

## Opening doors: Evaluation of the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation's Chronic Disease Strategy

### Aim

To evaluate the development and implementation of Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation's Chronic Disease Strategy over the past 10 years, and to provide guidance on further work.

### Overview

*Background:* Since the implementation of its Chronic Disease Strategy in 2005, Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation in Far West New South Wales has been using continuous quality improvement processes through its engagement with the Audit and Best Practice for Chronic Disease (ABCD) research program. In 2016 Maari Ma commissioned Menzies School of Health Research to assist with an evaluation of its Chronic Disease Strategy.

*Project description:* Maari Ma's Strategy takes a whole-of-life course approach, focusing on prevention, early intervention and management of chronic disease. The purpose of the evaluation was to review the development and implementation of the Strategy over the past 10 years and to provide guidance on further work. Using a mixed-methods approach, which drew on interviews, a clinical audit, and program and hospitalisation data, the evaluation was completed between January and December 2016.

### Outputs

The evaluation report, launched by the Federal Minister for Indigenous Health, the Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP, in August 2017, found:

- + The number of patients with diabetes who had abnormal blood pressure halved between 2005 and 2015.
- + In 2005, more than 80 per cent of clients with diabetes recorded an abnormal cholesterol result but this fell to just 20 per cent by 2015.
- + The number of female clients smoking while pregnant reduced from 78 per cent to 66 per cent between 2003 and 2011.
- + The number of health checks increased 10-fold between 2011 and 2015.
- + Clients were still smoking and using alcohol at higher rates than the national average.
- + The proportion of Aboriginal babies born with a low birthweight is still higher than the State average.

### Key messages

The main drivers of Maari Ma's achievements were:

- + A long-term commitment to continuous quality improvement and strong leadership from the Board of Directors and executive levels.
- + Good community links and a culturally accessible and safe service.
- + A strong focus on Aboriginal workforce development and a culture of 'two-way learning and working together'.
- + Investment in information technology and clinical information systems.
- + A track record of forming productive partnerships in research and evaluation.
- + The use of data to inform decision making.

<i>Project team</i>	Ross Bailie (Team Leader) <sup>1,2</sup> , Jodie Bailie <sup>1,2</sup> , Hugh Burke <sup>3</sup> , Cath Kennedy <sup>3</sup> , Frances Cunningham <sup>1</sup> , Alan Cass <sup>1</sup>
<i>Project status</i>	Completed
<i>Dates</i>	2016
<i>Further information</i>	Jodie Bailie <b>T</b> +61 2 6629 4171 <b>E</b> jodie.bailie@sydney.edu.au

- 1 Menzies School of Health Research (Charles Darwin University)
- 2 University Centre for Rural health (University of Sydney)
- 3 Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation