


Gidgee Healing

Annual Report

2022

The background features a light beige color with a subtle topographic map pattern in a slightly darker shade. On the right side, there is a pattern of soft, out-of-focus white circles (bokeh). A large, solid orange circle is positioned on the right side of the page, containing two paragraphs of text.

Gidgee Healing remains committed to acknowledging the Kalkadoon people as the traditional owners of Mt Isa and the land where our service originated.

We also acknowledge the traditional owners of the lower gulf region and communities where we are committed to delivering quality care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



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ABOUT US

The name Gidgee Healing is a tribute to the Gidyeya or Gidgee tree, which is native to Mount Isa — Kalkadoon Country — and other arid regions of Australia. The tree has special significance to our traditional owners who have used it extensively for generations.

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the essence of Gidgee Healing embodies the healing properties of its namesake plant in a literal sense. However, there are other parallels with the tree and its use that are deeply ingrained in the DNA of the organisation. Resilience, healing, shelter, community, tradition, comfort, and care are all qualities associated with the use of the Gidgee tree and are embedded in our ethos.

The phrase 'Gidgee wood' has become synonymous with the Gidgee Healing philosophy — the Gidgee Way. It's how we talk about the way we do things. The Gidgee Way or The Gidgee Wood is at the core of our purpose and principles and permeates everything we do. It's our litmus test and sense-check. It's the measure, mode and means by which we deliver services and make decisions. It underpins our vision, mission and values and represents our present and our future. And it's the mirror we hold up to ourselves.

Just as the abundant healing and nurturing qualities of the Gidgee tree work across different spheres, so too does Gidgee Healing's approach to wellness. We are committed to working with every individual as a whole being — mind, body, and spirit — not just a series of symptoms and pathologies to be 'fixed'. Our approach to healing embraces the physical, mental, emotional and cultural dimensions of everyone in our care.



OUR HEART:

The health and wellbeing of the communities in our region. The Gidgee Wood is embodied in our heart — our 'why' — by being Community Controlled, and empowering the Mob



OUR SPIRIT:

The people and organisations behind our actions



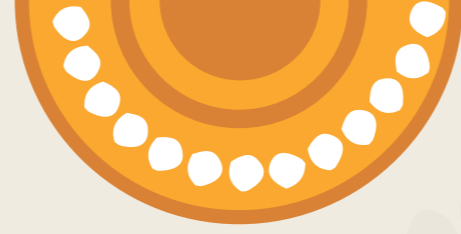
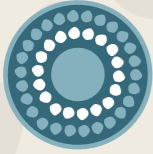
OUR MIND:

The thought, planning and structures that support our actions



OUR ACTIONS:

The services and programs that we deliver



GOALS, VISIONS & VALUES

OUR GOAL:

To provide high quality, sustainable and comprehensive Primary Health Care services that are culturally safe, responsive to community needs and integrated with other complementary service providers.

OUR VISION:

To make a significant and growing contribution towards achieving equity in health outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our geographic service area, including the Mount Isa, North West and Lower Gulf regions.

OUR VISION:

Cultural respect – Gidgee Healing recognises the cultural diversity that exists amongst its clients and respects the rights, views, values and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in service delivery.

Health sector responsibility – Gidgee Healing recognises that, while responsibility for improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health rests with the health system as a whole, it can play a key role in ensuring responsiveness of the sector.

Holistic approach – Gidgee Healing has adopted a view of health that encompasses the wellbeing of an individual, family and community, and recognises the broader social, cultural, spiritual and environmental influences on health.

Community control of primary healthcare – Gidgee Healing supports community control, participation and decision making as a fundamental component of the health system.

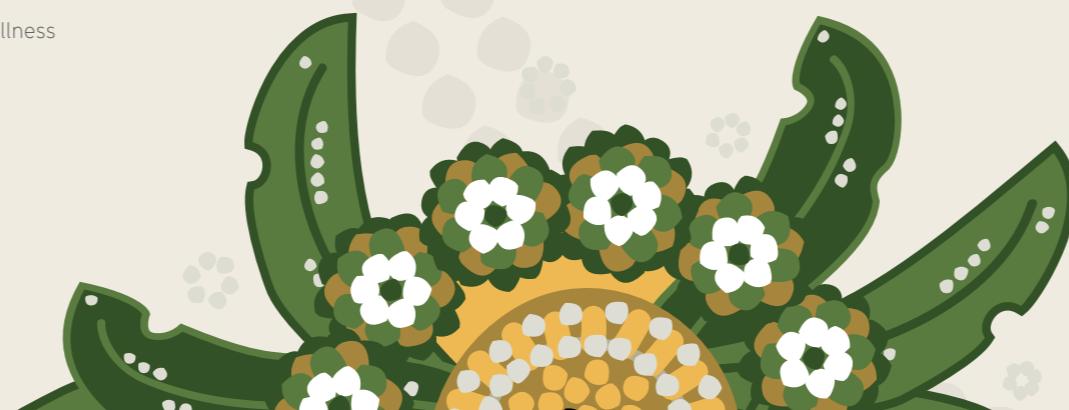
Building capacity – Gidgee Healing recognises the ongoing need to build capacity for improved health outcomes through both its own services and mainstream services, as well as through workforce, physical infrastructure and data management.

Working together – Gidgee Healing recognises the importance of working with a range of government, non-government and private providers to ensure coordination of efforts for maximum benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Local decision making – Gidgee Healing is committed to local level consultation and input to health service planning and delivery.

Accountability – Gidgee Healing is committed to improving the health of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Mount Isa and the other communities in our geographic area.

Promoting good health – Gidgee Healing recognises the importance of illness prevention as a fundamental component of its health service delivery.





STRATEGY

our strategic pillars are built on our values and guiding principles.



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As the world around us flexes and pivots to adapt to a constantly changing landscape, so too Gidgee Healing continues to evolve in response to challenges both global and local. Evolution – like healing – can sometimes be a case of two steps forward and one step back. The last 12 months have at times been challenging, even as we strive to progress.

Over the period, there have been three consistent themes influencing our activities:

-  CHANGE
-  SERVICE DELIVERY
-  COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT



CHANGE

Change really is the one thing that remains constant in our lives, and the last financial year has certainly not been short of variability for our organisation.

BOARD

During the period, we welcomed two new board members and bid farewell to two long-serving directors.

It's an honour to be joined by Patricia Lees (Aunty Pattie) and Valerie Craigie, who are highly respected Elders in our community. They bring much history, knowledge and deep wisdom to the board.

Aunty Pattie brings valuable insight through her role as CEO of Injilnji Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Children, Youth Services and Aged Care. Valerie Craigie is a Kalkadoon woman who is well known in the Mount Isa community, where she grew up. She manages our local Indigenous radio station, Mob FM.

Leann Shaw and Michael Martin have both been long time members of our board and contributed enormous value during their years with us. I am deeply grateful for their time, energy and commitment to the evolution of Gidgee Healing and thank them both for their dedicated service.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In March 2022, we farewelled CEO Renee Blackman. Renee joined Gidgee Healing in 2018 and contributed a great deal to the organisation. Throughout her time with us, Renee was always passionate about making Aboriginal culture central to our services and programs. She led Gidgee Healing's strong response to COVID-19 and steered the ship towards a 'new normal' way to live and work together during a global pandemic.

While we worked to fill the role, we were fortunate to have Stuart Gordon as interim CEO. Stuart was previously CEO of the North West Primary Health Network (OHNE) and is familiar with the communities in our footprint. Although he was only with us for five weeks, Stuart's time with Gidgee Healing was very productive. He fostered and strengthened relationships with Mount Isa and Lower Gulf communities and progressed several significant activities to lay the foundations for our next phase and new CEO.

Our new CEO, Cherrie Glasson, is a Djiru and Djabugay woman from the Mission Beach and Barron Gorge areas of Far North Queensland. Cherrie joined Gidgee Healing in June 2022, continuing her long involvement in leading the delivery of culturally appropriate health care for Aboriginal communities. We are looking forward to this new chapter of Gidgee Healing and the vision that Cherrie's fresh eyes bring to the organisation.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have a massive impact on service delivery. Keeping our communities safe from the virus is a constant challenge, and our frontline teams have worked hard to stay diligent in responding to the constant changes. Our operations now prioritise contactless services, screening centres and the roll out of vaccines in an effort to protect our communities from this deadly virus.



SERVICES

Gidgee Healing — like many other ACCHOs — continues to be challenged by complex factors that impact our service delivery. Interrelated systemic issues further complicate the problematic sphere of Indigenous and remote health care. We are working with our health care partners and funding bodies to implement and consolidate changes that are desperately needed to improve service delivery.

RESOURCING

Attracting and retaining permanent health care workers in remote communities is one of our biggest challenges to delivering health care. The pressures of COVID further impact the availability of staff as health workers are pulled in to help manage the pandemic in major centres. We are still severely impacted by the volatility of resourcing that is being experienced across the entire health care sector.

As always, we are striving to support and develop our own home grown talent. There are numerous benefits to having locals in our service delivery teams, including:

- Health care for Aboriginal people, by Aboriginal people
- Capacity building for our people
- Reducing our reliance on a non-Aboriginal, FIFO workforce

Minimising cultural risk is still a strong focus for Gidgee, and we continue to educate our clinic staff about safe and appropriate ways to communicate with the people we treat in our communities and clinics.

AGED CARE

The addition of aged care to our portfolio in the last financial year was a departure from our core primary health care services. We were very mindful that venturing into a new area would be a challenge. During the period we have worked with the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care to review our aged care residential services, with the aim of improving quality of care. Leading up to the review, Gidgee's CFO and CEO reported that our aged care services were significantly under-funded. At the time of writing this report, we are in discussions about funding arrangements moving forward.

BURKE STREET CLINIC

At the time of writing, we are finalising a lease agreement for the property at Burke Street on the site of our original clinic. This will enable us to re-open the clinic while we continue to negotiate the purchase of the property. While a number of issues impacted the start of capital works, we are confident that this will progress in the coming period, and we expect to be operational by mid-2023. We are looking forward to Gidgee's Mount Isa primary health care services return to their original home.

HEALTH EQUITY STRATEGY

During the 2021 financial year, we contributed to Queensland Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Framework. The policy was co-designed and jointly written by Queensland Health and QAIHC on behalf of ACCHOs in Queensland.

It is now legislated that every Hospital and Health Service (HHS) across the state will work with First Nations Communities, ACCHOs and other stakeholders to co-develop and co-implement a Health Equity Strategy. The inaugural strategies will be published by 30 September 2022 and an initial three-year implementation cycle will commence.

The North West HHS has drafted a strategy for our region, and we are currently working with other community stakeholders to review and comment.

RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE IN DOOMADGEE

In March 2022, the Queensland Coroner announced an Inquest into the passing of three Doomadgee community members as a result of Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD). We are deeply saddened by the loss of any community member, and we acknowledge the trauma experienced by the Doomadgee community over the loss of their daughters, mothers, sisters, and aunties.

RHD is a preventable disease and is not new in our communities, tragically the only people who die from the disease in Australia are First Nations People. RHD deserves the public spotlight as its management is complex and health impacts wide-reaching. Effective management and prevention go far beyond what our primary health care clinics are resourced to provide.

Gidgee Healing is participating in the Inquest, which commenced in July 2022. As the Inquest continues it is not appropriate for us to comment in any detail, however we look forward to the findings.

MORNINGTON ISLAND

Gidgee Healing has continued to work with the Mornington Island Health Council to implement a Community Controlled model for providing health services. We are working together to form an agreement with the local Health Council and Queensland Health to undertake a staged transition of Community Controlled services. The aim is to work with the Council over the next three years to support capacity building which will be facilitated by the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC).



COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Effective, transparent communication and engagement with our communities is paramount. At our 2021 annual general meeting, we received a clear message from our membership that we must do better at connecting with our communities. We need grass roots engagement. We need to make it easier to contact our clinics. Our practices need to be more patient-centred and culturally safe, so our mob feels protected in a Gidgee clinic.

We take this feedback very seriously and have immediately initiated some changes, which we will continue to build on. This includes a new regular newsletter, and a review of how we conduct our community meetings. We are committed to regular face-to-face engagement and are exploring how to do this in a safe and meaningful way. This will remain an area of focus and priority.

LOOKING FORWARD

While it has been a challenging 12 months, I feel hopeful about moving into the next phase of Gidgee Healing. With new board members and a new CEO at the helm, we have fresh eyes and new ideas to reinvigorate an organisation that is fatigued from fighting a global pandemic and living in fear for our communities. We are still looking forward to returning to Burke Street. And while this hasn't gone to plan, we are pleased with progress and excited about our 'homecoming'

OUR BOARD



Shaun Solomon — Chair

Shaun is a Birri and Ewamian man who has lived in the North West for most his life and has been working in Mount Isa for the past fifteen years. Indigenous Health and Higher Education has been the focus of Shaun’s career, which has enabled him to work closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of North West Queensland. Shaun also sits as a member of the North Queensland Training Network.



Mona Phillips — Deputy Chair to 10 March 2022, Director

Mona is a Jaru/Waanyi woman who has an extensive history of working in and around the Gulf and North-Western Queensland as well as the Northern Territory. Mona’s work experience covered a wide range in social health, including health promotion, alcohol and drug addictions and domestic and family violence. At the age of fifty, Mona gained a Social Science Degree in Aboriginal Community Management & Development. Mona was a founding member and has been on the Gidgee Healing board since 2014. Now retired, Mona is a passionate champion for Aboriginal affairs.



Leann Shaw — Director, Deputy Chair from 10 March 2022 (resigned from the Board 1 July 2022)

Leann is a Nugubu and Wik woman who has a long history of working in various health and social services, including alcohol, together and other drugs and women’s health and issues. Leann is committed to Indigenous rights and ensuring community is supported to achieve better health and wellbeing.



Patricia (Pattie) Lees AM — Director (elected 9 December 2021)

Pattie Lees AM is CEO and long-term board member of Injilinj Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Children and Youth Services. Pattie was previously CEO of West Queensland ATSI Legal Services for 20 years. She has been a resident of Mount Isa since 1976 and is mother of four children, grandmother to twelve and great-grandmother to three. Pattie has vast experience in advocating for and on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at local, state, national and international levels, including as a delegate at several United Nations development forums.



Valerie Craigie — Director (elected 9 December 2021)

Valerie is a Director of the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS) and is active on boards and committees for several Indigenous organisations. She has worked with Yapatjarra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health Services, and with Injilinj Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Children and Youth Services. She has also held positions with ATSIC, Department of Families, Mount Isa College of TAFE, and Tjilpatha Aboriginal Corporation.

Valerie has been involved with the Mt Isa Aboriginal Media Association (MIAMA) since 1997, when she was elected to the Governing Committee, and subsequently appointed to the role of Media Manager in 2005.



Darren Walden — Director

Darren is Waanyi and Gangalidda man with family and cultural links to Doomadgee and other Lower Gulf communities. Darren has lived in and worked in Mt Isa for around thirty years which includes experience with local Native Title Boards and approximately twenty years working directly in the Aboriginal health field. He is a strong advocate for the community.



Patricia Richards — Director

Patricia is a Waluwarra woman from the Georgina River. She is deeply involved with the Mt Isa community and across Gidgee Healing’s service footprint. Patricia volunteers with various sporting organisations, working across remote communities within the Northwest region to build strong relationships and partnerships. One of Patricia’s greatest assets is her community engagement experience.



Alan Nyhuis — Director

Alan Nyhuis has been a Mount Isa local since 2013. With a background in law and social work, he is passionate about using his knowledge and experience to promote Indigenous interests, particularly in the health and wellbeing space. Alan has extensive experience in the community services sector, working with families and young people at risk and in crisis.



Michael Martin OAM — Director (resigned from the Board 9 December 2021)

Michael Martin OAM FCPA was a skill-based Director until 9 December 2021, having been originally appointed in 2013. He was Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and provided financial management leadership to the Board. Michael is committed to Indigenous healthcare. He lives in the Northern Territory where he is active in the healthcare sector and is a member of a number of government boards.



James Cripps — Director

Originating from the Palawa nation, James’s family (Riley) comes from Cape Barren Island, Flinders Island and mainland Tasmania. James came to Mount Isa in 2013, to work with Queensland Health as a senior member of the Mental Health and ATODS team. He joined the board in 2019, bringing a wealth of experience in the prevention and reduction of alcohol and other substance abuse in metropolitan, rural and remote Indigenous communities. James spent a year as Service Manager at the Normanton Recovery Centre and serves on boards and committees of numerous Indigenous advocacy groups.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

I write this report as the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of Gidgee Healing, having commenced in the role after Renee Blackman left the organisation earlier this year. I would like to acknowledge First Nations people of our Northwest catchment in this unique and beautiful part of Queensland, and I pay respects to Elders, past present and future. I also acknowledge Renee and her contribution to Gidgee over her years in this role and wish her every success with ATSICHS. Additionally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Stuart Gordon who assisted the Board as interim CEO prior to my appointment, and we welcome his continuing collaboration with our organisation over the course of this year.

Whilst my time with Gidgee Healing has been relatively brief, I can see the last 12 months have been considerably challenging for the organisation, during a time many rural and remote Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across Australia struggle to return to their pre-COVID-19 business performance and resilience. The current pandemic has tested Boards and management to the limit with unprecedented challenges linked to recruitment and retention of staff and managing the impact of COVID-19 infections on the day-to-day operations of business. The barriers created during the hard border restrictions for interstate travel impacted pointedly on Gidgee's remote operations, particularly in the recruitment and supply of general practitioners and allied health professionals.

Throughout much of 2021-22 our effort focussed on responding to the urgent need to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the northwest had adequate protection against COVID-19 infection through access to vaccinations. Supporting our communities to access immunisation, including education and awareness, was a massive team effort across many agencies. I particularly acknowledge the important partnerships and collaboration between our Gidgee team and the Western Queensland PHN, North West HHS, general practice networks, RFDS and our North West aged care networks in responding to this challenge. Keeping immunisation and COVID-19 support at the forefront of our joint efforts in community will be important in the year ahead.

The complexity of operations for Gidgee increased as our organisation experienced major workforce constraints, particularly in the aged care centres of the Lower Gulf where some continue to be supported with nearly 70% agency locum staffing support. Additionally, Gidgee primary health care services have been significantly impacted by lower recruitment outcomes as Queensland came out of lock-down arrangements. Unfortunately, this has severely constrained our ability to deliver our planned programs and services for communities through the year.

As a result of these impacts, the cost of services has increased dramatically, and the forecast revenues predicted for the year have correspondingly been much lower than expected. With fewer general practitioners and other Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) eligible workforce, Gidgee has not been able to optimise access to MBS funded services as planned, particularly those supporting early intervention, prevention, and management of chronic conditions. Regrettably, the true impact of reduced revenues is that our communities have had decreased access to face-to-face services. With fewer clinical staff, responding to the demands of our clinics and outreach services has been very difficult at times.

Responding to these challenges requires a team effort within Gidgee and across the many primary health care organisations with whom we partner. I would particularly like to acknowledge the significant support provided by the RFDS Queensland, Health Workforce Queensland, Western Queensland PHN and CheckUp, whose supportive networks we greatly appreciate. We are also very fortunate to have access to the James Cook University Murtupuni Centre for Rural and Remote Health, particularly with the strong First Nations leadership at the centre, and we are grateful for their support. The collaborative and supportive engagement with Laura Johnson Village and Injilinj is highly valued, and I know will feature more in the year ahead.

Whilst it has clearly been a very difficult year for Gidgee operations, in my short time here I have already seen so much good work being undertaken every day. It is these important contributions that lay the foundations for the resilience of our organisation and our staff. This is how we will continue to strive to support one another and improve the services we offer our communities. Our organisation is diverse in its operations. This means we need to keep transforming in response to the challenges of providing health care services in very remote community settings, and to seize the opportunities that lie ahead for us.

Gidgee Healing is part of an incredible network of First Nations organisations in the North West. It is important that we balance the need to meet our contractual performance requirements with drawing strength from these important networks. Respectfully collaborating with our partners will advance self-determination and health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living across this region.

Many of the things we are striving to change cannot be achieved without genuine partnerships and meaningful stakeholder support. Providing accessible, affordable, and culturally safe care is a priority for everyone. It requires better integration and coordination of services, activating greater leadership from First Nations organisations, and supporting more authentic engagement with the communities we serve.

The annual report for 2021-22 highlights many factors that have adversely impacted our operations during the year. However, it also presents evidence of achievements by our dedicated staff under very challenging circumstances. It demonstrates the critical service supports that have required extraordinary effort and dedication to maintain essential operating requirements of Gidgee's operations.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the Gidgee Healing Board of Directors and Chairperson Shaun Solomon and thank them for their support and providing me this leadership opportunity. Furthermore, I acknowledge QAIHC and the critical support they have provided through their Business Quality Centre.

We have already commenced a process of change in responding to the many impacts experienced over the last 12 months. This includes the current review underway by the Department of Health and supporting the recommendations that will come from the very important coronial inquest into RHD.

There are multiple opportunities open to Gidgee Healing as we renew our strategic plan in the coming year. We have the opportunity to work together with the Board to strengthen our capacity and reset our organisational aspirations. We have the chance to re-group and harness the many strengths of our Community Controlled Health Organisation. Ultimately, we have the opportunity to positively influence the quality of services to our First Nations communities.

Finally, I will again express my gratitude for the efforts of Gidgee Healing's staff. I know the last 12 months have been difficult. Together we will continue to manage the disruption of COVID-19 to our workplace and operations and communities for the foreseeable future. Most importantly, I want to thank you for your warm welcome and enthusiasm to remain part of our Gidgee team. I look forward to working together into our year ahead with a renewed commitment to ongoing transformation for our organisation and the better health for the communities in which we work.

GOVERNANCE, QUALITY AND RISK

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

EXTERNAL STRUCTURES

Gidgee Healing is a public company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act. Our company operations are regulated by the Australian Securities and Investments Corporation (ASIC). We are also a registered charity, regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Importantly, we are Community Controlled. This means that the community can have a say in how the organisation is governed. Eligible members can participate in general meetings, nominate as candidates for the Board, and serve as Directors.

We maintain financial accounts in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and undertake an external audit each year in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

BOARD

The overall control and oversight of Gidgee Healing is the responsibility of the Board, which sets the strategic direction and performance targets, and monitors progress towards achieving those targets. Operational responsibility for performance is delegated to management, under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer.

The Board is comprised of up to seven Elected Directors chosen by the members, and up to two Skills-Based Directors appointed by the Elected Directors. Each Director brings specific skills and expertise that support the organisation's strategic direction and goals. The Board is well-placed to provide the leadership and governance oversight needed by the organisation.

During the year to 30 June 2022, two new Elected Directors joined the board. Pattie Lees AM and Valerie Craigie were elected by the members at the 2021 AGM. Pattie and Valerie bring extensive business experience and skills to the board table. See 'Our Board' section for more information.

In December 2021, we farewelled Director Michael Martin OAM, who resigned after serving over eight years as a Skill-Based Director, including several years as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. That committee is currently in abeyance and its role and responsibilities are being met by the Board as a whole. We thank Michael for his extensive service and wish him all the best for the future.

On 1 July 2022, we also farewelled Director Leann Shaw after many years as an Elected Director. Leann has moved permanently to the Northern Territory, and so is no longer eligible to serve as an Elected Director. We thank Leann for her dedicated service and wish her all the best for her exciting new chapter of life.

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

Delivering safe and high quality healthcare stems from a clinical governance framework that supports and shapes the organisation to be culturally safe, responsive to community needs and integrated with other complementary service providers. The Gidgee Healing clinical governance framework is central to a commitment of clinical and cultural excellence. Its goals are to:

- Embed First Nations perspectives and encourage cultural advocacy
- Implement a sustainable, quality infrastructure that fosters clinical and cultural excellence
- Harness and manage clinical and cultural knowledge to guide and drive responsive clinical practice
- Monitor, review and improve the framework practices, processes and policies
- Collaborate internally and externally to provide accountability, quality and safety on the journey of wellness

Our framework is based on a matrix model of engagement, with lateral and vertical inputs. It is designed to facilitate inclusive and effective communication. Regular meetings create opportunities for connections between staff and community, broaden understanding of cultural principles that link to best health service delivery and ensure partnerships with mutual respect. The vision is to make clinical governance 'Everyone's Business' and make continuous quality improvement 'Business for Everyone'.

TWELVE MONTH REVIEW

During the period, we conducted a review of our clinical governance framework, which was implemented late in 2020. The evaluation demonstrated an overall actions and solution focus with outcomes showing:

- The framework, with its dynamic systems approach, encouraged compassionate and inclusive leadership
- The lateral conversations, including those with the Cultural advisory group, facilitated improved cultural responsiveness, leading to clinical practice growth and improved decisions for best care
- The framework had pervasive cultural sensitivity and an ability to operate independently, empower participants and alleviate senior leadership of some decision making
- An understanding that the relationship between meaningful engagement and action completions, reduces blame culture tendencies
- Integrating multiple site knowledge was influential in creating greater awareness of common challenges and the responsive nature allowed a granular approach to meaningful change and sustainability
- The internal group meetings created a greater sense of belonging
- The external group meetings created interagency conversations that broke down non-productive entrenched attitudes

The high level of engagement with the framework translated to successful accreditation against three quality standards (ISO 9001:2015, RACGP 5th edition, HSQS). This is testimony to the amazing strength of the organisation's collaborative workforce.

Recommendations from the review include:

- A formal external group for partnering with consumers
- A stronger focus on quality and safety reporting, particularly to the board and the community, including greater oversight of clinical incidents
- Enhanced quality improvement data analysis to reflect a more meaningful view of the health service
- Greater clarity in workforce roles and responsibilities
- More frequent reviews of the complaints management system, with feedback to the board, staff and consumers
- Improved processes for orientation, training, performance review, credentialing and scope of practice management

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The review also identified that Gidgee would benefit from improving our responsiveness and close-out of incidents. An independent incident management review was subsequently undertaken and recommended that we:

- Develop incident management key performance indicators and incident performance review guidelines specific to each business group,
- Further develop our risk assessment criteria for investigating and managing clinical and non-clinical incidents
- Implement incident management training specific to staff and manager roles.

LOOKING FORWARD

The clinical governance framework continues to evolve and respond to our ever-changing operating environment. Its continued success will come from a focus on processes, plus vision and leadership to ensure accountability and transparency. We understand that health and wellbeing in Indigenous communities is made up of land, spirit, mind, body and culture that encompasses both the collective and the individual. This traditional concept focusses on all parts of wellness as a whole, rather than symptoms and illness, doctors and hospitals, medicines and incapacity. We are cognisant of specific cultural nuances across communities, and how community involvement in health can lead best practice.

We walk in two worlds, with love, respect, truth and hope to navigate our shared journey towards a greater understanding that we are one.

Dreaming Together, Stronger Together.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Gidgee Healing upholds a systematic approach to identifying, mitigating and managing risk. Risk management is embedded in all our practices from clinical services through to events and everything in between. We maintain a risk management framework that is regularly updated as new risks are identified. Staff across the organisation continue to track and manage risks on a day-to-day basis under the oversight of the Board.

ACCREDITATION, CERTIFICATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

We maintain a cycle of continuous quality improvement (CQI) for our quality management system, which is embedded in our clinical governance framework.

During the 2022 financial year, we were successful in recertification against both the ISO 9001:2015 quality management systems standard and the Human Services Quality Standards. The ISO 9001:2015 recertification scope includes Primary Health Care Services, Allied Health Services, headspace Youth Mental Health Services, Deadly Choices, Family Wellbeing Services, Nukal Murra and Family Health Services. This year the scope was extended to include certification for the Normanton Recovery and Community Wellbeing Service. The scope of the Human Services Quality Standards includes certification for the Family Wellbeing service in Mount Isa and Normanton.

We were also successful for accreditation against the RACGP 5th edition standards for our primary health care clinics in Mount Isa and Normanton. Our quality management system is facilitated through the Logiqc QMS safety, quality and risk management software developed specifically for the health care sector.

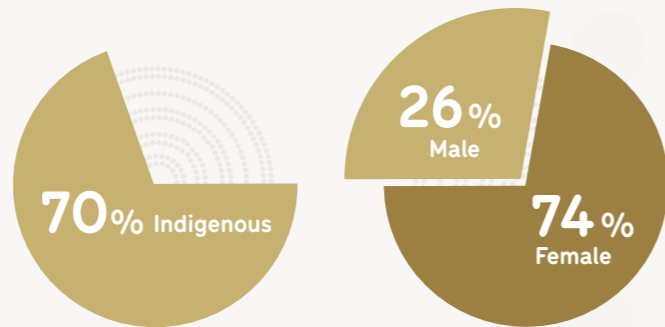
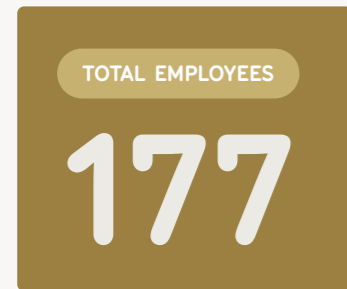
In the next financial year, we expect audits for reaccreditation against the headspace model integrity framework (hMIF version 2) standards for headspace and the aged care quality standards for our residential aged care facilities in the lower gulf.

OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

We work in collaborative relationships with a range of stakeholder groups to deliver the best possible culturally appropriate health care for the Indigenous communities in our region. We are proud to work alongside:

- Local Aboriginal Health Councils
- Traditional Owner groups
- Griffith University
 - Menzies Health Institute Queensland
- Queensland Indigenous Family Legal Services
- headspace
- Local Government
- Injilnji
- Visiting clinicians
- Young People Ahead (YPA)
- Queensland Department of Education
- Local, state, and federal government organisations
- JCU Murtupuni Centre for Rural and Remote Health
- Other non-government organisations aligned to our values

OUR PEOPLE



We continue to evolve our Human Resources team which was formed three years ago. In a period of constant change, there is always new knowledge and skills to be gained. We remain committed to our goal of becoming an Aboriginal Employer of Choice and having 75% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in our workforce. Our whole Human Resources team identifies as Indigenous.

SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

Having the right systems, processes, and procedures in place to support our people to be the best they be in their role remains a priority. We want our people to have the tools to do their job effectively, safely, and consistently.

EMPLOYEE SELF-SERVICE SYSTEM

During the 2020-21 period, we commenced a project to implement an employee self-service portal using Enable HR cloud-based software. Unfortunately, the initiative faced some technical challenges which have been ongoing during the 2021-22 year. At the time of writing, the system is still not live, however, we plan to persist with the software implementation as it will increase efficiency and empower employees to drive their own record management. It will also support our recruitment and workplace relations functions.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In response to continued positive feedback, we have continued with Assure as Gidgee's EAP provider. Our people report that the program provides responsive in-person support, even in our remote communities, which is of great benefit. The program has psychologists and counsellors based in Mount Isa and offers face-to-face consultations across the entire Gidgee footprint, as well as telephone, video and text-based services. They also provide specialist Indigenous support.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting our people to learn and develop their professional skills and knowledge has always been a priority for Gidgee. A key driver of our goal to become an Aboriginal employer of choice is to offer career paths to First Nations peoples, supported by grass roots training and education. Encouraging and nurturing our people to grow in their roles is integral to our training model as we continue to mature our mentoring program and work on building cultural competency.

During 2022, Gidgee employees undertook the following training and professional development.

CLINICAL

- Clinical Psychology Supervisor Training
- ADOS Training
- Kalka Healing Suicide Prevention
- Case Management
- Occupational Therapy Conference
- 2022 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference
- West Morton Public Health – IROC/ICOP Co-design Workshop
- Lead Infection Control – Australian College of Nursing
- NDIS training

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

- Certificate III Business Administration (Medical) – in progress

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

- First Aid
- CPR
- Manual handling
- Emergency Evacuation
- WHS Awareness
- Fire Safety
- Indigenous Mental Health First Aid
- Kidsafe Child Restraint Training

PROFESSIONAL

- Certificate III in ATSI Primary Health
- Certificate IV in ATSI Primary Health
- Certificate III in Individual Support (Aging)

OUR CONVERSATIONS

our conversations — with mob, with community, with staff, government and funders — are essential for leading and effecting change in Indigenous health.

Telling people who we are, what we do, and how we operate — in ways that are meaningful and resonate — is fundamental to achieving our strategic goals. We must talk to the right people about the right things in the right ways at the right time.

OUR COMMUNICATION GOALS

Gidgee's communication objectives are tied to our values and strategic goals. We want our conversations to build awareness, knowledge, and trust. We want them to facilitate capacity building and increase health literacy in our communities and educate mainstream health about culturally appropriate care. And we want our partners and funders to understand what we are doing to meet our obligations as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service.

Over the last year, our communication goals have been to:

- **Increase community engagement**
We have done this through events, social media, our website, a newly implemented newsletter and in-clinic activities.
- **Increase awareness of what we do**
Our awareness campaigns have leveraged engagement activities to share information about services, achievements, and good news stories.
- **Strengthen relationships with partners and stakeholders**
We work with our partners across the healthcare sector to collaborate on events, programs and initiatives
- **Build internal communication and engagement with our staff**
Tools like weekly 'Message Stick' internal newsletter and regular email messages from leaders have helped to keep our people informed.



WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE SAY IT



PATIENTS

We communicate with our patients — current and future — about how Gidgee provides culturally appropriate preventative primary health care. Our conversations are framed in language that is plain, clear and relatable. We also provide links to practitioners who provide services outside our remit.

Conversations with patients include content like:

- services
- booking appointments
- clinic locations
- contact details
- operating hours
- transport arrangements
- medication dispensar
- outreach clinics

We communicate through channels such as:

- social media
- website
- posters and flyers in clinic
- education events
- monthly newsletter
- community outreach



COMMUNITY

Our conversations across the communities we serve are carefully curated by staff in each location who have community connections and are attuned to local culture. Local context makes sure messages resonate with their intended audience.

We communicate with community through channels such as:

- social media
- website
- events
- community outreach
- informal conversations



STAFF

Our people are our greatest asset. Engagement with staff is vital for a coherent and healthy organisation so they have the tools and information to do their jobs, and feel valued, respected, consulted, and celebrated.

The cultural knowledge and connections that Gidgee staff have within community are vital to our services. Word of mouth is one of the most effective means of communication and engagement.

Activities that support our internal conversations include:

- weekly Message Stick internal newsletter
- high-frequency emails
- Intranet
- Team meetings and daily stand-ups
- Social media focussing on staff profiles



PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND FUNDING BODIES

Our work is enriched by our relationships with partners, stakeholders and funding bodies. We collaborate with community health councils, allied health providers, government agencies, and NGOs across the healthcare sector.

These conversations are facilitated through:

- direct email (EDM)
- social media
- online meetings
- media releases
- monthly newsletter
- quarterly reporting as required



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

Our external engagement activities and events are essential to increase awareness of Gidgee Healing and the services on offer. They highlight Gidgee's points of difference as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service, providing culturally appropriate care. Modes and means of engagement include:

- community events
- media releases
- education sessions in clinics, schools and community
- radio interviews
- social media
- monthly newsletter

During the 2021–22 financial year, we have led or partnered with others on a range of activities, promotions and community events. Highlights include:

JUNE 2021

Clinic Open Day – Pioneer Clinic
Education around Bowel Education Month
Mabo Day
Mount Isa Show

JULY 2021

Dry July
NAIDOC Week
Corporate Women's Breakfast
NAIDOC March & Mob FM Family Fun Day
Elders Luncheon
Flag Raising & Lowering Ceremonies
Local basketball competitions
Jamaylia Topsey Harry Lunch
YPA Car Park Fun Day
MICC partnered event
Boulia Camel Races

AUGUST 2021

Tradies National Health Month
Mount Isa Street Parade
Mount Isa Rodeo
Doomadgee Rodeo
Great Northern Clean Up

SEPTEMBER 2021

Blue September
International Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
Rheumatic Heart Disease Ball

OCTOBER 2021

Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Anxiety & Depression Awareness Month
Pink Ribbon Breakfast
World Mental Health Day

NOVEMBER 2021

World Diabetes Day
White Ribbon Day
Movember
Lung Cancer Awareness Month
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

DECEMBER 2021

Community Christmas Party
GH Christmas Party

JANUARY 2022

Back to School Health Checks –
in and around all clinic footprints

FEBRUARY 2022

Back to School – Honeyeater's Picnic
Back to School events –
Doomadgee, Mornington Island
FastFeb (headspace led)

MARCH 2022

Close the Gap morning tea
Community Meeting & Opening of Burke St

APRIL 2022

Executive BBQ Breakfast – Mt Isa
Youth Week (headspace led)
ANZAC Day

MAY 2022

Flu Vaccination Drive
National Sorry Day
Reconciliation Week
Burketown SC Mental Health & Wellbeing Week
Executive BBQ – Normanton
Executive BBQ – Doomadgee
Community Consultation –
Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Normanton

JUNE 2022

QPS Reconciliation Week Touch Football Day
Executive BBQ – Mornington Island
Community Meeting – Mornington Island



OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Gidgee Healing's primary health services are predominantly funded by the Department of Health and Queensland Health. We provide a range of culturally appropriate primary health care services to support the health and wellbeing of our patients and their families in Mount Isa, Normanton, Doomadgee and Mornington Island. Our team includes Aboriginal health workers, General Practitioners, registered nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, visiting medical specialists and support workers.

Our services include:

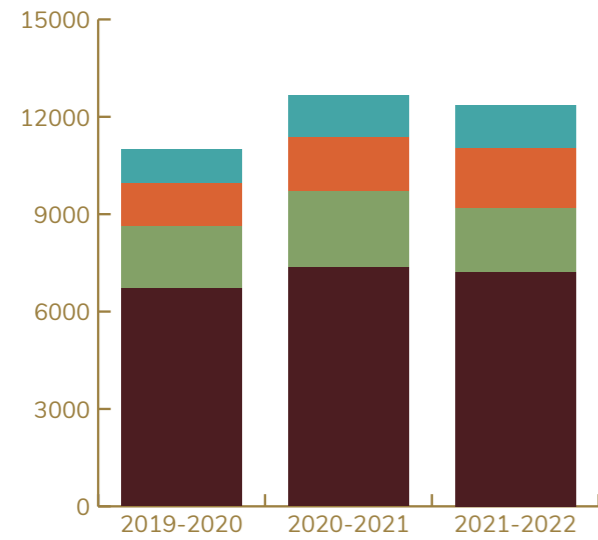
- Health Checks
- Wound care and chronic wound care management
- Chronic Disease Management
- Healthy lifestyle promotion and education
- Maternal and Child Health
- Pharmacy services
- Women's Health
- Visiting Medical Specialists
- Men's Health
- Home Visits
- Sexual Health
- Transport to and from appointments
- Vaccinations and immunisations

To cater to differing needs, Gidgee offers consultations by appointment and 'walk-ins'. The transport service is vital to providing primary health care, ensuring that patients can get to their scheduled appointments and home again safely.

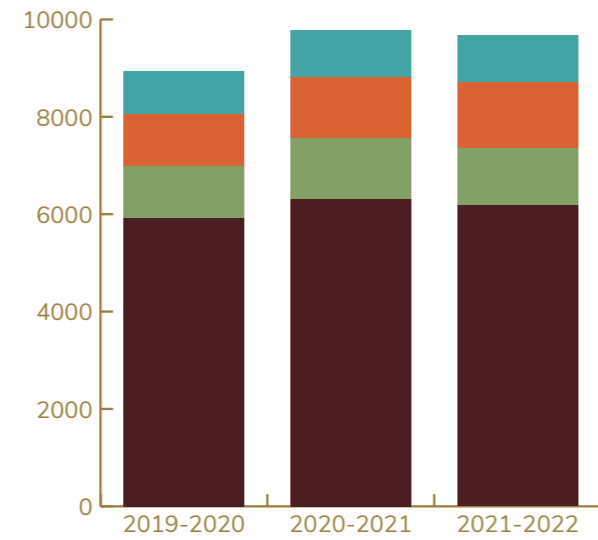
The effects of COVID-19 have challenged us to consider how we can deliver health services differently and provided opportunities to explore options for virtual appointments like telehealth. We have continued to grow this capability to help manage the delivery of health services in regional and remote communities.

Managing chronic disease is a crucial part of Gidgee Healing's primary health care service. Significant work has been done to strengthen the connection between GP, pharmacy and allied health to integrate management of chronic diseases. We have stepped up our multi-disciplinary collaboration on case conferencing, medication reviews and referrals to provide chronic disease patients across clinics, allied health, aged care facilities and home visits seamless wrap-around care.

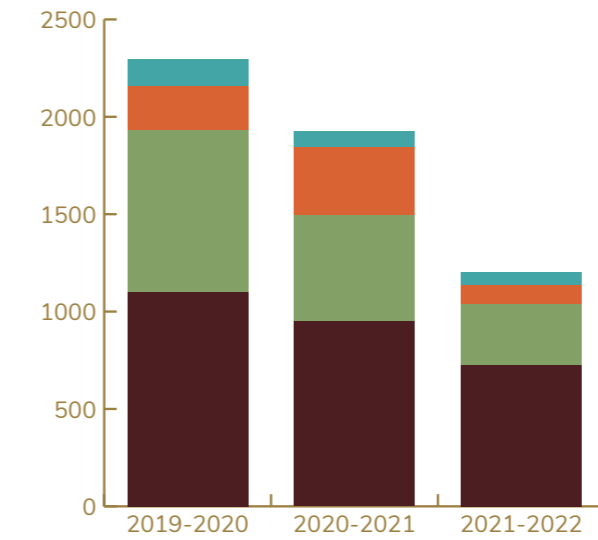
TOTAL PATIENTS



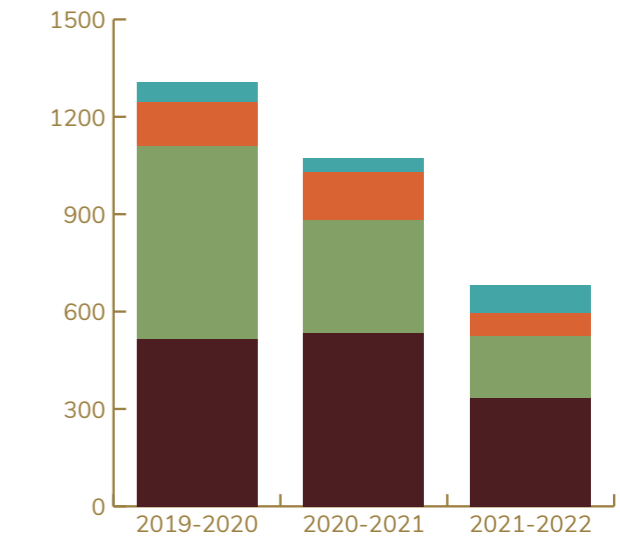
TOTAL FIRST NATIONS PATIENTS



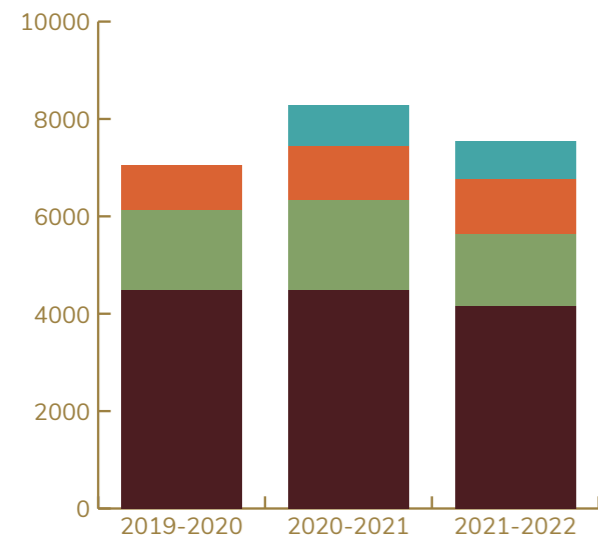
NUMBER OF HEALTH CHECKS



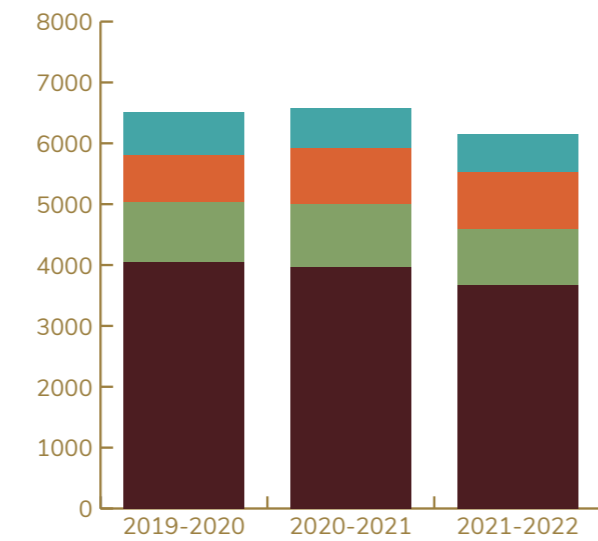
NUMBER OF GP MANAGEMENT PLANS COMPLETED



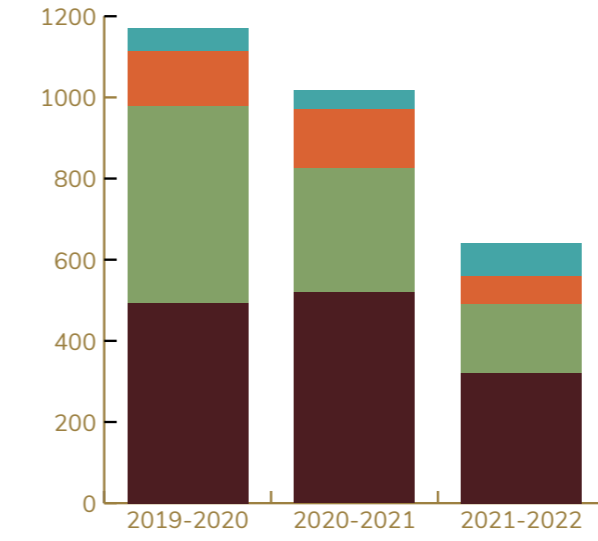
TOTAL ACTIVE PATIENTS



TOTAL FIRST NATIONS ACTIVE PATIENTS



NUMBER OF TEAM CARE ARRANGEMENTS



FLU VACCINES DATA (DATA ACROSS THE FOOTPRINT):

	TOTAL VACCINES	TOTAL VACCINE 50+ YRS
2019-20	177	32
2020-21	451	244
2021-22	698	395

TELEHEALTH DATA

LOCATION	NO. OCCASIONS OF SERVICE
Mount Isa	2273
Doomadgee	116
Mornington Island	133
Normanton	408
Total	2930



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINICS

Our priority for all our clinics continues to be strengthening primary health care services that are clinically and culturally safe, and that will last into the future. We remain true to our vision of providing holistic, integrated care and have made good headway towards a more streamlined approach, which we continue to evolve.

Our primary health care clinics have always had a strong focus on physical health. We are working towards embedding a care model that values social and emotional wellbeing equally with physical aspects, and smoothly integrates all elements of services.



MOUNT ISA

Sometimes referred to as the 'oasis of the outback', Mount Isa stands on Kalkadoon Country – the origin of some of the most fierce and organised resistance to settlement and colonisation. The Kalkadoon people have a long history of being strong, resilient and powerful – qualities we see in this mob every day.

The region is known for its rich mineral deposits. The resultant mining activity and local agriculture attracts people from all walks of life – from other traditional nation groups and a range of international origins. Mount Isa is a diverse multicultural melting pot of culture and industry.

HIGHLIGHTS

In a year of considerable change and challenges, it's important to acknowledge our achievements along the way. Some of the highlights for the Mount Isa primary health care clinic for 2022 include:

- Recruiting a Coordinator of Outreach Services to better support community access to specialist clinics and visiting services at all sites.
- Resuming our full range of services as pandemic restrictions eased.
- Implementing a dedicated Diabetes Aboriginal Health Worker role in partnership with Diabetes Australia to help support our Mount Isa community to manage diabetes.
- Rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations which were well received and had a high uptake by community. This included Gidgee's Deadly Night Out COVID event which encourage community to come out and get jabbed. The event was run in partnership with Deadly Choices and Virgin Australia and other local stakeholders.

CHALLENGES

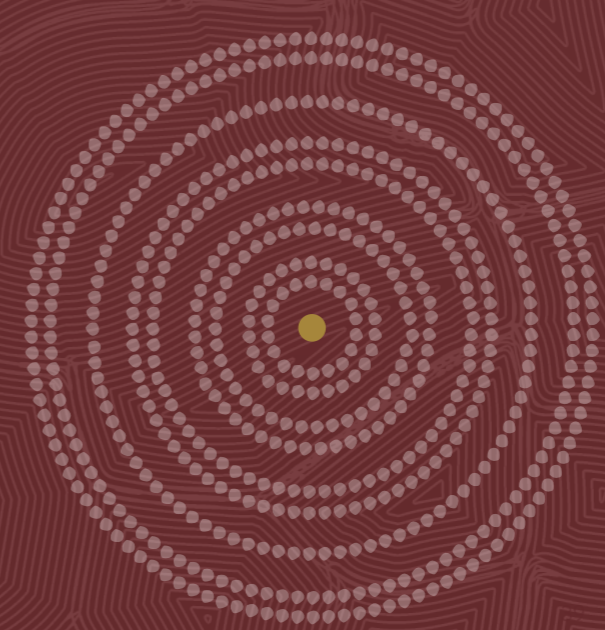
The most significant challenges to our ability to provide culturally appropriate health care during 2021-22 have been related to resourcing. The shortage of healthcare workers, which has impacts across the whole country, is felt particularly keenly in remote and rural communities. GPs are a scarce resource nationally and even internationally, and it is difficult to recruit Aboriginal Health Workers.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our future plans for Mount Isa Primary Health Care clinic include the recruitment of trainee Aboriginal Health Workers. As an integral part of caring for our communities, we look forward to investing in these resources to expand their skills base and the scope of the care they can provide.

A further goal for the upcoming year is to place a greater emphasis on engagement through health promotion and education events to support people in the community to improve their health literacy.

MOUNT ISA CHRONIC DISEASE	NO. FIRST NATIONS PATIENTS		
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Top 6 Chronic Disease			
1. Hypertension	649	721	827
2. Hyperlipidaemia	636	671	757
3. Diabetes	597	636	665
4. Mental Health	429	423	507
5. Chronic kidney disease	410	426	444
6. Renal Impairment	410	429	441
No. of patients with 2+ chronic diseases	777	841	820
Number of patients taking 5+ medications	839	995	1008
No. of patients 8 + medication	461	536	538
No. of patients current Care Plans	1495	406	340





NORMANTON

Normanton is home to a resilient community of First Nations people. The area is predominantly a pastoralist region and nearby Delta Downs is the largest station in Queensland to be 100% owned and operated by the Traditional Owners. The local community has an extremely close connection to country and tradition, actively using bush foods and traditional medicine in their daily lives. Gidgee Healing respects and supports First Nations Peoples to combine traditional and contemporary methods of managing their health.

Widely regarded as the hub of the Gulf, Normanton offers a range of services and provides a base for communities across the Gulf Country. Although there is often a high volume of tourist traffic going through the township on the way to explore the beautiful saltwater country, Normanton remains a tight-knit community with strong social connections.

HIGHLIGHTS

With the limited availability of health care resources across the country, we are very pleased to have engaged regular GPs in Normanton for the rest of the 2022 calendar year. Three doctors will be in the Normanton community on a fly-in-fly-out basis, and while they may not all be present at the same time, we are delighted to be able to provide some continuity of service.

The Normanton primary health care team worked with the local PHN to deliver COVID vaccinations and boosters to the Normanton community. The vaccination clinics were conducted quarterly throughout the year.

This year we stepped up our community education about RHD prevention and management in the Normanton community. We also worked with partners like Queensland Health to implement more rigorous processes around regular bicillin injections. Working together with community and our health care partners has resulted in improved compliance in delivering this important preventative medication.

As we continue to adapt and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are improving our processes and procedures to be more culturally appropriate. This year our in-clinic processes are more patient-centred, requesting patients to self-report when they present to the clinic. Anyone with symptoms is re-directed to a dedicated testing area outside the clinic, rather than being sent to the hospital.

CHALLENGES

COVID-19 restrictions impacted on our diabetes cycle of care clinics this year. The clinics are dependent on coordinating GP and allied health staff like podiatrists and dieticians. The combination of gathering restrictions, travel constraints and the limited availability of practitioners meant that we were unable to conduct any diabetes clinics during the reporting period.

The nationwide scarcity of health industry professionals has had significant impacts to Normanton's primary health care services, including:

- Extreme difficulty recruiting GPs and finding locums
- Unable to conduct school health checks
- Unable to secure sufficient mental health care professionals
- High staff turnover

The high turnover of staff also presents challenges to providing adequate cultural awareness training.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are keen to ramp up professional development and communication and engagement activities in Normanton during the upcoming period.

Our plans include:

- Improved communication processes with the Normanton hospital, including more streamlined information sharing and collaboration to provide a united front to community.
- More training and support to staff for professional and career development
- Incorporating cultural awareness training in all staff onboarding, including agency staff
- Upskilling community health workers to decrease dependence on temporary and casual FIFO staff and deliver health care for community by community
- Reinstating diabetes clinics and school checks after the hiatus due to COVID-19
- Increasing community engagement activities like social gatherings, yarning circles, and men's and women's groups

NORMANTON CHRONIC DISEASE

NO. FIRST NATIONS PATIENTS

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Top 6 Chronic Disease			
1. Hypertension	203	210	209
2. Hyperlipidaemia	199	202	200
3. Diabetes	178	188	184
4. Mental Health	99	102	103
5. Respiratory	81	110	104
6. Renal Impairment	81	86	85
No. of patients 2 + chronic diseases	216	225	231
No. of patients taking 5+ medications	225	243	244
No. of patients taking 8+ medication	124	134	132
No. of patients on care plans	391	61	179



DOOMADGEE

The Aboriginal community of Doomadgee is closely connected and passionate about their land and traditional culture. Traditional food and medicines feature strongly in the daily life of the Doomadgee community and Elders are eager to pass on the history and knowledge of their heritage to younger generations.

HIGHLIGHTS

It's been satisfying to have two Aboriginal Health Workers join us in the latter half of the reporting period. It has been quite some time that we have had the benefit of health workers from within community. Both will embark upon their Certificate IV in Health Care Practice in the new financial year.

With health care resources so difficult to attract and retain in our regional communities, we have been grateful to collaborate with Queensland Health who has supported the delivery of bicillin injections in community and in the hospital.

This year we have had staff with the expertise to conduct echocardiograms on site in the Doomadgee primary health care clinic. Previously the testing has been performed in Mount Isa, and the travel can pose a barrier to people attending their appointments. Being able to attend testing locally makes it easier for people to get to their appointments, and therefore more likely to attend.

We are looking forward to adding an extension to the current clinic, with plans being finalised at the time of writing. The renovation will provide much needed space for storage. We anticipate that the plans will be submitted to council for approval earlier in the 2022-23 financial year. The construction will be completed without impacting the running of the clinic.

A new practice manager was engaged early in the reporting period. It has been of great benefit to appoint a local from within the Gidgee organisation, with her knowledge and connection in community being invaluable to the delivery of health care.

CHALLENGES

Compliance with the monthly bicillin regimen is particularly challenging with young children, due to the injection being quite an unpleasant experience. We are hopeful that the upcoming appointment of a Care Coordinator will free up capacity to do home visits for the injections. This will simplify the process for parents and provide some comfort to kids with the familiarity of their home surroundings.

Motivating patients to be proactive about preventive health care, follow-up appointments, treatment regimens and specialist consults is an ongoing challenge. There are a number of factors contributing to this problem, including:

- **Health literacy** — there is still some work to be done in educating community about their health, treatments and understanding the impacts of their health behaviours.
- **Travelling long distances for specialist appointments** — the logistics of travelling to see specialists can be tricky. At times appointment letters are received with little time for preparation.
- **Inconsistent staffing** — the resourcing difficulties being experienced across the health care sector often mean that patients don't have a regular practitioner and have to re-tell their history repeatedly to each new person, which can be traumatic. There isn't an opportunity to build a rapport with a trusted health adviser.
- **No local pharmacy** — pharmacy medications and supplies are shipped from Mount Isa, which can result in supply issues if not ordered in a timely fashion.

Like our sister clinics, resourcing continues to be a constant challenge. It is difficult to find suitable people to provide culturally appropriate primary health care to the Doomadgee community.

LOOKING AHEAD

Resourcing is high on the agenda for the next period. At the time of writing, we are in the process of recruiting a care coordinator, community liaison officer and male health worker. Our goal is to have our full complement of 12 positions filled by the end of the next financial year.

Another goal, which will be enabled by achieving our recruitment objectives, is to step up our home visit services. We plan to have our care coordinator, a registered nurse, and either the community liaison officer or an Aboriginal Health Worker team up to go out into community to deliver various services, including injections, pathology collection and skin checks.

We are keen to upskill our new staff to be able to do regular ear health checks for kids in-between visits from Deadly Ears. We hope to be able to work with our partner organisation to train our people in the requisite skills to provide referrals to an ear-nose-throat specialist.

Increasing child immunisation numbers in our community is another key goal for the upcoming financial year, which we hope will be enabled by having additional resources.

DOOMADGEE CHRONIC DISEASE

NO. FIRST NATIONS PATIENTS

	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21
Top 6 Chronic Disease			
1. Diabetes	161	189	192
2. Hypertension	124	136	135
3. Renal Impairment	117	121	109
4. Chronic kidney disease	117	121	109
5. Hyperlipidaemia	88	111	108
6. Mental Health	37	61	66
No. patients with 2+ chronic diseases	168	191	187
No. patients taking 5+ medication	205	305	255
No. patients taking 8+ medication	107	155	135
No. patients on care plans	249	122	67



MORNINGTON ISLAND

The community of Mornington Island is passionate about their health and is highly engaged in having input to the services available to support their wellbeing. The Mornington Island Health Council is dedicated to collaborating on the delivery of care.

Traditional culture is rich and strong here and is firmly ingrained in everyday life, with regular activities run in school and through the arts centre. Mornington Island is a fusion of cultures. From the Lardil people – the traditional custodians – to the Yangkaal and Kaiadilt people, the Gangalidda people and the many visitors and workers, Mornington Island is a diverse community.

HIGHLIGHTS

We were thrilled to appoint a new practice manager at the Mornington Island primary health care clinic in May 2022. Living in community, she is well-placed to make connections and build relationships with locals, the hospital, Health Council, and other key stakeholders. Joining the dots with families, school teachers, other health care providers helps facilitate the best possible health outcomes for community. In the two months since coming on board, we have seen the following changes:

- Higher attendance at outreach clinics such as podiatry, paediatrics, child and family health, diabetes education, renal health, etc. We believe this is due – at least in part – to implementing systems that remove barriers to attending, such as delivering appointment and reminder letters and providing transport.

- More consistent clinic hours, which is now open all day, five days per week. This also maximises the time our FIFO practitioners are with us.
- More local people employed in the clinic.
- Meeting bicillin injection KPIs, with some patients now requesting it proactively.
- Close collaboration with the Mornington Island Health Council to ensure maximum attendance at specialist clinics.

After a long hiatus, we recently had a visit from a Queensland Health mental health team to administer depot injections, conduct metabolic monitoring, and do welfare checks. The team was able to connect with all mental health patients on the island.

CHALLENGES

Resourcing remains an issue across the board for the entire health industry. On Mornington Island we are challenged by difficulties attracting local staff and finding accommodation for locums and other short term placements. Resourcing challenges are further compounded by telehealth appointments being unappealing to community. Face-to-face consults are most culturally appropriate, so there is reluctance to engage in telehealth as an alternative when medical staff are not available on the island.

Food security is a huge issue on the island, with fresh food being very expensive and in short supply. This makes it challenging for people to manage health concerns through healthy eating. The remote nature of the island also makes it challenging to access medication and other medical services like x-rays, ultrasounds, MRIs, CT, and other radiology services. Outreach services are restricted by access and accommodation and are often only available for half a day.

Observation of local Sorry Business practices can have significant impacts on continuity of service, especially for visiting specialists and specialist outreach clinics.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our plans for the Mornington Island primary health care clinic during the next period, are to get back to basics. Our goals include:

- Having GPs regularly in attendance in the clinic
- Promoting primary health care as preventative, rather than reactive care
- Increasing the health literacy of patients through awareness and education campaigns

We know that when we have GP regularly in attendance, there are fewer presentations at the hospital emergency department. We are eager to empower the community to take control of their own health outcomes.

MORNINGTON ISLAND CHRONIC DISEASE

NO. FIRST NATIONS PATIENTS

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Top 6 Chronic Disease			
1. Renal Impairment	137	132	130
2. Chronic kidney disease	136	131	129
3. Diabetes	135	135	140
4. Hypertension	131	129	116
5. Hyperlipidaemia	87	88	89
6. Mental Health	40	34	39
<hr/>			
No. patients with 2+ chronic diseases	168	168	165
No. patients 5+ medications	129	134	173
No. patient 8+ medications	87	97	96
No. patients on care plans	242	42	80



COVID-19

As we continue to navigate the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gidgee has been working hard to remain agile and responsive to shifting demands, ensuring we keep our communities safe. We continue to work collaboratively with hospital and health services, local councils, health councils, and other partner organisations in response to the pandemic, and through the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Our Mount Isa Primary Health Care team has been part of the COVID-19 vaccine roll out, providing vaccines to community members. This has required the collective effort of clinical and non-clinical staff to ensure safe, efficient delivery of vaccines that is in line with State and Federal requirements.



1430 TOTAL VACCINES DELIVERED

466
TOTAL VACCINE
50+ YRS

847
FIRST
NATIONS

369
FIRST
NATIONS 50+

ALLIED HEALTH

Gidgee's Allied Health services help our patients manage chronic disease, injury, and illness, and promote early intervention and prevention. This multidisciplinary team includes Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Dietetics, Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Mental health Nurse, Psychology, Exercise Physiology and Optometry. The Allied Health team is based in Mount Isa and provides outreach services in Burketown, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, and Normanton.

ALLIED HEALTH OUTREACH SERVICES

Location	Number of Visits	Patients Seen	First Nations Patients
Burketown	9	56	56
Doomadgee	27	357	191
Mornington Island	26	410	167
Doomadgee	27	1109	92
Mount Isa	-	2444	722

BE WELL LEARN WELL

Be Well Learn Well is a Queensland Department of Education program funded by CheckUP. Through this program the Allied Health team identifies the learning and social development needs of First Nations and non-Indigenous kids in remote Queensland schools. It supports children from pre-prep to year 12, providing early intervention and health promotion. Gidgee Healing has been contracted to deliver this program in Doomadgee and Mornington Island State Schools.

Delivery of this model in the school, as opposed to a clinical setting is central to the implementation and allows for an integrated workforce of education and health professionals to respond in a holistic and timely way to the risk factors influencing child development and schooling outcomes.

The program supports students' developmental needs through the delivery of targeted psychology, clinical psychology, occupational therapy and speech pathology services to identify and treat behavioural and learning issues.

Therapy	Location	Visits	Patients	First Nation Patients
Occupational Therapy	Mornington Island	3	23	20
Psychology	Mornington Island	-	-	-
Clinical Psychology	Mornington Island	-	-	-
Speech Pathology	Mornington Island	4	28	18
Occupational Therapy	Doomadgee	7	81	81
Psychology	Doomadgee	-	-	-
Clinical Psychology	Doomadgee	1	15	15
Speech Pathology	Doomadgee	7	63	63



EYE HEALTH

Our eye health program is funded by CheckUp Australia under the Visiting Optometry Scheme (VOS). It provides optometry services to improve the detection of eye disease and ensure appropriate treatment and management for people living in rural and remote locations.

The program aims to:

- Increase the availability of optometry services in areas of identified need
- Improve the coordination of and integration of eye health services and the quality of ongoing patient care
- Enhance communication between visiting optometrists, local health professionals and other visiting health professionals

With the permanent optometrist roles created in our team last year, we now have additional resources to help make optometry services more available. It also reduces our reliance on visiting specialists and helps us provide better continuity of service and consistency of practitioners. This enables patients to have ongoing access to comprehensive eye health services, and saves them retelling their history to a new practitioner each time.

The eye health team provides vision testing, fitting and supply of spectacles, and retinal photography. As part of vision testing, patients are also screened for essential eye health conditions including cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy.

Eye health also links with other services like the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) and Nukal Murra to help patients to cover the cost of spectacles, which can be an obstacle to accessing service.

Location	Patient Numbers
Burketown	42
Doomadgee	185
Mornington Island	119
Mount Isa	300
Normanton	251
TOTAL	897

ENHANCED SYPHILIS RESPONSE

The Enhanced Syphilis Response program addresses infectious syphilis in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in the North West and Lower Gulf. Working with the Mount Isa Sexual Health Clinic, we aim to deliver a long-term response to syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections and blood borne viruses, with the goal of reducing rates to a low level.

The program aims to test 70% of the target population – 14-35 year olds – twice annually. It also provides treatment, follow-up care, contact tracing, and education. We manage appointments, maintain a register for treatment history and collect and record data for monitoring. Gidgee is working with partner organisations like North West Hospital and Health Service, Public Health Unit and local health services in each community.

Most of the targeted age group attend Gidgee Healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health checks and – if they consent – are referred for STI checks. While happy to complete a health check, many clients prefer to have their STI check at the local community sexual health clinic. Clients fear that they will run into family members whilst attending the Gidgee Healing clinic for an STI check, causing shame and embarrassment. This is not a new challenge in remote communities. We collaborate with the local community sexual health to better understand numbers from the target group who are presenting at those clinics. There may be some overlap between screenings, but data privacy restricts us from determining this.

	Doomadgee	Mornington Island	Normanton	Mount Isa
Population in targeted age group	276	179	285	1223
No. in target group referred for STI checks with Gidgee	9	4	25	72
No. screened at community sexual health clinic	111	85	Not reported	Not reported

NUKAL MURRA

Nukal Murra is an integrated team care service. It supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with complex chronic disease better manage their conditions through access to one-on-one assistance from a care coordinator. Care coordinators manage care plans with health service providers. Nukal Murra is funded by the Western Queensland Primary Health network.

COVID-19 restrictions continued to impact our ability to provide a face-to-face service with our Nukal Murra clients. However, we have facilitated a range of virtual options for our clients as needed, to ensure patients stay connected with essential health services.

Services outside of Gidgee Healing can refer patients to Nukal Murra to access support. The program is delivered in Mount Isa, Burketown, Cloncurry, Dajarra, Julia Creek and Leichardt and provides the following support and service to clients:

- Care coordination
- Supplementary services
- Clinical services access
- Allied health and specialist services

of 240 total referrals to Nukal Murra, 194 came from Gidgee Healing for supports and services such as:

- Blood sugar monitors
- Transport
- Spectacles
- Breathing assistance equipment
- Footwear
- Mobility aids
- Dose aids
- Medical aids

FUTURE FOCUS

The 2022 financial year has been a period of deep reflection in the primary health care space. Gidgee Healing is committed to continual quality improvement to ensure that patients receive the best possible care that is safe and culturally appropriate. We continue to amplify our efforts to practise a health care model that integrates allied health, pharmacy, Nukal Murra and family health as part of primary health. This integration simplifies and accelerates referrals to other services and ensures patients accessing multiple services have consistent and streamlined care.

The 2020 closure of the Burke Street Clinic has affected our services and the Mount Isa community. We have been working hard to return to Burke Street plan to re-open the Burke Street Clinic late in the near future.

FAMILY HEALTH

The Family Health team is based in Mount Isa and regularly outreaches to the Mornington Island and Doomadgee communities. The multidisciplinary Family Health team is made up of Aboriginal health workers and practitioners, cultural liaison officers, nurses, general practitioners, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and clinical psychologists.

Family Health supports children aged 0-17 years and their families to access culturally safe primary health care led by Aboriginal health workers. Their journey begins with a comprehensive tiered health assessment that holistically explores whether a child's health and development is 'on track'. If there are any concerns that they may not be tracking as expected, the multidisciplinary team supports the child and family with relevant, timely and culturally safe support, assessment and intervention. Our Dreamtime Story 'You are You and I Love You', written by Dr Marjad Page and illustrated by Aunty Shirley Dawson, and the associated Tracking Cube help families conceptualise Family Health support pathways in a meaningful and culturally relevant way.

TIERED ASSESSMENT

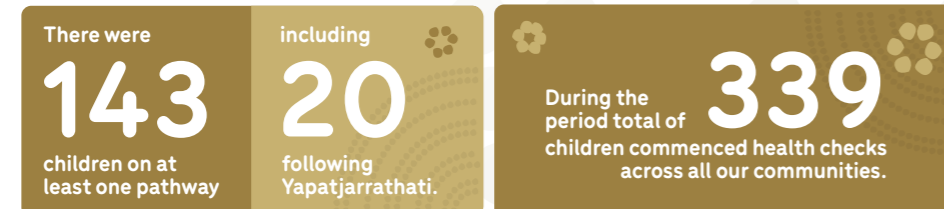
Our tiered assessment (well child health check) has now been running for around four years in Mount Isa and has become the cornerstone of Gidgee Healing's Family Health services. It shapes the health journey of our young patients, beginning with a comprehensive health check, which includes assessments for a range of neurodevelopment concerns including autism, ADHD, and FASD. The tiered assessment helps us understand how a child is tracking with their health and developmental milestones and determine what level of support and ongoing intervention may be needed.

The team uses the Tracking Cube to work through each step, or tier of the assessment :

1. Informed Consent
2. History Taking
3. Rapid Neurodevelopmental Assessment (RNDA)
4. Information Gathering
5. Support and Feedback
6. Comprehensive assessment

There are five support pathways which may be indicated through the tiered assessment:

1. **GREAT Ways** – a social and emotional cultural program which connects with culture as a way to access health
2. **Follow You, Follow Me** – Things are going okay but we need to review every year for an annual health check to ensure things continue to track well
3. **Is Serious** – serious medical concerns
4. **No Muckin' Around** – other developmental concerns
5. **Yapatjarrathati** – Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) pathway.



YAPATJARRATHATI PROJECT

We have continued working with Griffith University on the ground-breaking Yapatjarrathati project. Initially designed to assess and support children with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), this project has widened to include all neurodevelopmental concerns. Funded by the Department of Health, this co-created program delivers culturally appropriate, flexible solutions to assessing child health and neurodevelopment.

The Yapatjarrathati Project has received grant funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to extend its reach and work alongside Queensland Health services to validate the pathways with Gidgee.

LOWER GULF OUTREACH

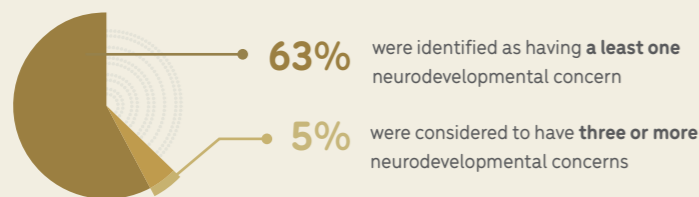
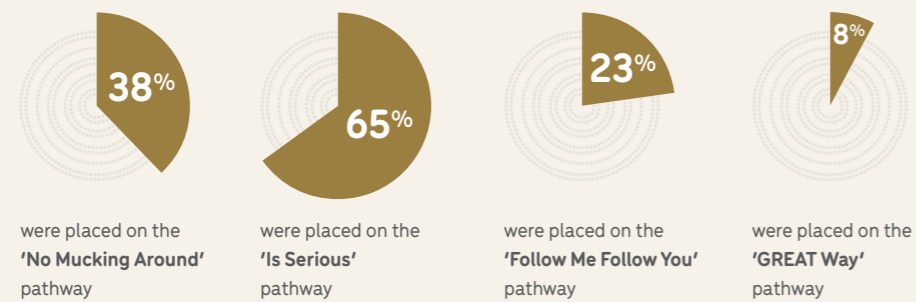
This outreach initiative supports families in our Lower Gulf communities by providing preventative, early intervention and clinical child and family health services. The services can be flexibly delivered through primary health care clinics, schools, home visits and community events.

In January 2022, we implemented the tiered assessment using the 'Tracking Cube' as the preferred health assessment framework for children aged 0-17 years in Mornington Island and Doomadgee. The assessments include:

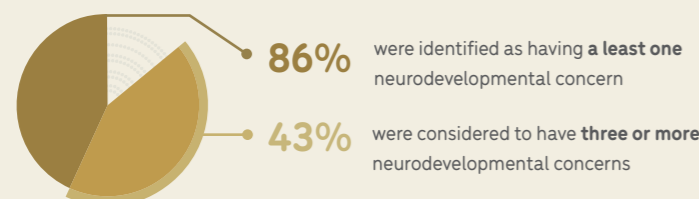
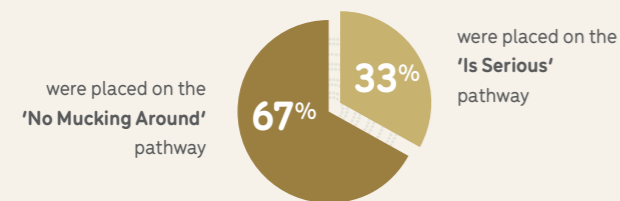
- Immunisations
- Child health and parenting education
- School readiness education
- Assessments for a range of neurodevelopmental concerns including autism, ADHD, and FASD
- Care coordination and referrals
- Healthy skin check
- Occupational therapy and speech therapy
- Ear health

Since January 2022, 52 children commenced health checks in Doomadgee and 24 in Mornington Island. The checks include:

Of the 52 children in Doomadgee who had a health check:



Of the 24 children in Mornington Island who had a health check:



HEALTHY SKIN PROJECT

The Healthy Skin Project delivers community based prevention, early detection and treatment of pathogens causing skin infections across the Gidgee Healing footprint. It provides support, education and resources within schools, community organisations and within the clinic. The program has continued to work with schools, in conjunction with home visits to educate and provide treatments for nits, scabies, and ringworm. This program aims to support and educate people about the importance of healthy skin and its links to Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) and health.

The program's goals are to:

- Increase access to opportunistic screening for at risk client groups, particularly primary school aged children, including contact tracing and providing support and education for clients and families requiring ongoing treatments and follow-up.
- Improve the prevention, education and early detection of skin infections by developing community relevant information and local education strategies aimed at healthy hygiene in the home, school and community settings
- Improve the responsiveness of the health system by providing a range of educational and training activities to patients, families and the health workforce in rural and remote settings
- Reduce the current burden of disease associated with skin related infections experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

HEALTHY SKIN CHECKS

Schools	Children Screened	Home Visits & Skin Care Education
Townview State School	276	137
Central State School	47	-
Happy Valley State School	52	-
Ngukuthati	11	-
Sunset State School	0	-
Special School	0	-
Brilla Brilla Community Centre	9	-
Community	7	-
Serenity House	-	5

WOMB PROJECT (MOUNT ISA)

The Women's action for Mums and Bubs (WOMB) project is an initiative of James Cook University, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Its purpose is to bring together First Nations women to share their stories around pregnancy and birth, with the aim of improving maternal and child health care and outcomes.

In 2022 Gidgee's Family Health team was fortunate to be named as a partner site for the project. At the time of writing, we are still in the planning phase, with one of our Aboriginal health practitioners working to establish a local group, and incentives for participation.



STRENGTHENING HEALTH ASSESSMENT PATHWAYS

The Strengthening Health Assessment Pathways for children and young people in care initiative is a Queensland-wide project aimed at improving Child Safety and Health sector responses to the health needs of children and young people in care. Established by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (CYJMA), the initiative leverages the Primary Health Network to engage, consult and raise awareness with general practitioners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services and other health and allied health practitioners.

As the initiative’s nominated ACCHO in the Mount Isa catchment area, Gidgee Healing is collaborating with the Western Queensland PHN and CYJMA to streamline referral pathways for children in care to access health assessments at Gidgee. Our goal is to embed our health assessment pathways into standard processes and practices for Child Safety staff and other health professionals, care agencies, carers and educators to ensure children in care don’t miss out on health care and support as they navigate through the system.

LEAD ALLIANCE

The lead Alliance is a Mount Isa community initiative that works to raise awareness of lead health risks and protection measures with locals. Since 2020, Gidgee Healing has partnered with the Lead Alliance to provide point of care testing as part of our Family Health program to support lead health assessment. Children are tested for lead levels as part of their regular health assessments. During the 2021-22 financial year, 51 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were tested.

HEARING AND EAR HEALTH

HEARING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM—EARLY EARS (HAPEE)

Gidgee Healing is working together with Hearing Australia to deliver HAPEE, which screens First Nation Children aged 0–6 years for hearing loss. The collaboration dovetails with Queensland Health’s Deadly Ears program that specialises in middle ear health. Any kids found to have middle ear pathology at a HAPEE screening are referred to Deadly Ears for a review with an ear, nose and throat specialist. The Hearing Australia audiologist also provides monthly professional development opportunities for Gidgee staff around hearing and ear health including screening, theory, use of machines, resources, education.

DEADLY EARS

Regular Deadly Ears clinics recommenced during the year, after a hiatus during initial COVID-19 restrictions. They are especially well-attended in Mornington Island, where the local Health Council has a dedicated person to champion Deadly Ears. The Council coordinates the clinic, organises transport and collaborates with Gidgee Healing’s Family Health team to coordinate a health check at the same time. At a Deadly Ears clinic early in 2022, there was a 100% attendance rate, with children also accessing their health check at the same time. This was a significant win for engaging children in a specialist clinic as well as a consistent primary health care.

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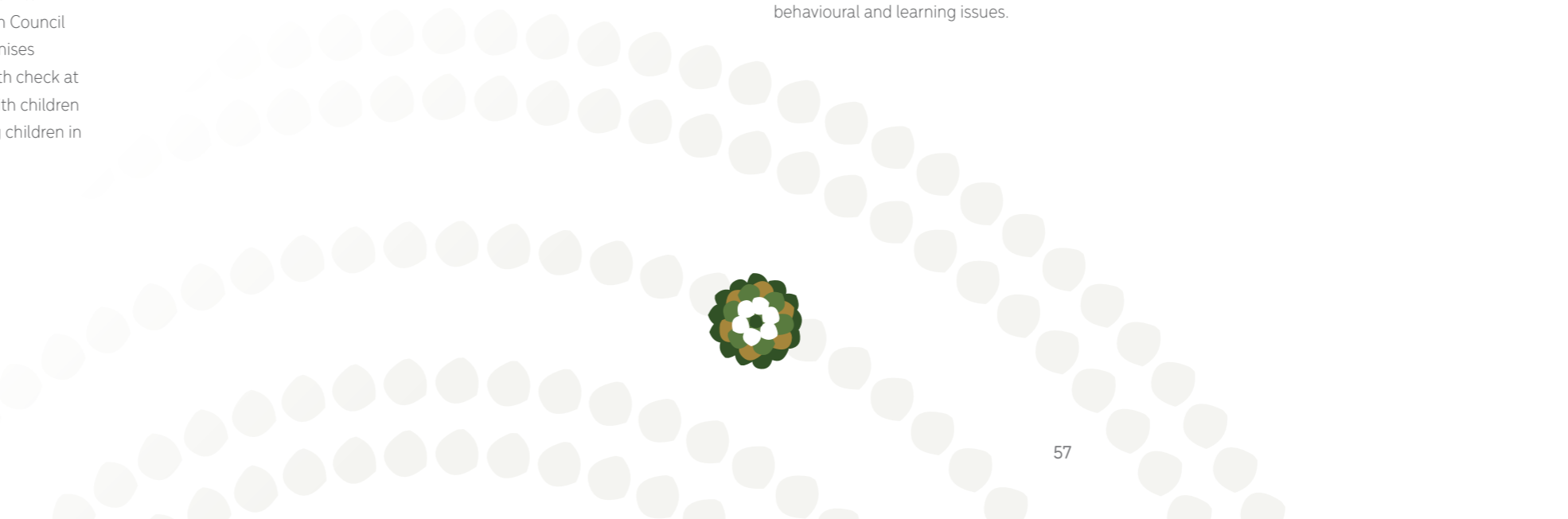
Hearing Provider	Doomadgee	Mornington Island	Mount Isa
Deadly Ears	-	76	-
Hearing Australia - HAPEE	18	29	70

BE WELL LEARN WELL

The Be Well Learn Well initiative now sits within the remit of our Family Health Team. It is a Queensland Department of Education program funded by CheckUP. Through this program, we identify learning and social development needs of First Nations and non-Indigenous kids in remote Queensland schools. It supports children from pre-prep to year 12, providing early intervention and health promotion. Gidgee Healing has been contracted to deliver this program in Doomadgee and Mornington Island State Schools.

The program delivers occupational therapy, speech pathology and psychology in the school, rather than a clinical setting. This allows for an integrated workforce of education and health professionals to respond in a holistic and timely way to the risk factors influencing child development and schooling outcomes.

The program supports students’ developmental needs through by delivering targeted psychology, clinical psychology, occupational therapy and speech pathology services to identify and treat behavioural and learning issues.





SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

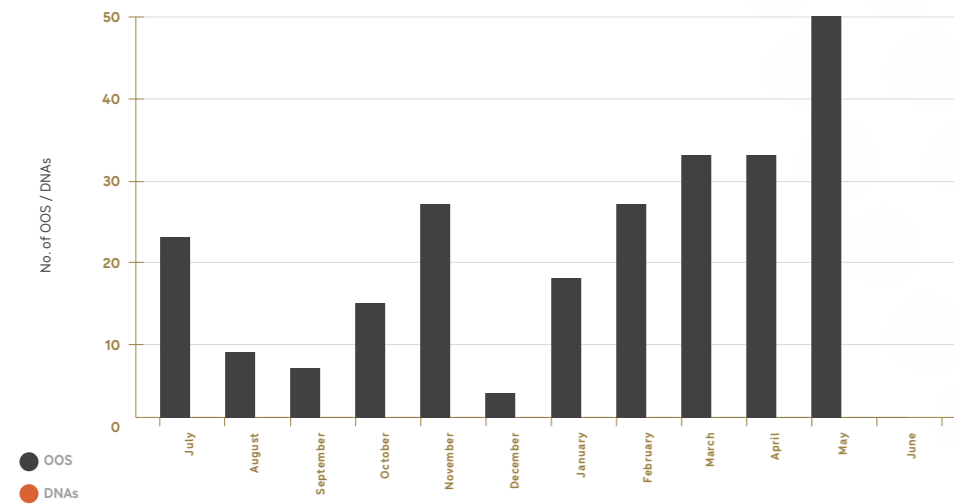
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Gidgee Healing’s Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Program is dedicated to bolstering the social and emotional wellbeing of our communities and supporting clients to feel connected to culture and mob through cultural activities and special events. It takes a grass roots approach to working with our people in community to help them get the right support at the right time, by the right person.

The program supports our clients to access culturally safe services and navigate social and emotional challenges like mental health, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, disability, housing, and domestic violence. We can connect our clients with a range of counselling and advisory services, and culturally specific events or programs. A SEWB worker can provide further support by attending appointments with the client, providing transport, general support during the appointment, and ensuring a culturally appropriate service is provided by all stakeholders.

During the 2022 financial year, the SEWB team was pleased to welcome two new full time local staff members and an Indigenous psychologist who visits on a fortnightly basis to provide cultural and clinical supervision. Our local practitioners are well-credentialed and highly respected in their local community of Mount Isa. Their training and experience includes social and emotional wellbeing, mental health support and Aboriginal suicide prevention. Our new psychologist specialises in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the areas of mental health, social and emotional well-being, community safety promotion, trauma, grief, loss, family and domestic violence.

These additional resources have allowed us to gain momentum with service delivery not only in Mount Isa, but in the Mornington Island community as well. It’s been great to see the steady increase occasions of service since our new team members started in January 2022.



The Gidgee Healing SEWB strategy has been developed in consultation with the communities in which we work. It is based on eight domains of social and emotional wellbeing which overlap, depending on individual needs at a given point in time. This model is based on the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023.



FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE

The Family Wellbeing Service provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with access to culturally responsive support to help with their social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. It also supports parents to build capacity to safely care for and protect their children. The service supports children, young people and families living in Mount Isa, the Lower Gulf and other communities of the North West Queensland Region.

Funded by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, the service works with families across the North West and Lower Gulf region, providing holistic case management and therapeutic support. There is a strong focus on the overall health and wellbeing of families and integrating across all Gidgee Healing's Primary Health and Human Services programs. The service assists families and communities to access supports and resources that are reflective of community and family strengths and that meet specific needs of communities.

The Family Wellbeing Service works with children and young people and their families across the child protection continuum from early intervention through to reunification.

During the 2022 financial year, we have worked hard to progress the ongoing promotion and sustainability of the program, with families being 'front and centre' of our work. The Family Wellbeing Service has concentrated on enhancing service delivery and practices to strengthen the existing 'family centric model of care' and tailoring support services to be flexible and compatible with each family's unique needs.

Key areas of focus for the period were:

- Availability and access to early intervention supports and health care for families and communities.
- Increased promotion of 'family-led decision-making' to support all families to have a voice in decisions that are made for their children and families.
- Streamlining internal and external referral pathways and access to support.
- Strengthening relationships and networks with families, communities and government and non-government services in communities.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2022

- Commencement of outreach and support services in Doomadgee.
- Continued expansion of our men's groups in Mount Isa. To date ten local agencies support and host men's group events on a regular basis. Participant numbers are increasing and at times there are over 50 males attending events.
- We facilitated the inaugural men's group event in Normanton, which are now a regular occurrence. It was held in partnership with Gidgee Healing's Normanton Recovery Centre and local support services.
- Four 'Youth and Family Connecting' Events were held during the year in Mount Isa, Normanton, Doomadgee and Burketown.
- Wellesley and Gidgee Healing's Mount Isa Suicide Prevention Network.

YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM INITIATIVE

The Family Wellbeing Service's Indigenous Youth and Family program is funded by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs under their Youth Justice Strategy. The initiative is explicitly focused on addressing family factors associated with young people offending. We engage family members as well as working with the young person.

Our Indigenous Youth and Family Workers — one in Mount Isa and one in Normanton — respond to families where children and young people are at risk of entering, or are already in contact with, the Youth Justice system. Indigenous Youth and Family Workers may develop specific strategies for connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including involvement in broader community youth responses. In these circumstances there may be a period of engagement with young people before the worker establishes connections with their family.

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HEADSPACE

Gidgee Healing is the lead agency for headspace in Mount Isa. The service provides free, high quality, early intervention health services for young people aged 12–25, who need help with mental, physical, and sexual health. headspace also delivers vocational support, plus information and education about alcohol and other drugs.

We are the only service in the region that delivers a holistic suite of youth focussed services under one roof. All members of the headspace Mount Isa team are trained youth specialists who work to engage, support, and empower young people to increase resilience and improve the health and wellbeing of our young people. We are also the only headspace centre in Queensland that sits within the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation model.

INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT

Our Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program continues to gain traction and mature. Offered in 24 headspace centres across Australia, IPS is part of the Australian Government's Youth Employment Strategy to tackle high youth unemployment and improve the educational and employment outcomes for young people with mental illness. The program began as a trial in early 2017 and we are delighted that funding has been extended to June 2024.

IPS supports young people to gain employment and undertake meaningful vocational activities. The model is the most researched strengths-based approach to supported employment, and incorporates eight core principles:

- Focus on competitive employment
- Eligibility based on individual's choice
- Integration of mental health and employment services
- Attention to client preferences
- Work incentives planning
- Rapid job search
- Systematic job development
- Individualised job supports

During the reporting period, a total of 42 young people received a direct service from the IPS program, which is just below the national average of 42.9. Of these, 62% identified as Indigenous.

POST-GRADUATE STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Headspace Mount Isa hosted placements for two students studying Master of Social Work and Master of Psychology. We regularly host allied health student placements as a contribution to increasing Allied Health staff in the North West.

GRADUATE PROGRAM

The headspace graduate placement program offers graduates access to a two-year comprehensive youth mental health training and development program. The program includes discipline-specific clinical supervision as well as 40 days of funded professional training. It also incorporates opportunities for First Nations allied health graduates to engage in a graduate program designed for them. Our participation in the program provides us with an additional resource and the opportunity to provide firsthand clinical experience of providing culturally safe and responsive support in a remote location.

MODERATED ONLINE SOCIAL THERAPY (MOST)

This year we were nominated as a pilot site for MOST, a digital platform for young people aged 12–25 years. MOST is the first digital mental health platform to offer continuous, integrated face-to-face and digital care to young people. It provides online access to evidence-based therapy and clinical support that includes tailored online therapy, tools and programs guided by clinicians, peer workers and career consultants. Young people can access clinicians, peer workers, and even employment experts and have access to a safe network of young people. MOST is now implemented and offered as an option for young people in Mount Isa.

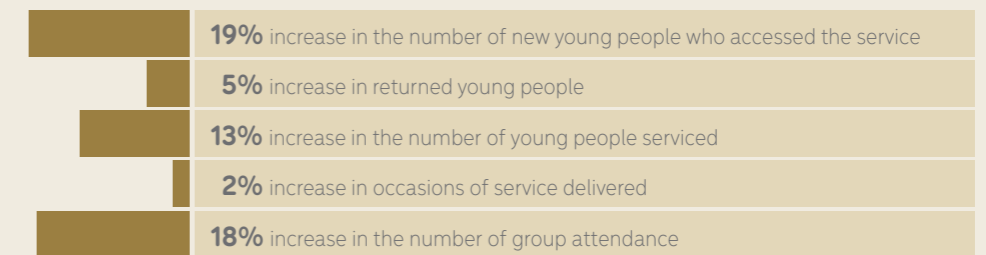
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE HEADSPACE PROGRAM

headspace Mount Isa featured as a case study site in the national evaluation of headspace. The evaluation aims to provide an understanding of the appropriateness, effectiveness, and outcomes of the national headspace program to inform future policy decisions about how headspace is implemented. The outcome of this evaluation will be released soon.

The process was conducted over a period of almost two years and involved interviews with the Gidgee Healing staff, headspace staff, stakeholders, and the Youth Reference Group.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Key indicators and occasions of service compared to 2021



EVENTS AND ENAGEMENT

Headspace Day – led by the Youth Reference Group to raise awareness of small things that can support mental health and how to recognise when things might not be ok.

Hit the Hill with headspace – for Queensland Mental Health Week, which was themed 'take time – for mental health'. The event was funded by a Mental Health Commission funding grant.

Take a Step – the headspace mental health campaign aims to empower young First Nations Peoples to take charge of their social and emotional wellbeing. Funding through this campaign supported us to work with the local Youth Hub to bring ninja Jack Wilson to Mount Isa to spread a positive message about the importance of mental health and physical health

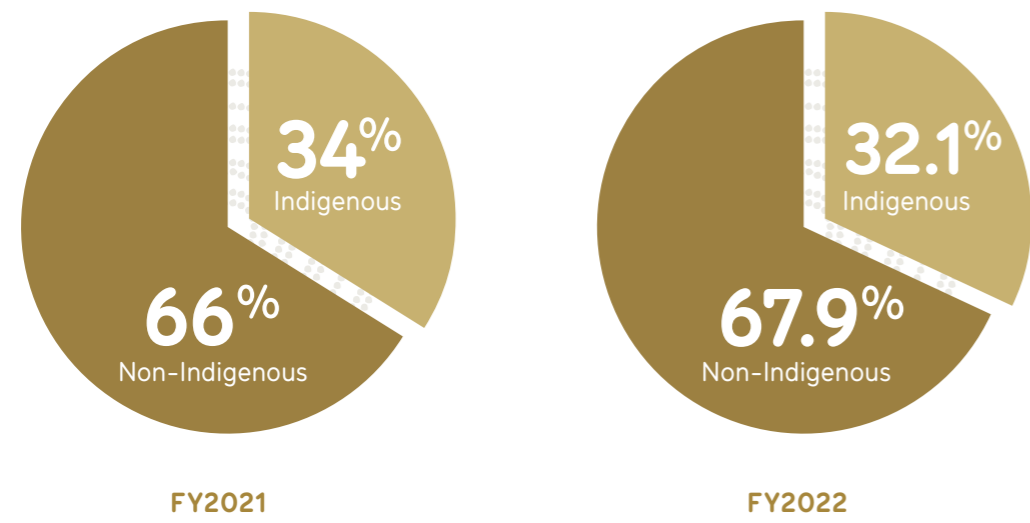
COVID-19 vaccination clinics – headspace supported the clinics by organising activities for children and young people and providing coffee and tea

Closing the Gap morning tea – held on site and well-attended by partner organisations and Gidgee employees.

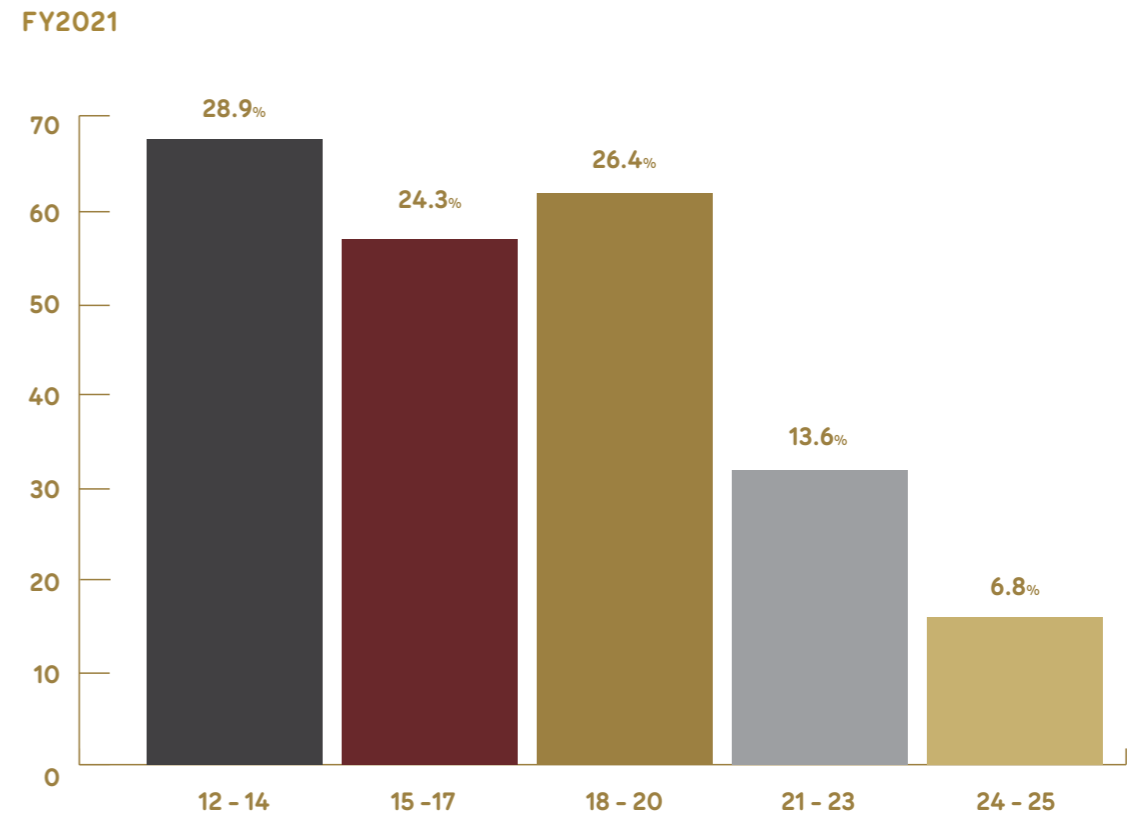
NAIDOC Week march – headspace staff attended the march, provided hot drinks and hosted a 'cabbage stew cook-off' which was very popular and attended by over 100 families.

WE ARE ALSO THE ONLY HEADSPACE CENTRE IN QUEENSLAND THAT SITS WITHIN THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED HEALTH ORGANISATION MODEL.

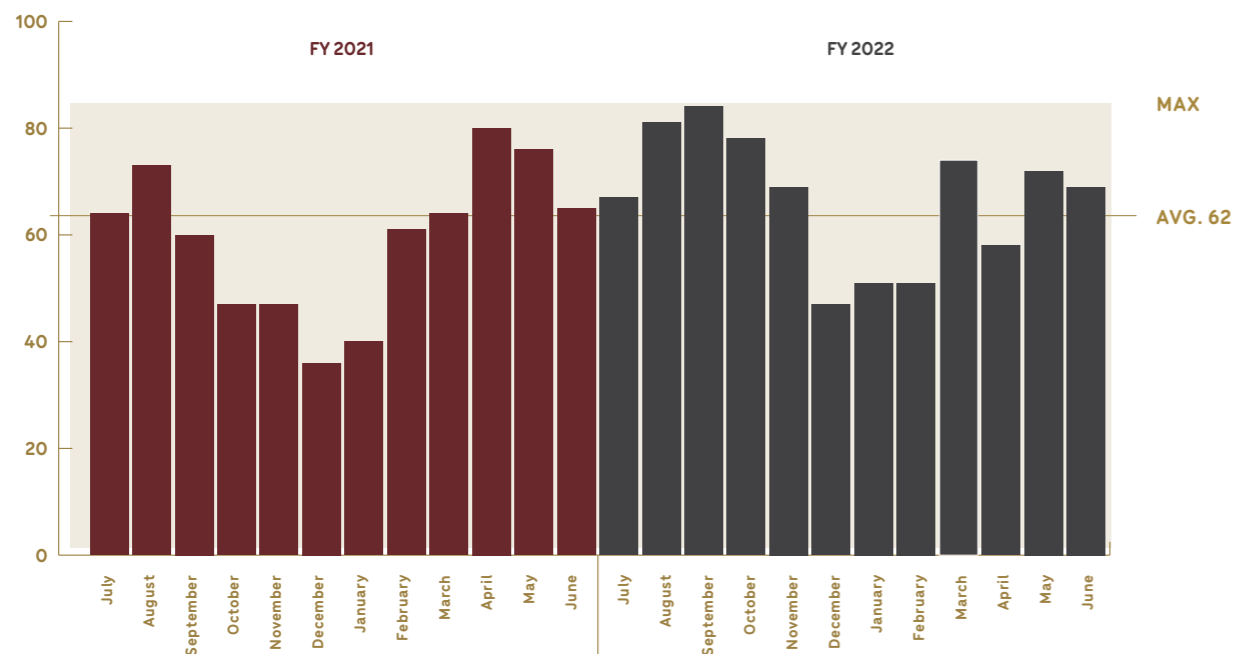
NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS WHO ACCESSED A SERVICE



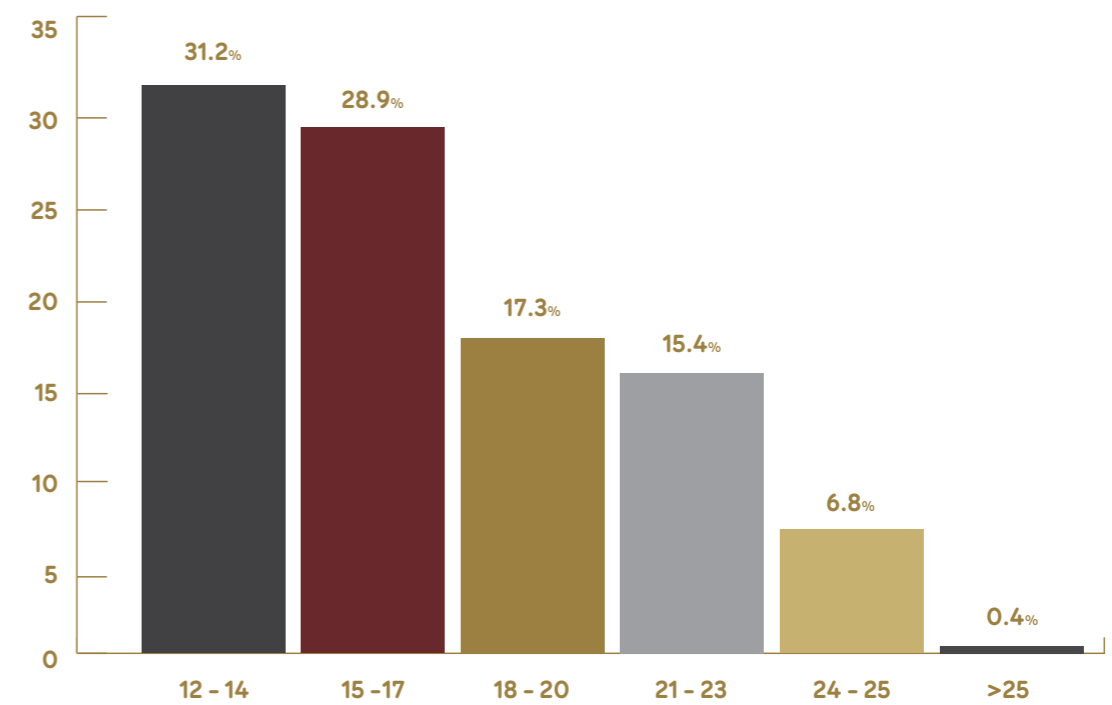
YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICED BY AGE



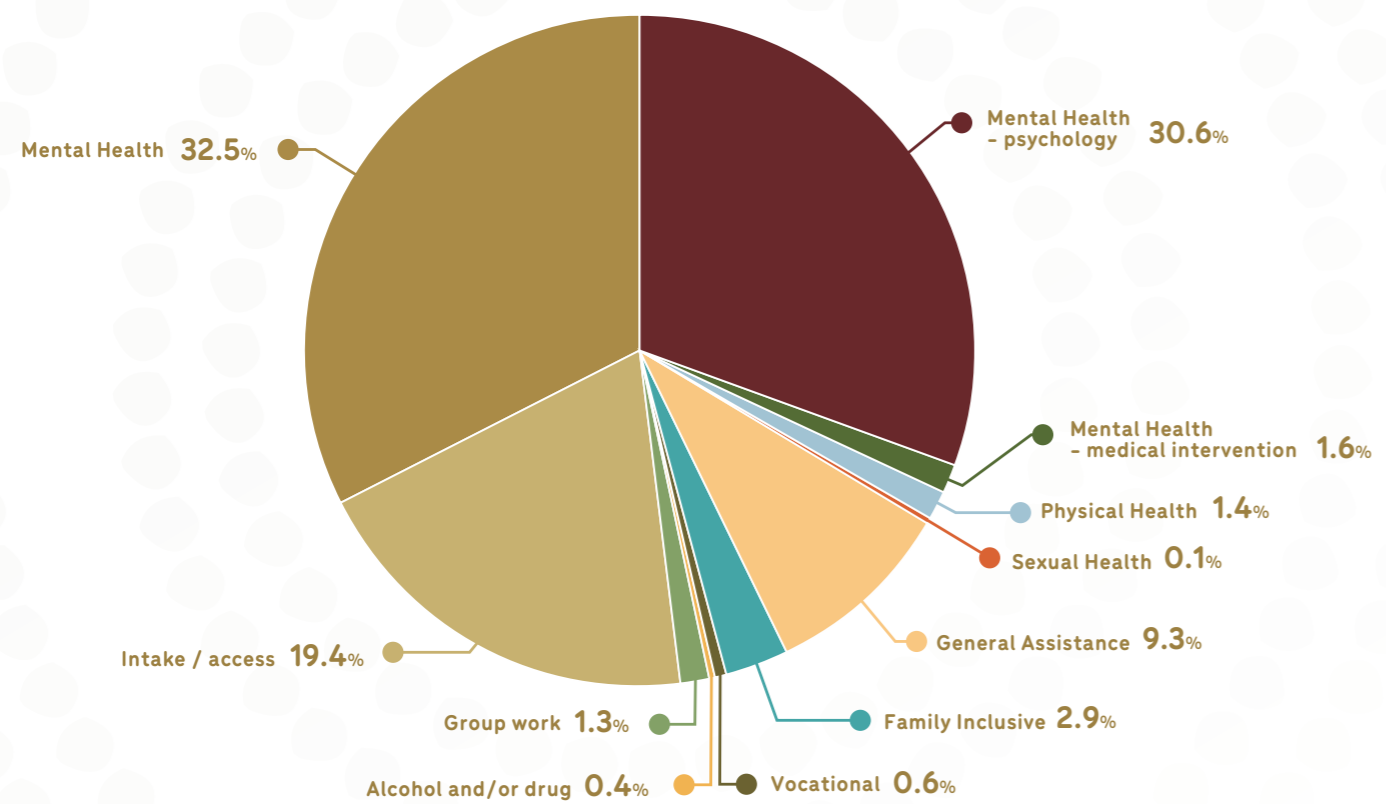
NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED A SERVICE AT HEADSPACE MOUNT ISA EACH MONTH



FY2022



NATURE OF SERVICES



AGED CARE AND RESIDENTIAL CARE

AGED CARE SERVICES

Aged care is a new service area for Gidgee Healing, having taken on management of the facilities in January 2021. We manage three residential facilities in the Lower Gulf – Kukatja Place in Normanton, Kuba Natha Hostel on Mornington Island and Ngooderi House in Doomadgee.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Gidgee Healing's aged care services aim to improve quality and access to flexible, culturally safe aged care services for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people close to their homes and communities. Services are provided to residents in the facilities and to patients in their homes.

Food from Meals on Wheels is provided in community, with meals available for approximately 50 community members who live in Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Normanton.

HIGHLIGHTS

Service delivery

We have worked hard to lift the standard of service delivery in our aged care facilities. Some of the improvements implemented during the period include:

- Fostering opportunities to connect with culture and community by facilitating residents to attend cultural activities and events and visiting family in their community and arranging cultural events in facilities.
- Modifying meal menus based on feedback from survey responses.
- Streamlining integrated care with Gidgee Healing primary health care and social and emotional wellbeing programs.
- Purchasing new vehicles to transport aged care residents.
- Ensuring infection prevention measures to manage COVID-19 in residential facilities, working with the Public Health Unit, Aged Care and Quality Commission, and Department of Health.

Workforce

Resourcing in remote communities is a constant challenge. Over the last 12 months we worked to develop and grow our aged care workforce by:

- Providing ongoing professional development in aged care and disability for local staff to cement their skills and qualifications.
- Conducting ongoing recruitment in an effort to fill all vacancies.
- Engaging long term permanent managers on site at each facility to improve consistency of service and care.

Quality and governance

As part of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program, we are committed to the Aged Care Quality Standards, which reflect the level of care and services the community can expect from aged care facilities. In our efforts to meet or exceed these standards we have completed the following quality and clinical governance related activities:

- Joined Leading Aged Services Australia (LASA) to access best practice resources and advice for providing quality clinical and personal care. The aged care team participates in the LASA members advisory committee to raise emerging issues, strategic challenges and opportunities within the aged care sector.
- Implemented a COVID-19 vaccine program within the facilities and supported external agencies with COVID 19 vaccination programs in private home residences.
- Engaged a specialist to educate staff and residents about the Aged Care Quality Standards and work with us towards accreditation.
- Implemented Gidgee's clinical governance framework.
- Conducted an independent audit of incident management reviews.
- Implemented specialist aged care pharmacy management for all aged care facilities and in-home residents.
- Monitoring service delivery across the facilities to maintain consistency of care.
- Joined the dementia program within Project ECHO to collaborate and gain specialist, culturally appropriate dementia care resources and support. Participation in the program earns CPD points for our practitioners.

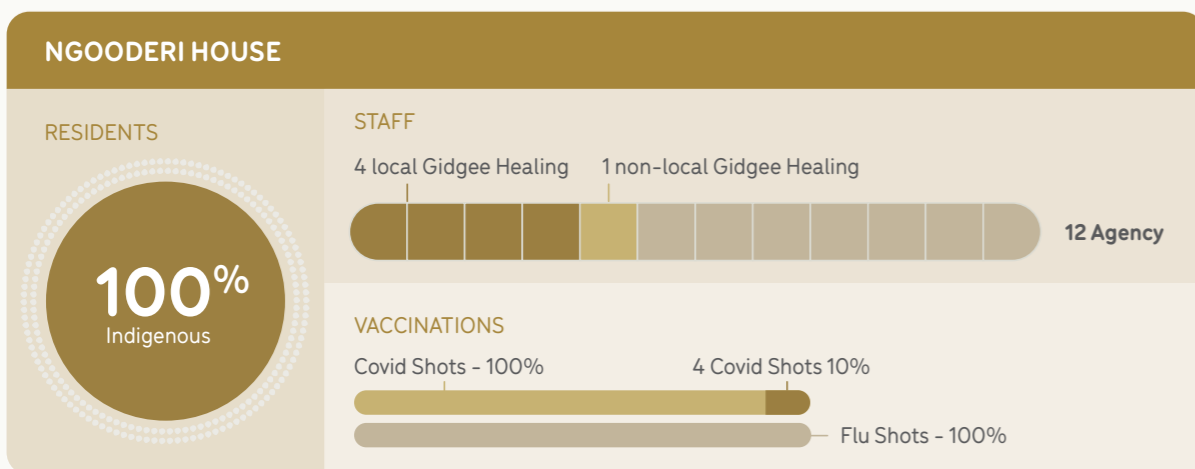
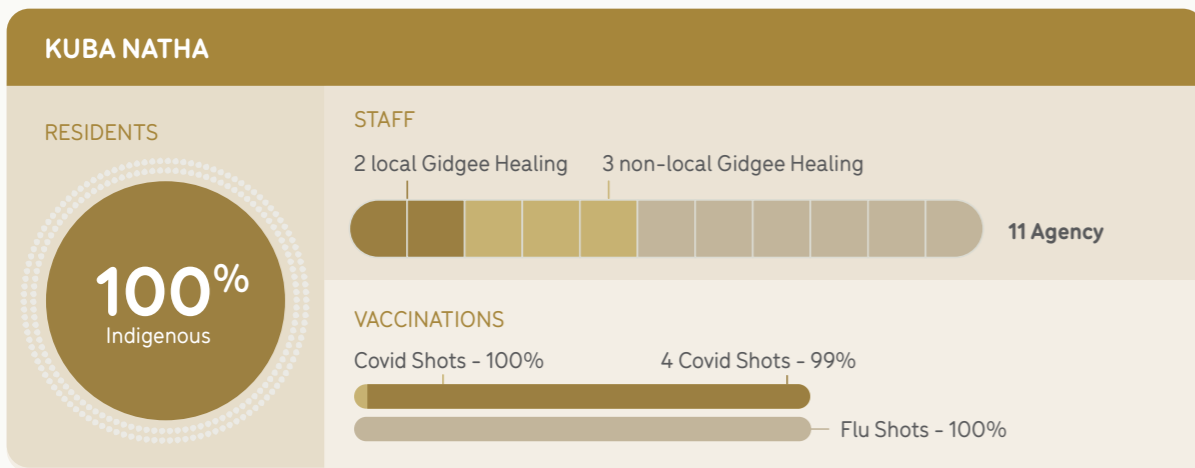
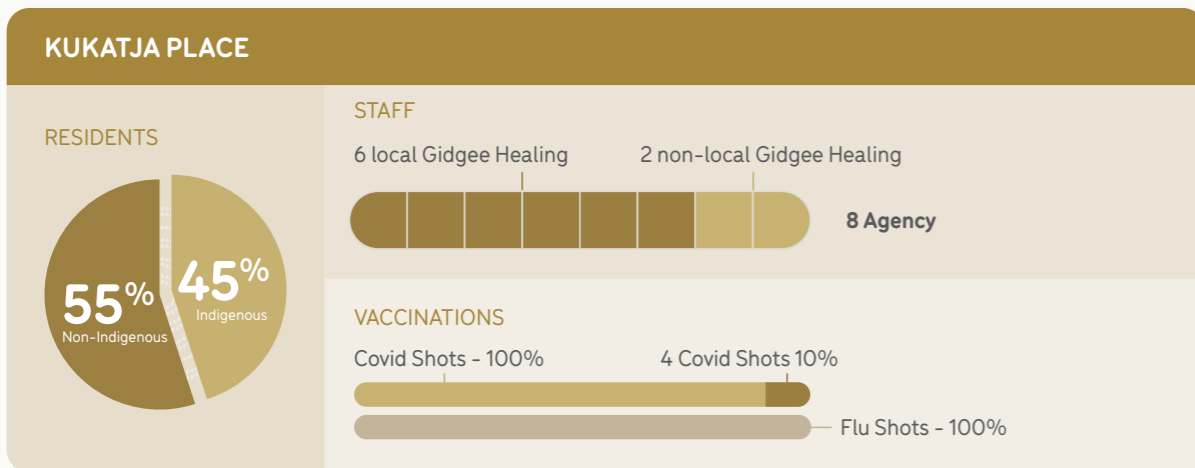
CHALLENGES

Attracting and retaining appropriately qualified resources is an ongoing challenge which has deepened over the last year, especially in our remote communities. We continue to work with community and local government groups to increase the proportion of staff who live in local communities and decrease our reliance on FIFO agency resources.

LOOKING FORWARD

As our aged care services continue to evolve, we look forward to building on the improvements of the last twelve months. Some plans and initiatives under consideration, or already underway include:

- Promoting aged care as a career pathway within our local schools and communities.
- Leveraging our home-grown talent through a new graduate program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses with a passion for aged care.
- Supporting student nurse and carer placements in our facilities.
- Working with resourcing agencies to streamline our onboarding process, including cultural awareness training.
- A full review of our aged care menu to incorporate culturally appropriate food options.
- Establishing a community panel to support recruitment from our local communities through referrals and recommendations.



NORMANTON RECOVERY AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

Funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Normanton Recovery and Community Wellbeing Service (NRCWS) is a specialist alcohol and other drug service, designed to support Indigenous men and women across the Lower Gulf region who misuse, or are at risk of misusing, alcohol, and other harmful substances.

Established in 2015, the main focus of NRCWS is an intensive 12 week residential program. This program can cater for up to twenty individuals at any one time. A smaller but increasingly important service offered by NRCWS is the aftercare and outreach support program, which is an extension of the residential program. This service was developed to provide continuing support for individuals once they have completed the residency.

Recovery from addiction is not a simple process. It requires effort, determination to change, and a willingness to look beyond the substances to the broader social factors and the day-to-day lifestyle patterns associated with substance misuse. Both residential and outreach services place a strong emphasis on:

- Cultural sensitivity and safety
- A holistic, integrated model of care
- Strengthening community ties

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND SAFETY

- NRCWS is proud of its team of workers, local to Normanton. Eighty percent of NRCWS staff are Indigenous, with Gkuthaarn, Kukatja and Kurtijar Traditional Owner groups represented on staff.
- Strong emphasis is placed on cultural healing — programs that have been developed by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For example, 'Break Through Our Way' and 'Eyez on Ice'. Residents are encouraged and supported to learn about their family history and heritage, and to map their family trees.
- Many activities are delivered on country — camping on country and cultural activities are central to the program. In the last 12 months, NRCWS hosted the largest 'Camping on Country' event in Australia, with Ernie Dingo and the Bush TV mob. Fifty-two men attended.
- Holistic, integrated, quality care
- As part of Gidgee Healing, NRCWS is able to link residents to regular medical treatment and supports including allied health services like podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, exercise physiology, diabetes education, dietetics, optometry and audiology.
- Residents are actively encouraged to access other services such as: ATODs, NDIS, Save the Children, NDIS, Centacare, and Bynoe Community Advancement Cooperative.
- NRCWS obtained ISO Accreditation as part of Gidgee Healing, in the past 12 months.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY TIES

- Programs encourage and support the residents to participate in community cultural activities such as NAIDOC Week, Australia Day events, Kup Murri events, and Men's Groups.
- Three community engagement forums were undertaken in Normanton during the year. With community consent, opportunities for similar forums in other Lower Gulf communities are being explored.
- Residents are encouraged to seek out work or study options, and embrace the role they can play in keeping communities and culture strong.

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS:

17

FIRST NATIONS PATIENTS:

0 16



Gidgee
Healing