



## MAXIMISING LEARNING POTENTIAL



Because of COVID 19 rules, the Early Years team at Maari Ma has had to keep the numbers of families attending Playgroup to less than what they've had in the past but Playgroup is still continuing in Broken Hill and Wilcannia, and bringing joy to the families whose turn it is to attend. Staff at both sites are doing an exceptional job under the new conditions. They continue to establish and foster respectful and caring relationships with children and families so they can work together to maximise the learning potential of the child. Little Kids and Books is incorporated into Playgroup as well with staff modelling different reading strategies and parents able to take home quality picture books to add to their libraries. Books help to create warm emotional bonds between adults and kids when they read together so what better way to help develop basic language and other skills than to pick up a new quality book with kids and share that special time.

MAARI MA HEALTH  
ABORIGINAL  
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*Playgroup and Little Kids and Books are continuing to bring enjoyment to families during the pandemic.*

# ACCESS TO LEGAL HELP FOR PATIENTS

It's recognised that legal problems not addressed can have a harmful impact on the health and wellbeing of the person affected which is why Maari Ma has entered into an MOU with Warra Warra Legal Service enabling a solicitor to be at the Broken Hill Primary Health Care Service one morning a week to provide legal assistance. The partnership also entails a mutual exchange of knowledge and skills between the two services. Warra Warra provides legal education to help Maari Ma staff to identify and respond to their patients' legal needs, and Maari Ma provides health education to lawyers to help them identify and respond to the health impacts of their clients' unmet legal needs. These partnerships are being developed across Australia and have been described as the 'quiet revolution' transforming the way some of the most vulnerable in our community access legal services.



*Pictured at the launch of the partnership are (from back left) Stacy Treloar, CEO Far West Community Legal Centre and Warra Warra Legal Service; Linda Lynott, Executive Manager, Primary Health Care Service; and Kendy Rogers, Service Manager. (Front from left) Shannon Oates, Manager, Warra Warra; Leah Billeam, Principal Solicitor, Warra Warra; and Bernie Kemp, Manager Aboriginal Health.*

## ASSISTING IN RESEARCH

Maari Ma is pleased to be participating in two research projects. The Board has endorsed involvement with a study looking into improving diabetes care, called the Flash Study and a study looking into sexual health surveillance. The Flash Study is examining the use of a new sensor for measuring blood sugar levels, called flash glucose monitoring to improve blood sugar management for Aboriginal people with type 2 diabetes. Maari Ma's visiting endocrinology service from RPAH, lead by Dr Stephen Twigg, is involved in the assessment of the flash glucose monitor, along with the University of Melbourne. The sexual health surveillance study aims to determine whether the use of the MBS715 Annual Adult Health

Check increases testing for sexually transmitted infections for Aboriginal young people aged 15-29 years. This is being conducted by NSW Health's Centre for Aboriginal Health, the Kirby Institute and the Sydney Sexual Health Service. While Maari Ma receives a number of requests to take part in studies which don't have direct relevance, these two studies reflect some of the organisation's core clinical activities. It's hoped by participating in them Maari Ma will play an integral part in helping to improve diabetes care for Aboriginal people in Australia in the first study and in the second, helping to stop the spread of sexually transmitted infections by increasing the level of testing.



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# THE VALUABLE BENEFITS OF HIPPY



COVID 19 has done nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of families being involved in HIPPY – the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters. 52 families are currently enrolled in the two year program that empowers parents and carers to be their child's first teacher. Maari Ma employs four HIPPY tutors – two for each year. In the first year, families learn skills to get their children ready for school. In the second year, parents learn more about supporting their children's learning and development at school and at home. The one to one delivery of the HIPPY curriculum encourages families to work closely with their children, and they are supported by their tutors to extend their child's learning and understanding across the developmental areas within the HIPPY framework. Maari Ma's HIPPY tutors have been working around COVID 19 by continuing to visit homes but having shorter visits, remaining outside of the house and keeping to the social distancing rules. The program was recognised and rewarded by HIPPY Australia for maintaining enrolment rates for children going from the age 4 to the age 5 programs for the 2019 /2020 period and Maari Ma is already getting a lot of enquiries from families wanting to come into HIPPY for next year.

*Pictured left: Caitlin-Amber Coff (pictured on the left in the photo) and Robyn Cattermole are Maari Ma's HIPPY tutors for the first year of the two year program. Adah Etrich and Stephanie Newman are working with families who have children in the second year.*

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## MAARI MA TRAINEES ON TRACK DESPITE COVID 19 CHALLENGES

It's been a difficult year in many ways for Maari Ma's fourth cohort of Aboriginal health worker trainees with COVID 19 because TAFE has been unable to deliver face to face training. However, the trainees who are undertaking the Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care were able to return to face to face teaching this term and for some it was their final TAFE block. The trainees are Hannah Morris, who was previously Maari Ma's Regional Office administration assistant, Kalinda Morrison, Jae Edwards and Cooper Fleming who are from Broken Hill, Britny Coff from Menindee and Shontae Harris

from Wilcannia. Staff, Lavinia Henderson and Latesha Adams also joined the group, and Tarissa Staker is updating her qualification and joined the group to complete some units. Long-time employee, Bernie Kemp who re-joined the Maari Ma team after working for some time in Dubbo, has a strong mentoring relationship with the trainees. All going well, it's expected the students, who started the course in March 2019 will complete it before the end of December and Maari Ma is already in discussions regarding a new cohort of trainees to commence in February 2021.

# YOUNG MINDS AT WORK



The plans for a new Wings facility are taking shape thanks to the input from the children who attend the after school and holiday activity programs. The team from Adelaide based Troppo Architects was in Wilcannia recently to meet with the town's young people and to get their creative minds working on what they would like for their new purpose built facility. It was also an opportunity for the architects to have a mingle and a yarn with the kids and community members over a sausage sizzle. The Federal Government, through its Building Better Region's Fund, awarded Maari Ma a grant of \$1.6M towards a new Wings building specifically designed to cater for the after school and holiday activities as well as playgroup. It will be the second new facility for the town with a Primary Health Care Service also to be constructed to replace the current facility. Troppo Architects are designing and project managing that building as well.



*Architects will tell you that every design process is unique and judging by the input from the Wings children Troppo Architects will be building a facility that is going to be one of a kind.*



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