

WILCANNIA COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

— Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation

WALKABOUT BARBER

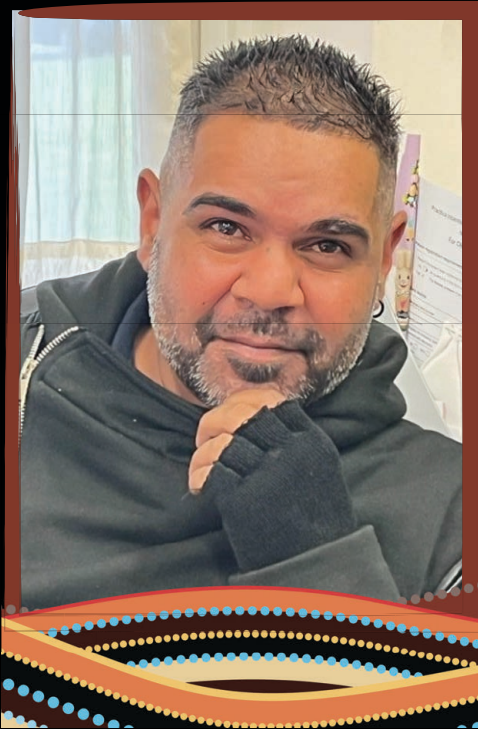


MAARI MA PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICE

JUNE 2022 | ISSUE 55

The Walkabout Barber came to town in mid May and amongst many others gave AHW Christopher Hunter a new do.

The Walkabout Barber Facebook page said:



WELL THATS A WRAP!!!!

A massive thank you to Jane Kemp and CatholicCare Wilcannia/Forbes for your belief, support and kindness shown to my team and I whilst travelling the Far West Region of NSW!

Over the past 8 days our team travelled out to Menindee, Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Cobar and Narromine, delivering haircuts cuts, beau-ty services, connecting with community members in need, and having healthy conversations around positive mental health and suicide prevention strategies!

Being able to go out and do what I do best is not only a privilege but a true blessing, and something that I do not and will never take for granted!

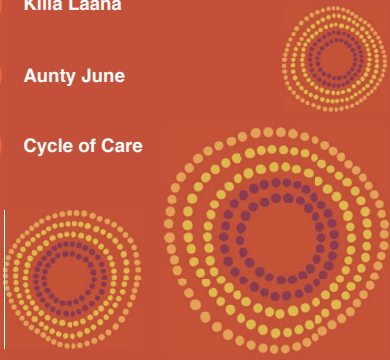
Thank you to my amazing team of barbers and beauty therapists for allowing me to lead you on a path that not only helps others out there to help themselves, but also helps us so much in the process!
Last but not least thank you to my wife and kids for not only being in my corner, but cheering me on with every crazy adventure that I take you all on!

BRING ON THE NEXT TRIP!



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Walkabout Barber
- 2 Ministers Visit Far West / Dental Team
- 3 Kiila Laana
- 4 Aunty June
- 6 Cycle of Care



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"Improving Aboriginal health and closing the gap"

MINISTERS VISIT FAR WEST

A number of NSW Government Ministers attended the Far West in early April headed by the Deputy Premier, The Hon. Paul Toole.

The Deputy Premier was travelling in the region to talk to local Aboriginal communities following the tough couple of years with COVID. He was accompanied by Minister for Regional Health, **Bronnie Taylor** and member for Dubbo, **Dugald Saunders**. They were in Broken Hill land travelled to Wilcannia to talk to local



Deputy Premier **Paul Toole**, was in Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Bourke with other Ministerial colleagues to hear first hand how the COVID crisis has affected Aboriginal communities. He is pictured in Wilcannia with Minister, **Bronnie Taylor** and Dubbo Member, **Dugald Saunders**.

community members about health, housing, education and young people before heading on to Bourke.

Executive Manager Aboriginal Health and Community Wellbeing, **Tegan Hinchey-Gerard** spent time with the

group talking about the COVID crisis and the affect it has had on our communities. The Deputy Premier also spent time in Wilcannia with REDI.E and heard about how important the local grocery store is to the town. The Deputy Premier said the NSW Government recognises that COVID-19 has impacted life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a range of unpredictable ways, particularly in the far west.

The visit, albeit fleeting, was their chance to get an idea of exactly how bad the impact has been. We look forward to further developments from the visit which may benefit our communities in the future.



THE DENTAL TEAM

The Dental team has been on the road again and made a visit to Wilcannia Pre-school, St Therese's Community School and the High School.

Senior Dental Therapist, **Meg Hurst** said the preschool children did a "brush the bugs" activity while the students at the High School and older children at St Therese's took on a more in depth activity involving eggs.

The idea of the eggs was to demonstrate what acids in the saliva do to tooth enamel when not brushed off the teeth over a period of time. This was demonstrated using one egg in lemon juice, one in orange juice and another egg in lemonade.

Meg said the kids were astounded at the layers coming off the egg when being brushed - demonstrating how acids strip all the minerals out of the enamel causing holes and toothaches. This helped the children see the damage drinks do to teeth and what are the best ways to look after teeth - brushing, fluoride, regular dental checks, healthy food options, cheese and chewing sugar free gum.



TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE FACTS OF VAPING



kiila
laana



Complete the post-webinar evaluation for a chance to receive 1 of 4 x \$150 petrol vouchers



Western NSW Local Health District
invites all parents to join the webinar:



VAPES AND YOUR CHILDREN

FIND OUT WHY IT'S A BIG DEAL

- **Dr Lyndon Bauer | GP**
Risks of vaping
- **Taylor Ryan | headspace**
Safe communication with children

Wednesday
22nd June
7.30-8.30PM
Register before 21st June

AUNTY JUNE

WINGS YOUTH WORKER

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the sudden passing of June Jones who passed away on Friday 29th April just two months short of her 72nd birthday.

June worked at the Wings Drop in Centre from its inception to her passing. Her commitment to children, and her care for their education and wellbeing will live on within the Centre. She touched the lives of many in her quiet way and all who had the fortune over the decades to be taught by her at what was then called the mission school and then at Wings will remember her gentleness, her thoughtfulness and her compassionate nature. With the loss of June, the Wilcannia community has also lost a teacher of language and culture. She grew up speaking Barkindji and knew well the bush and the offerings it could provide. We are immensely grateful for her valued contribution to Wings and the wider community, and our thoughts are with her family. Her passing will be felt greatly but we will always remember her with great fondness.

June was interviewed in December 2017 as part of a staff profile series. The interview has been included below.



Aunty June grew up in Wilcannia when the river was high, the circus came to town and dust storms would blacken the town at least twice a year. She was the third youngest of nine children – seven girls and two boys – and home was a three bedroom house on the mission, without electricity.

“There was no power in those days, we had candles for light and it was hot in the summer. The dust storms would roll in and they’d black out the whole town. We had the windows down but the dust and sand would still get in and the beds would

fill up with sand. We had a couple of them every year, and they’d last a fair while. We used to get sent home from school”.


At the mention of school Aunty June’s gaze goes into the distance as she remembers her school years. Her voice is compelling yet soft and she speaks choosing each word carefully.

“I used to really like school. We went to bed as soon as the sun went down and we’d wake up early and walk into school. We didn’t like staying home from school

like the kids do these days. We had a strict upbringing”.

Aunty June’s upbringing provided her with boundaries that meant she went to school and she became educated. It also provided her and her siblings with safety nets. Because the children couldn’t swim they weren’t allowed in the river and if by chance they did go there, there were significant consequences.

“We had no town pool back then so the only place to cool off was the river, but we weren’t allowed to go in, we weren’t even



allowed to go down there. I remember I sneaked down one time and went to the weir. The river was high back then. I must have been about nine or ten. I went with my cousin and my Aunty came along. There was a whirl pool at the weir and we could have been caught in it and drowned. Well, I got flogged when I went home, I was put to bed with no tea and I was grounded for a week. I didn't go back after that".

Life in Wilcannia during Aunty June's younger years was vibrant and carefree. There were about three thousand people in the town, and she describes times when Aboriginal people were treated well and they were respected.

"There were more whites than Aboriginal people. The shops were open, the streets were lined with pepper trees and we'd all mix in together. We used to get a lot of circuses through town and we'd go there after school. There'd be elephants in the river squirting on the bridge, lions in cages, monkeys, hyenas and other animals. I used to go and pat the monkeys. We'd get side shows too – the Brown Brothers, and they'd stay for about two weeks. There'd be clowns, fairy floss, a big merry-go-round. That was the late 50's".

It was around that time that Aunty June and her friends sat on the Wilcannia bridge watching a paddle steamer bring stores in and head off with wool bales

"It was fun. We watched people get off and there'd be the men unloading things. The river was too high and they pulled the bridge up so the boat could get through".

The clay pan near the mission was the hub of entertainment with soft ball games, races and even temporary poles for a game of footie. There was also lots of dancing.

"We'd have so much fun. If there was a big wake, we'd dance around the piano accordion, someone would be playing a mouth organ and someone else a guitar.

Trucks carrying bullocks would even pull of the road and they'd watch us dance. The blokes would come over and introduce themselves and talk to the elders – there were a lot of friendly people. We'll never see those days again. Slim Dusty called in a couple of times. There were a few songs you know made up about the clay pan. (Country music singer) Graeme Connors told a story about clay pan dances".

The clay pan was a popular venue for Guy Fawkes nights too with crackers, sky rockets and scarecrows alight after dark.

"All the kids would come over to watch but we couldn't get too close with the crackers" she says laughing.

When Aunty June turned 15 she left school to get a job to help the family and went to work at one of the stations doing housework and looking after the children. The children were schooled at home, and she'd read books to them and help them with their homework. After many years, she worked at the then Court House Hotel, washing and ironing before starting work with children in a structured environment.

"I worked at the mission pre-school for 12 years. It closed down in 2000 and I worked there up until it closed. Then came the Drop in Centre. It was next to the old store that burnt down. It would stay open just about all day and all night and you could cook a meal. The police used to take the kids there, this was in the 80's and 90's, and you used to see a fair few kids there. There wasn't much for them to do though. The Council used to run it, and I worked there for two years then Maari Ma took it over. There was a big difference when Maari Ma took it over.

It was more structured - there were activities".

Culture and language have been and still are a big part of Aunty June's life and she recalls days when her mother would gather children around a fire bucket to share stories.

"She'd have all the little ones huddled around and tell them things, and she'd do bush tucker with them as well. Our mother taught Barkindji at the school and we used to speak it at home with her. (Nephew) Murray Butcher carries on with it now, he teaches a bit in school, it's so important to keep it going" she pauses for a minute then continues very softly with

disappointment "I don't know, the kids today, now they won't listen to you anymore, they just laugh when you try to talk the language".

Aunty June, as an elder in her community like her sisters the late Gloria King and the

late Janet Jones, is an inspiration to the young people of Wilcannia even though at times she may not think so. The days of Anzac marches down the streets which saw station owners' daughters dressed in white suits parading with all children in their school uniforms may be long gone but culture and language remain at Wilcannia through people like Aunty June. Years of working with children – supporting them in education, sharing culture and language, and encouraging them to make the most of any opportunity, are at the heart of what she does and what she always will do.

"When I have a couple of weeks break from the Drop in Centre, I always look forward to coming back here - it's what I love to do".

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GP REVIEW

During the year you should see your doctor to see if your GPMP or medication needs to be changed. You may also need some tests.

START

Your cycle of care starts with a twelve monthly CTG/IPIP sign up. This includes ATSI Health Check and a follow up by a health worker.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

Our health workers will visit you to talk about your health and see how you are going with your medications.

MAARI MA CYCLE OF CARE

GPMP & MEDICATION

You will be looked after by our Keeping Well team and other specialists like our dieticians, podiatrists and eye specialists. The Keeping Well team and pharmacist will help you with your medications which could include a Home Medication Review and a Webster Pack.

You should see your doctor regularly and develop a care plan to manage your health. This plan is called a GPMP.



Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service

Improving Aboriginal Health & Closing the Gap..

About MMPHCS

Maari Ma Primary Health Care Service aims to provide culturally appropriate health services to Aboriginal people living in Broken Hill and surrounding communities.

We are governed by an all Aboriginal Board of Directors, who are deeply committed to providing a holistic approach to Aboriginal health that includes physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions.

Our health workers, doctors and nurses are committed to providing you with the highest quality care. If you ever feel that this has not been achieved, please contact the manager, Kendy Rogers, on 08 8082 9777 to discuss the matter.



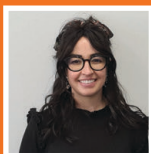
Kendy Rogers

Service
Manager:
PHCS



**Nola
Whyman**

Executive
Manager
Operations



**Tegan Hinchey-
Gerard**

Executive Manager
Aboriginal Health
and Community
Wellbeing

Regular services

Doctors
Nurses
Health workers
Child health nurses
Midwives
Dietician
Primary mental health workers
Alcohol and other drug staff
Psychologist
Kids dentist
Adult dentist
Women's health
Pharmacist
Social Worker

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Occasional services

Heart specialist
Kidney specialist
Diabetes specialist
Child health specialist
Eye specialist
Alcohol specialist
Smoking specialist
Podiatry
Optometrist
Psychiatrist
Child and Adolescent
Psychiatrist
Pain Specialist

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