

FIRST COVID VACCINES IN THE REGION AT MAARI MA



(Pictures left) Maari Ma Board Chair, Maureen O'Donnell received her vaccine from Manager General Practice, Daniel Jackman while Senior Primary Health Care Practitioner, Bernie Kemp received his from RN, Toni Bahler. A media contingent was present during the vaccinations.

Maari Ma Board Chair, Maureen O'Donnell, and senior Primary Health Care Practitioner, Bernie Kemp demonstrated the importance of vaccinating against corona virus when they became the first people in far west New South Wales to receive the COVID 19 vaccine - AstraZeneca. They said they were both very proud to lead by example for their communities. Maari Ma has been vaccinating front-line staff and clients by appointment in accordance with the

Australian Government guidelines and has a separate vaccination clinic with fully trained staff administering the vaccines.

"I wanted to lead by example as a Maari Ma employee and also to show the Aboriginal community that it's not as bad as it's made out to be with all the negative stuff that's been around it." Senior Primary Health Care Practitioner, Bernie Kemp.

**MAARI MA HEALTH
ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION REGION OF
SERVICE**



HELPING TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF A CHILD'S LIFE

A program that Maari Ma has been implementing for seven years has had very positive findings. The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) has been evaluated in an Australia wide longitudinal study. Among the positive findings were:- not only did parents enjoy the two year program they transformed the home learning environment and spent more time on learning activities with their children; - at commencement HIPPY children on average scored below the Australian mean on a test of literacy and numeracy. After completing HIPPY, children's average score was above the relevant Australian mean; - their improvement suggests HIPPY leads to a changed learning trajectory for children, not just a developmental gain that might be expected with age; - in this way HIPPY works to redress the negative impact of poverty and financial hardship on child development. HIPPY is funded by the Commonwealth Government via the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Maari Ma is fortunate to have received philanthropic support from the CAGES Foundation which has enabled the organisation to now include Wilcannia and Menindee four and five year olds in HIPPY this year.



25 children graduated from HIPPY last year after completing the second year of the program. Maari Ma has been implementing HIPPY with 25 four year old and 25 five year old Aboriginal children each year since 2014.

EARLY YEARS PROJECT TO BE SHOWCASED AT CONFERENCE

Staff from Maari Ma's Early Years Project will be presenting to a national audience at a conference in August hosted by SNAICC – National Voice for our Children. The biennial event is the largest conference of its type in the southern hemisphere and this year will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. Early Years Project Leader, Michelle Parker together with staff Leeann Adams, Briony Callaghan and Valerie Bugmy submitted the abstract titled *Maari Ma*

Early Years Project: Investing in the early years pays dividends for this generation and the next. It looks at the findings of an Early Years Project evaluation completed in 2019 and the strategies Maari Ma has used to create a unified approach to service delivery. Michelle, Leeann, Briony and Valerie have been allocated 90 minutes at the conference and they will be among a number of national and international speakers to address the delegates.



A MUCH VALUED PROGRAM



Marrabinya Care Link Workers are positioned across the Primary Health Network area. During the 2019/20 financial year the program brokered more than 24,000 support services and processed nearly 6,000 referrals for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the region.

Since 2016 when the Marrabinya program commenced, its Care Link Workers have been regularly engaging with clients and service providers to get feedback to assess how they feel about the service and if there are any areas that could be improved on. In a recent survey of clients, they found the overwhelming majority are very happy with the service with many saying without the support that Marrabinya provides they would not be able to attend their scheduled appointments and believe their health outcomes would be very different. The Marrabinya program has been operating throughout the Western NSW Primary Health Network region since 2016. It was a new model devised by Maari Ma and Bila Muuji Aboriginal Corporation Health Service in Dubbo to maximise the support services available for Indigenous people in the western region needing to access medical aids and assistance to manage their diagnosed chronic conditions.

CELEBRATING BROKEN HILL'S YOUNG PEOPLE

Together More than Ever was the theme of this year's Youth Week which was held across New South Wales from April 16th – 24th. Maari Ma joined a combined agencies event held at Broken Hill's Sturt Park to highlight the health and wellbeing of the city's young people. Maari Ma's Kiila Laana team set up a novel "head in the hole" activity designed to open a discussion about the dangers of smoking and the benefits of singing which proved very popular. There were lots of resources to take away from the Maari Ma stand and with the past 12 months being challenging – particularly for young people, it was good to see a smiling community out and about and celebrating the resilience of youth.



DREAM BIGGER



Staff at WINGS and Strong Young Families always ensure the kids have a good time during the school holidays and the last holiday break was no exception. The activities included special hair and make-up activities for the girls in preparation for a fashion parade - organised by the Safe House, called Dream Bigger. It was held at the Wilcannia community hall and more than 40 children paraded on the catwalk in front of their families and friends to popular music. In between the modelling there were singing performances and there was a Wilcannia Community Dinner for all to enjoy.

The Dream Bigger event is an initiative which aims to instill confidence in young people so that they feel good about themselves, and feel empowered to say no to domestic and family violence.



CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Maari Ma has recently been assessed against the 7th edition of the Health and Community Services standards under QIC (Quality Improvement Council). There were 21 individual standards being assessed and a range of staff and Board members were interviewed including CEO, Bob Davis, Board Chair, Maureen O'Donnell, Deputy Chair, Des Jones, Kendy Rogers as Governance Officer, and a selection of managers, service delivery staff and front-line staff. Maari Ma facilities and staff at Wilcannia and Balranald were part of the process as well, and clients and external stakeholders were also interviewed. The QIC Standards Accreditation Program offers a look at the whole of an organisation, ranging from the approach to quality and safety to achieving positive and empowering client outcomes. Maari Ma has been accredited under the QIC Standards since 2012.



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