

## MAARI MA'S 5TH COHORT OF AHWs



*Maari Ma's 5<sup>th</sup> cohort of AHWs is pictured above with some students from the Far West Local Health District during their first face to face TAFE block. The Maari Ma trainees are Kendi Simmons, Tessa Files, Tamara Thomas, Pearl Ferguson, Jenni McDonald, Laura-Lee Simmons, Zac Henderson, Kylah White, Lakisha Sloane, Christopher Hunter, Tayla Leayr, Donna Cahil, Paige Winch and Kelvin Murray.*

While it's been a difficult year for students with COVID 19 restrictions, Maari Ma's 5th cohort of Aboriginal Health Workers (AHWs) has taken the difficulties in their stride and have continued with their studies this year. The group of 14 is studying a Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice while working on the job and recently undertook their first face to face TAFE block training. The Aboriginal Health Worker program continues to be one of Maari Ma's major workforce development strategies. A strong partnership with TAFE Western NSW has seen more than 40 students graduate from the course since 2009. In 2012 AHWs became recognised by AHPRA (the

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) in all states and Maari Ma has worked with its AHWs to achieve their registration. In 2014 Maari Ma accounted for nearly half of all AHWs registered in New South Wales. While many have moved on to continue their work in other communities, a number have advanced their skills by taking on further qualifications such as registered nursing, midwifery and diabetes education and have continued to work for Maari Ma, while others have continued to increase their knowledge on the job. Maari Ma recognises all of its AHWs for their dedication to their work and their dedication to their communities.

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# VIRTUAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATION



Pictured above before their virtual presentation are Leeann Adams, Briony Callaghan, Michelle Parker and Valerie Bugmy. The SNAICC conference brings together policy makers, researchers and practitioners working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family services. The 2021 conference theme was *Our Children Matter: Innovative Approaches to New World Challenges*.

A closed New South Wales/ Queensland border meant Maari Ma's Early Years team could not be on the Gold Coast in person to deliver their presentation to the 9<sup>th</sup> SNAICC - National Voice for our Children – conference held in early December. But they were undeterred and rose to the challenge by conducting their presentation virtually. The biennial event is the largest of its type in the southern hemisphere and more than 800 delegates attended over the three days. There were more than 70 concurrent sessions—including panel discussions and workshops, displays, poster presentations and exhibitors, and cultural highlights and performances. The presentation by the Early Years team was called *Maari Ma Early Years Project: Investing in the early years pays dividends for this generation and the next*.

**Some of the presentation feedback from delegates:-** I love the idea of families taking home a book to build their library! : Beyond a playgroup, this deadly project offers mob a soft entry point to the health service that is culturally safe for them. Projects like this are fundamental to holistic 'all of family' access and uptake for services: Thank you for sharing your tremendous program with us! : What a wonderful program for the families in your community. So valuable for all, well done! :You mob should be proud of that amazing program. Great playgroup model for mob: Amazing program! Congratulations on your hard work! Such an important key element to keep showing up at home visits. : Fabulous! We'd love to visit once those borders open up! :Thank you so much ladies for your presentation! Awesome work.

## A WINNING PARTNERSHIP

Maari Ma together with the CAGES Foundation has been recognised for its work in the Early Years by jointly winning the 2021 Indigenous Philanthropy Award at the Australian Philanthropy Awards. The awards recognise and celebrate extraordinary achievements in contemporary philanthropy for work that is visionary, that has high impact and is transformative. Maari Ma's partnership with CAGES began more than ten years ago when the Foundation started its support of the Early Years and Healthy Start programs—recognising the importance of such programs on the health, development and wellbeing of Aboriginal children. Foundation principals, Paul and Sandra Salteri and their family have been visiting Maari Ma and communities since then to see first hand the work Maari Ma is doing with their support. While much of it now attracts government funding Maari Ma is indebted to the Foundation for its understanding ten years ago that real progress can only be achieved through a sustained commitment that spans far longer than government funding cycles.





# IN PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Maari Ma CEO, Bob Davis has co-authored a book with long time friend John Heath detailing the colonisation of the Port Macquarie region from the perspective of the Birrpai people. *Healing the Spirit - A Birrpai Perspective on the Port Macquarie Penal Colony and its Aftermath* is a collaboration between the two authors and the Port Macquarie Historical Society which has assisted in publishing the book. Both authors have a passion for history and the pursuit of social and restorative justice. *Healing the Spirit* draws on historical records and resources, and covers pre-contact Birrpai society before investigating the recorded first encounters of the Northern Birrpai and Europeans, the impact of the Port Macquarie penal colony and free settlement, and the subsequent waves of legislation, policies and practices that have impacted the Birrpai through to the present day. John Heath (on the left) and Bob Davis are pictured at the book's launch.



## HELPING TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR

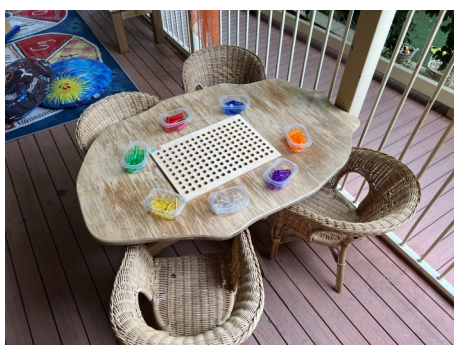


Staff at Maari Ma joined others throughout Australia to mark White Ribbon Day which this year was held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November. This is a time where communities come together to stand up, speak out and act to say 'no' to gendered violence in Australia. Awareness raising activities at Maari Ma's health services included a White Ribbon breakfast, a novel treasure hunt for white ribbons with corresponding messages about domestic violence, a women's pamper day and street march. White Ribbon is the world's largest movement engaging men and boys to end men's violence against women and girls, promote gender equality and create new opportunities for men to build positive, healthy and respectful relationships.



# THE JOY OF PLAYGROUP

With COVID 19 it's been a stop start year for Playgroup so when it did restart in November, Broken Hill families were overjoyed. Staff too were very excited to be able to provide children and families with the opportunity of getting together, seeing smiles on faces and watching the kids interacting in play. These rich and nurturing spaces for kids inspire them to learn through playful experiences.



## TAKING THE PLEDGE

The team from Maari Ma's smokers program, Kiila Laana travelled to Balranald to present Muuka (smoke free) pledgers with a reward on their smoke free journey. The pledgers received a \$250 voucher from Foodworks – which they said couldn't have come at a better time of the year with Christmas around the corner. The Kiila Laana team focuses on encouraging and supporting community members who smoke to access support via the Muuka program.



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