

# Ear Health Success Stories

Plan

Do

Study

Act

Success stories from NSW Aboriginal  
Community Controlled Health services



Aboriginal  
Health & Medical  
Research Council  
of NSW

## About this booklet



### 8 Ear Health Stories

Continuous Quality Improvement was developed and implemented



Stories and photos were provided by NSW Aboriginal Community Controlled Health services that were a part of **Ear Health Collaborative group**.



**AH&MRC Program staff** worked on this project



This program was funded by the **Department of Health**

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## Foreword

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plays a key role in the operation of every Aboriginal community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS). The main aim of this 2019 ear health CQI project was to improve ear health for Aboriginal people within NSW by supporting ACCHSs to increase ear screening rates and knowledge around hearing health. It also focused on spreading awareness through engagement with community services such as schools and events.

In these eight stories, NSW ACCHSs are sharing successes in ear health, in order to build skills and knowledge. I would like to acknowledge the work done by the eight ACCHSs that are featured

in this booklet. Your excellent programs and innovations benefit the whole sector. Also I want to acknowledge the many ACCHSs whose stories are not represented in this booklet. We know there are many ACCHSs using CQI approaches and processes to improve ear health, and their efforts are definitely making positive contributions to improving Aboriginal health outcomes.

Thank you for sharing your stories.



**Robert Skeen**

Chief Executive Officer  
Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW

20 May 2020

## Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service Incorporated (GAMS)

At GAMS, hearing health screenings for children are currently performed through scheduled bookings, as part of the 715 child assessments in school screening/child group programs or as opportunistic sessions. The focus chosen for their PDSA was to educate parents of children between the ages of 0-5 years regarding Otitis Media (OM). The young mothers that were involved in the Murrinbinya mothers' group were targeted to receive education on OM and its crucial impact on the growth development of their children.

This knowledge will then follow through within families as their children learn through their primary school education stage.

These mothers had the opportunity to learn through the health presentations and be involved in their kids' screening sessions through visual aids and asking questions. Parents were provided with culturally appropriate flyers and other packs/resources to take home with them.





## Katungul Aboriginal Corporation Regional Health and Community Services

Katungul's hearing health screenings were delivered mainly through school screening programs and opportunistic appointments in their AMS. To supplement these, their PDSA was around organising community education days for parents and carers. This was held at their 3 clinic sites and provided participants with education to gain a better understanding of preventive health measures for ear health.



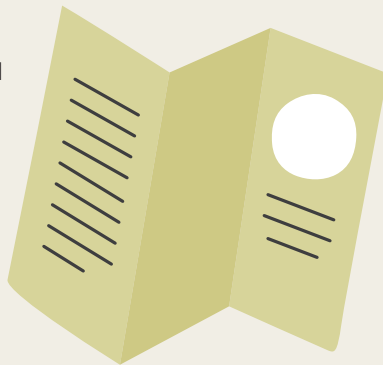
Katungul Aboriginal  
Corporation Regional  
Health & Community  
Services

Workshops were also organised during the 2018 NAIDOC celebrations wherein 'Healthy Ears Happy Kids' resources were given out to the community. An OM information stall was put up by staff on NAIDOC where beanies and health pamphlets were distributed as well.

Another PDSA activity involved getting relevant AMS staff to complete their Certificate 4 in Audiology with the support from the AH&MRC and TAFE Digital. This process assisted the students with travel and accommodation to complete the course.

At Rivmed, ear health cases are referred to Hearing Australia and ENTs by GPs and health workers during their internal ear health clinics. Schools and juvenile detention centre screenings are also regularly conducted by Aboriginal Health Workers and Ear Health workers as part of their outreach program.

## Riverina Medical & Dental Aboriginal Corporation (Rivmed)



RivMed's chosen PDSA activity involved a 'face stand/station' concept which is an interactive prevention resource that educates children on proper hygiene to help stop the spread of common infections. This tool came with promotional items such as brochures, stickers, stamps and other children's materials. The stands were put in their medical centre, outreach and screening clinics and were showcased during community occasions such as NAIDOC and sports events.



Currently, hearing health screenings are conducted through the 715 health checks in the outreach clinic and schools in Toomelah. The program has assisted in augmenting the costs for assisting 2 staff to attend an audiometry training course and to contribute to healthy hearing promotion initiatives at schools.

The latter involved the purchase of shirts for the students as part of their uniform which contained local artwork and ear health promotion messaging. The staff chose to implement a third PDSA cycle which involved updating their telehealth capability in the clinic to increase specialist appointments without having to travel to appointments as much.



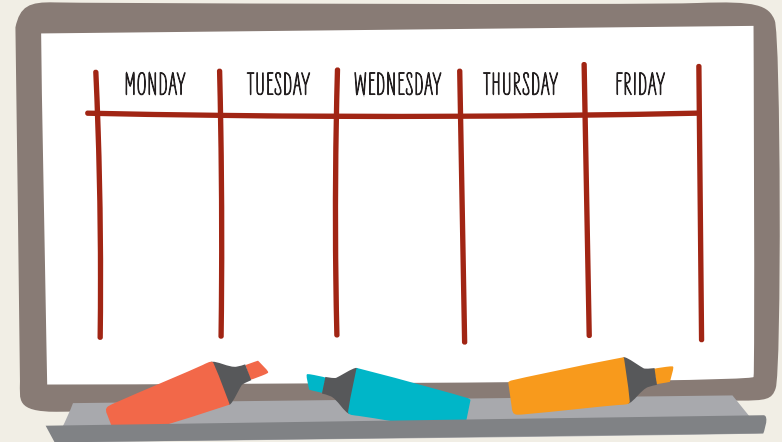
## Pius X Aboriginal Corporation (Toomelah Clinic)



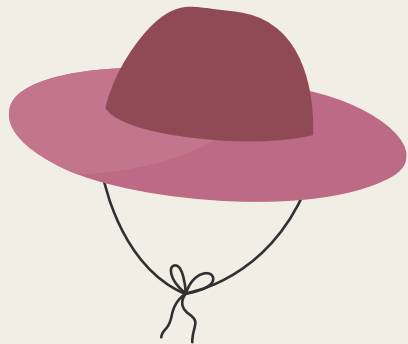


Pius X (Moree) partnered with the Mungindi Central School where ACCHS staff conducted hearing and vision screenings and distributed health promotional items to the students. A total of 22 children were screened with 6 referred to their General Practitioners for follow up and 2 referred for follow up with an ENT and Hearing Australia.

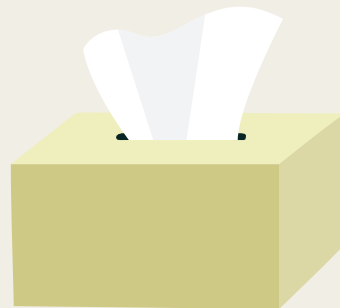
The second PDSA cycle involved having a 'notice board' located at the reception area of the ACCHS which contributed to more children being scheduled for ear health screening appointments. This brought about a significant increase in screening for children and referrals to the relevant providers at the ACCHS.







**Walgett  
Aboriginal  
Medical Service  
Co-Operative  
Limited**



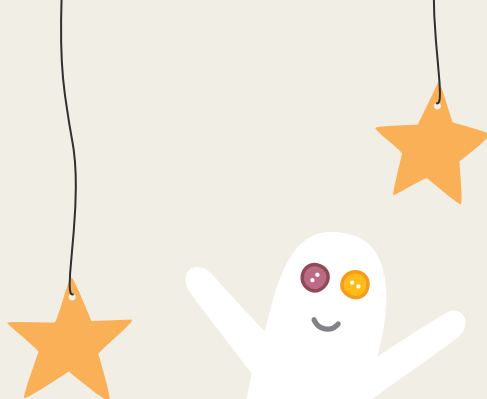
Walgett conducts hearing health screenings as part of 715 child health assessments done in the clinics and schools. Walgett's PDSA involved strengthening health promotion in schools through the distribution of promotional bags containing health merchandise such as branded shirts, ear plugs, hats, sunscreen, tissues, hand sanitiser and other items given to students who have undergone health checks. The grant was also used to produce 'face stands' which were strategically placed in the AMS and schools.



At WACHS, hearing health screening forms part of 715 health assessments and most often are opportunistic during appointments. Referrals and follow ups to specialists and other providers are arranged as required. Other screenings that were conducted were at schools, play groups, community events and were enhanced by their partnership with the 'Hear Our Heart' (HOH) Bus program. WACHS's first PDSA involved health resources (shirts, leaflets) to be handed out in schools, community centres, preschools upon completion of 715 health checks.



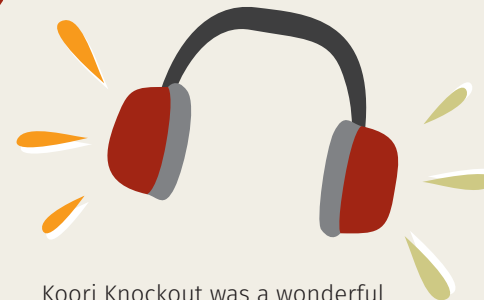
## Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health (WACHS)



The next phase included the use of the HOH staff and other tools (puppet show) to widen the screening coverage in the community. All this has long been incorporated into WACHS daily practices and has contributed to enhancing their model of care by reinforcing the community's awareness and importance of follow up.

The AH&MRC had a designated area during the 2019 Koori Knockout that staff shared with a member service. There were educational materials displayed at this booth such as ear health equipment and booklets/flyers. A qualified staff member conducted hearing health assessments for people that dropped by the booth and participants were given a bag each of useful ear health resources and merchandising items. A total of 20 children and 10 adults were screened over the weekend.

## Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW



Koori Knockout was a wonderful opportunity for AH&MRC to interact with community members and most importantly, this helped refer people who needed further assessment or management regarding their hearing health. This screening exercise proved to be a popular and effective way of engaging with community on a special occasion, and helped AH&MRC pilot our Hearing Health goodie bags that are now shared with all Member Services to use.

## Acknowledgments

### We would like to thank the following

- Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service Incorporated
- Katungul Aboriginal Corporation Regional Health and Community Services
- Riverina Medical & Dental Aboriginal Corporation
- Pius X Aboriginal Corporation (Toomelah Clinic)
- Pius X Aboriginal Corporation (Moree Clinic)
- Walgett Aboriginal medical Service Co-Operative Limited
- Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health
- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW

## Acknowledgement to Country

AH&MRC would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands in which we work, the Bidjigal and Gadigal clans, and acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands of our member services across New South Wales. We wish to pay our respect to all Elders past and present, as well as the many emerging leaders in Aboriginal Communities across the state.



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