



Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICE

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The Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited (AMS Redfern) was established in 1971 and was the first Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service in Australia.

The AMS is a founding member of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (formally NAIHO 1974) and of the NSW Aboriginal Health Resource Committee 1984 (now known as the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW). NACCHO and the AHMRC are the national and state umbrella bodies respectively for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

We strive to improve the quality and range of our services through community interaction and evaluation. We recognise that the unacceptable state of Aboriginal health will never improve substantially while Aboriginal people are denied human rights and recognition of ownership of land.

We see health as: “Not just the physical wellbeing of the individual but the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community, this is a whole-of-life view and also includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life”

—National Aboriginal Health Strategy, 1989

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Edie Coe Chair of the Board

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Ltd (AMS Redfern), I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2018–19. In reflection of the past year, we have continually reformed our programs and clinical services that strive to meet better health outcomes for our community.

On behalf of the board, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dulcie Flower who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) on Australia Day 2019 'for significant service to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and to the 1967 Referendum Campaign'. In particular, Dulcie was acknowledged for her role in the establishment of AMS Redfern and her work as a nurse. We are grateful to have Dulcie on the Board of Directors as a mentor and friend to both the board and staff. She has inspired us with her passion and ongoing commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal Australians through the co-ordination and delivery of health services.

In addition, we welcome Leona McGrath who joined our board in November 2018. Leona grew up in Redfern and Waterloo and has a clinical background in midwifery as well as holding a senior role in the Ministry of Health where she is able to advocate for Aboriginal people. Leona's appointment is part of our succession planning and we are fortunate to add her experience and knowledge to the existing executive team.

I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support and dedication of my fellow directors Dulcie Flower, Ricky Lyons, Barbara McGuinness, Daniel Daylight, Kooncha Brown, and Leona McGrath, who have provided ongoing support and dedication to the role of guiding the AMS Redfern that underpins good governance, and culturally appropriate and affordable health services for Aboriginal people. As such, AMS Redfern has continued to address local health needs providing holistic health care for our community through the expansion of clinical services and the improvement initiatives that we have delivered.

AMS Redfern strive to be a leader in the provision of Aboriginal health care. The dedication of all the staff at AMS Redfern has been instrumental in ensuring

the successful delivery of health services to the local Aboriginal communities and families and for this, I would like to say thank you. Without the support of this group of professionals and the guidance of LaVerne Belleair (CEO) the service would not have been able to prosper and grow.

Looking towards the future

The focus areas identified in our draft strategic plan enable us to focus on the principles of self-determination and good governance. These include; holistic health and wellbeing, innovation, strong leadership, culture and history allowing us to be a leading voice in the community, shaping the delivery of services to best meet the needs of the community we serve.

To meet our aim of providing a holistic health service we have introduced a number of new clinics and programs in the past 12 months. In particular we introduced a prosthesis clinic, expanded the cardiology clinic to 3 practitioners to cater for increased demand and we are planning for the introduction of a neurology clinic to cater for patients with cognitive impairment due to stroke, epilepsy and other diseases of the nervous system.

Plans are also well underway for expanding our physical space beyond the current facility at Turner St Redfern. We have commenced the refurbishment of the Exchange Building on Redfern Street and expect to be operating from this new facility by early 2020. This will not only help build capacity but also improve access to Aboriginal health services in the inner city of Sydney. The new facility will be designed with a patient focus that will provide a state-of-the-art building to meet the future health needs of our community and to satisfy the growing demand for health services. It is anticipated the Exchange Building will accommodate some of our specialty clinics including aged care, endocrinology, paediatrics, cardiology and neurology clinics to name a few.

In addition, we will undergo a restructure of our dental service to streamline quality and align with the Australian Dental Association Standards. We have been working towards accreditation of the dental service to make sure we deliver a consistently high standard of care to all our patients.

— Ms Edie Coe



AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION



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Auditor's Independence Declaration

To the Responsible Entities of Aboriginal Medical Service Co-Operative Limited

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as lead auditor for the audit of Aboriginal Medical Service Co-Operative Limited for the year ended 30 June 2019, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grant Thornton".

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Winter".

James Winter
Partner – Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 16 October 2019

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ABN 44 263 743 151

As at 30 June 2019

	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
Assets		
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,665,991	7,492,261
Trade and other receivables	214,851	121,662
Other assets	145,720	89,214
Current assets	9,026,562	7,703,137
Non-current		
Financial assets	3,512	3,702
Property, place and equipment	4,988,901	4,968,268
Other assets	11,571	6,452
Non-current assets	5,003,984	4,978,422
Total assets	14,030,546	12,681,559
Liabilities		
Current		
Trade and other receivables	536,449	436,846
Provisions	581,475	597,285
Current liabilities	1,117,924	1,034,131
Non-current		
Provisions	127,973	108,740
Share capital payable on demand	97	97
Non-current liabilities	128,070	108,837
Total liabilities	1,245,994	1,142,968
Net assets	12,784,552	11,538,591
Funds		
Accumulated funds	12,784,552	11,538,591
Total funds	12,784,552	11,538,591

This statement should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

ABN 44 263 743 151

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
Income		
Revenue	10,664,482	10,692,181
Other income	226,056	223,676
Total income	10,890,538	10,915,857
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expense	7,527,566	7,082,475
Depreciation and amortisation expense	312,083	323,900
Clinical costs	484,400	516,819
Property and utilities costs	622,076	603,968
IT costs	142,877	129,643
Promotional costs	4,337	10,327
Professional costs	230,652	269,514
Other costs	320,586	321,463
Total expenditure	9,644,577	9,258,109
Surplus for the year	1,245,961	1,657,748
Other comprehensive income	—	—
Total comprehensive income for the year	1,245,961	1,657,748

This statement should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.



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Independent Auditor's Report To the Members of Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited (the "Registered Entity" or the "Co-operative"), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the responsible entities' declaration.

In our opinion,

1. the financial report of Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
 - i giving a true and fair view of the Registered Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
 - ii complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*; and
- 2 the financial report of the Co-operative for the year ended 30 June 2018 is in accordance with the requirements of the Co-operatives National Law (NSW).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Registered Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Responsible Entities for the Financial Report

The Responsible Entities of the Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, the ACNC Act, and the Co-operatives National Law (NSW), and for such internal control as the Responsible Entities determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Responsible Entities are responsible for assessing the Registered Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Responsible Entities either intend to liquidate the Registered Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Registered Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Registered Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.



- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Responsible Entities' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Registered Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Registered Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Grant Thornton

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD
Chartered Accountants

James Winter

James Winter
Partner – Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 16 October 2018

PERFORMANCE REPORT

LaVerne Bellear
Chief Executive Officer



Reflecting on the 2018-19 financial year and putting pen to paper makes me realise how much change has taken place at the Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited (AMS Redfern) during this time. We have made significant headway in meeting the aims of our strategic plan and we have introduced a number of new initiatives to improve the health outcomes and health experience for the Aboriginal community we serve.

This was achieved through the ongoing dedication of the Board of Directors and staff at AMS Redfern who have worked collaboratively to provide leadership and professionalism in the delivery of services to our patients and the broader Aboriginal community.

We continue to meet and improve upon the key performance indicators set by our funding bodies including state and federal governments to support the ongoing improvement of health outcomes for Aboriginal patients. This can only be achieved with the help of a high performing team and executive group who provide ongoing leadership and support to help us achieve our goals.

Key to our success is our ongoing collaboration with external partners and organizations who work with us to provide resourcing for improved access to programs and clinics including improved clinical pathways that lessen the burden of patient care and assists with more efficient and effective health service provision that has resulted in better health outcomes for our patient and clients.

I would like to thank all staff and our health partners for their dedication and continued support throughout the year, in working with us toward achieving improved health outcomes.

Workforce

We continue to see well over 100 patients per day in our medical clinics at AMS Redfern. This is possible due to a stable workforce of clinicians and administrative Staff who are dedicated to providing excellence in patient focused care. We have a total of 73 Staff (60 clinical staff and 13 administrative staff) and a staff retention rate of 97%. We currently have 50% of our staff members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This has resulted in a stable workforce with considerable pooled knowledge that can be used to provide effective continuity of patient care. It also indicates a high level of staff satisfaction across the workforce, which has a positive impact on our patients.

Dental Clinic

We have employed a new principal dentist to streamline the operations of the dental clinic and identify opportunities to provide improved patient care in alignment with the medical clinic. Dr John Lee (Dentist) commenced in June 2019 and has been working with the executive and dental teams to achieve accreditation for the dental clinic (completion date Oct 2019) and improve clinic capacity and service delivery. In order to inform this project, we visited both Yerin and Awabakal AMS's to learn from their experiences of running a dental clinic alongside their medical clinics. We are also in the planning phase for a refurbishment of the existing dental clinic to enhance the provision of services to patients during the second half of 2019.

Partnerships

We have renewed our agreement with Sydney Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Health (SMLAH) Partnership for another 3 years to improve the co-ordination of services for Aboriginal people in the region. This partnership is committed to positively improving health outcomes and service delivery for Aboriginal people living in the geographical area covered by Sydney, Northern Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health Districts and St Vincent's Sydney Children's Hospital. It works collaboratively and provides a forum to discuss and prioritize Aboriginal health issues so that they can be addressed and proactively managed.



AMS Youth Surfing – summer 2018/19: a wet and wild treat for our end of program fun day



AMS Youth Surfing – summer 2018/19: 'bush to the sea' Yipirinya School join the AMS Surf group

Sol Bellear Memorial Graduate Health Management Program

The Sol Bellear Memorial Graduate Health Management Trainee Scholarship is a partnership project between Sydney Local Health District and The Aboriginal Medical Service, the program is designed to develop future health managers and leaders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care. The AMS hosted two trainees as part of this program Ms Shirley Tutudua and Ms Karinya Bellear, who have both progressed onto their next placements with Sydney Local Health District.

Expanded Service Delivery

We have evolved our services to meet the changing needs of our local population by introducing the following specialty clinics in 2018-19:

- An obesity clinic run by Professor Caterson.

- A new women's pelvic floor clinic run by an exercise physiologist. This clinic was the result of a research project conducted by Dr Sue Jacobs and Dr Talita Milroy.
- In September 2019 we are planning to expand our cardiac clinic to incorporate a third cardiologist (Professor Harris) to cater for the increasing demand for heart disease treatment.

Men's and Women's Programs

These groups continue to be offered to local Aboriginal patients as an opportunity to connect socially through yarning circles while extending their activities to regular exercise groups to promote wellness, inclusivity and cultural connection. These programs encourage participants to make healthy lifestyle choices and provide a strong network for support. Fitness sessions are led by an exercise physiologist who sets goals for participants and actively support participants to achieve in a supportive environment.

AMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Edie Coe
(Chairperson)



**Kooncha
Brown**



**Barb
McGuinness**



**Ricky
Lyons**



**Daniel
Daylight**



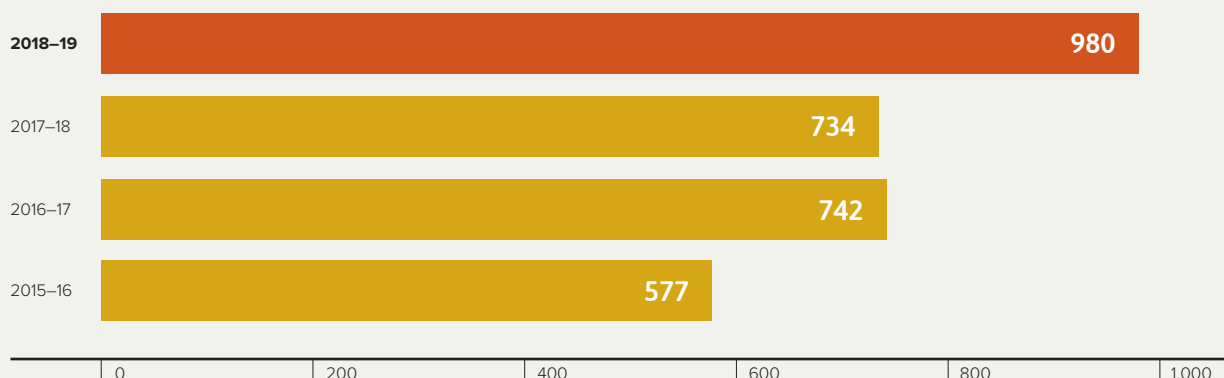
**Leona
McGrath**



**Dulcie
Flower**

PERFORMANCE AND STATISTICS

Health assessments by year (all ages)



Disease Prevention

In keeping with our commitment to the prevention of disease, AMS Redfern has introduced an ongoing screening and health assessment program. During the 2018-2019 year we completed 980 health assessments, a 34% increase year on year from 734. Given the importance of this service in identifying risk factors for the development of chronic conditions we plan to increase the provision of this service further throughout the coming year and this will be enabled through the expansion of the AMS Redfern facility to 115a Redfern Street, Redfern.

Youth Programs

A gymbaroo program for 0-5 year olds has commenced with the aim of providing social support for new mums and bubs. This is a critical time in the lives of new mums and providing education and support during this time is essential to ensure their social, emotional and medical needs are met.

Chronic Disease Management

We have a holistic approach to chronic disease management at AMS Redfern through the provision of a variety of specialty services available in the JBB clinic. In particular, we employ the services of a diabetes educator, dietitian, podiatrist, endocrinologist, ophthalmologist and optometrist. This is a team-based model of care that serves our patients well as it minimises the need to travel to access services and enables us to provide proactive care to our patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

Mental Health

During 2018-19 AMS Redfern have improved access to mental health services for both youth and perinatal patients in response to an increased demand in the local area. The perinatal psychology clinic runs every Thursday through the Local Health District to address the needs of young mums and mums-to-be. With the growing rate of youth suicide impacting our younger generations, we have also added the services of a child psychologist to our mental health team. The service works in conjunction with the paediatrician to complete comprehensive mental health assessments and ensure patients are monitored with suitable treatment plans and pathways to effectively manage their condition/s. Since July 2018, youth mental health services have provided 109 youth consultations.

Quality Improvement Program

Redfern AMS participates in a number of quality improvement initiatives to ensure the clinics operate to the highest standards. We are accredited under the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for General Practice (5th Edition) and ensure regular training is provided for all members so that clinical standards are maintained. We are also working on having our dental service accredited so that we can ensure the same high quality of patient care is able to be delivered consistently across the services.

Health Promotion

AMS Redfern has an active health promotion team aimed at increasing the health awareness and health literacy of the Aboriginal community for the early detection of disease and to improve health outcomes through better understanding.

We utilise our Facebook page to advertise events due to the very high usage of Facebook in the community.

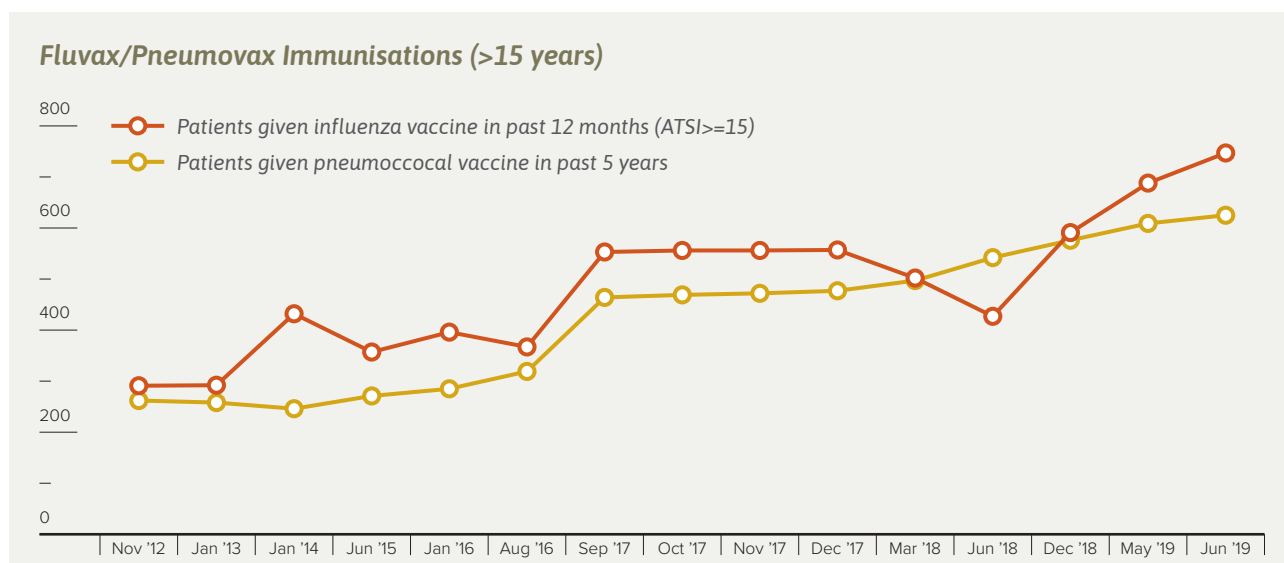
We ran the following events to promote specific health messages during the 2019-19 year:

Date	Event	Cause
July 2018	Hepatitis Awareness	Awareness of Hepatitis, promote sexual health screening and the importance of harm minimisation.
Dec 2018	World AIDS Day	To raise awareness of AIDS prevention strategies and promote AIDS related services in the area.
Dec–Jan 2019	Youth Surfing Program	To promote healthy active lifestyles in Aboriginal children.
March 2019	Close the Gap Day	Highlight the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health and promote the services provided by AMS Redfern to address this gap.
April 2019	Easter	To promote AMS Redfern services, bring families together and decrease social isolation.
May 2019	High Tea	To promote social inclusion for Elders and Aboriginal women including cancer screening and the key role of women in the community.
June 2019	Pamper Day	To promote the benefits of regular cervical and breast screening for women.

Immunisations

Flu and Pneumonia Vaccinations –AMS Redfern continue to promote the importance of vaccinations for both Influenza and pneumococcal in high risk groups and this has resulted in increased numbers of patients

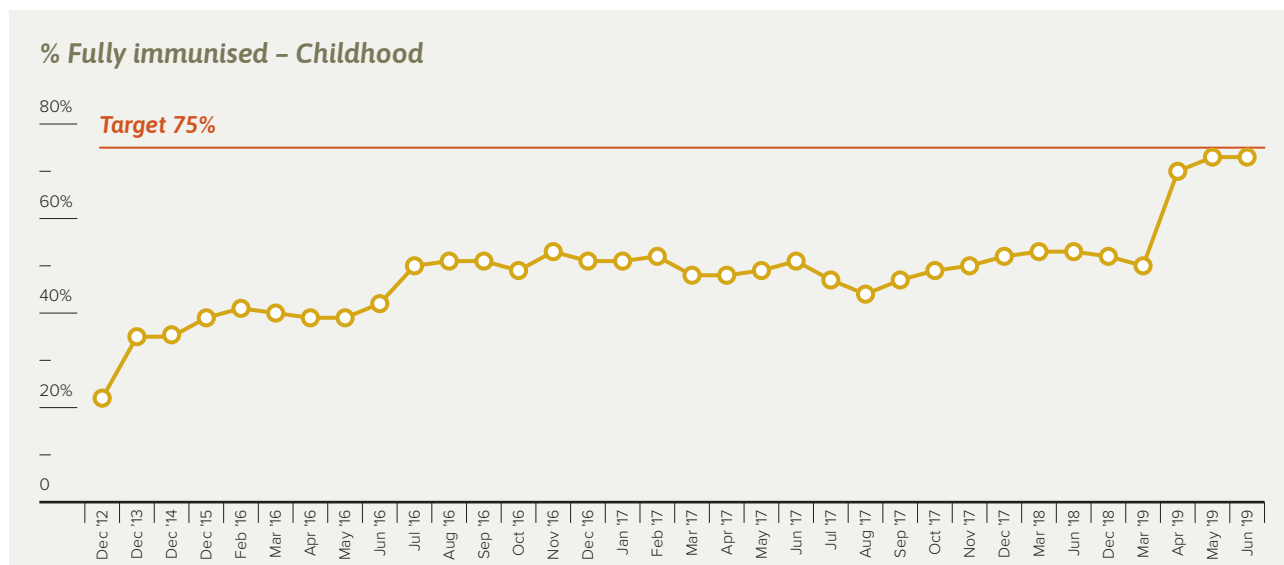
being vaccinated in the past 5 years as shown in the below Fluvax/Pneumovax Immunisations (>15 years) graph. This supports the services focus on prevention and keeping Aboriginal patients out of hospital.



Childhood Vaccinations

There has been a significant increase in the % of children aged 0-5 years who are fully immunised in the past 12 months from 53% to 73%. This is a result of a concerted effort to ensure all our records are

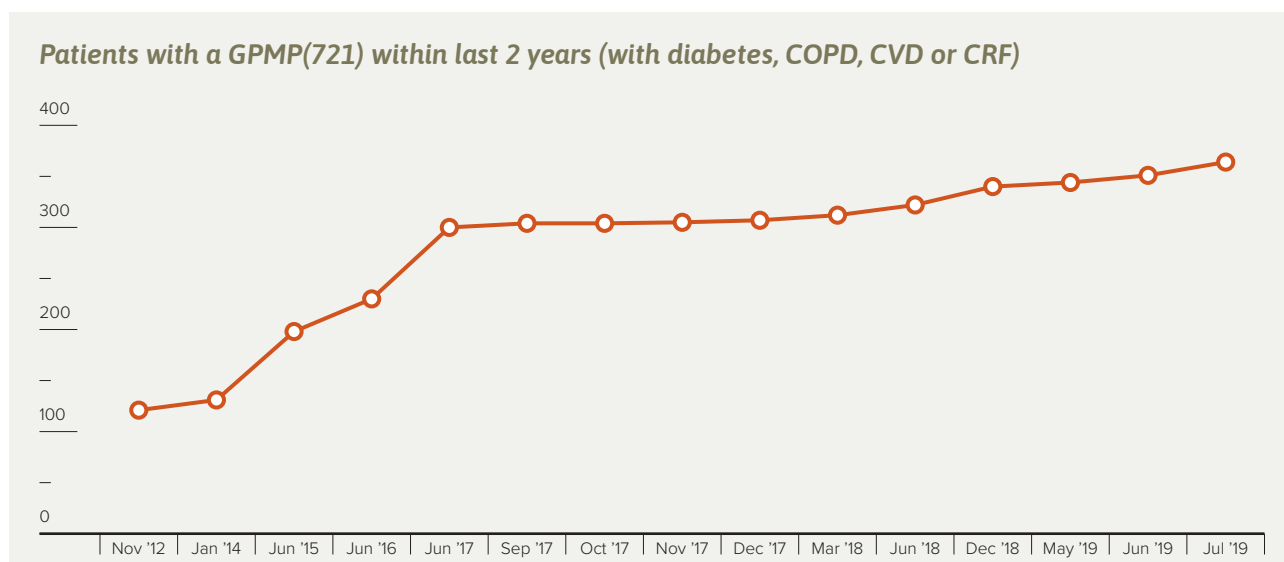
up-to-date and that we have a streamlined reminder system in place to advise parents when their children's immunisations are due.



Chronic Disease Management

Our diabetes clinic at AMS Redfern has an excellent track record of providing holistic services to our diabetic patients. Of the 464 active patients with type 2 diabetes (10.5% of patients), 73% have a GP Management Plan in place and 70% have had a health assessment within the previous 2 years to help prevent complications and better manage their chronic condition.

We also have some comparative data to enable us to track the efficacy of our treatment and this shows that in comparison to other Aboriginal Medical Services we are managing our diabetes type 2 patients effectively with the number of patients whose blood pressure is <130/80 being quite high (indicating a positive result).





ABSEC Community, 'Community Organisation of the Year' National Dreamtime Awards 2018

Triage in the Medical Clinic

AMS Redfern make use of a triage process in the Medical Clinic to enable us to assess the needs of individual patients to ensure the safest and most appropriate level of care can be provided to cater for individual patient needs.

Our nurses aim to triage patients within 15 minute of their arrival at the medical clinic patients who are severely unwell, such as patients experiencing chest pain, can be taken directly to the treatment room where they can receive priority access to care.

Whilst using the triage model means that the patient must see more than one health practitioner when visiting the clinic, there are significant benefits for both the patient and the health service in adopting this approach including:

- It means we can prioritise patients so that those in need of urgent care can be seen more quickly if necessary.
- It improves workflow by ensuring that clinical staff are assigned to the duties for which they are best qualified, freeing up the doctors for diagnoses and treatment.
- Decreases waiting time by prioritising wellness across the clinic.
- Enables the nursing staff to identify preventive health services that the patient may benefit from such as vaccinations, and health assessments.

Dreamtime Award – Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (ABSEC) Community Organisation of the Year 2018

AMS Redfern was awarded the ABSEC Community Organisation of the year at the National Dreamtime Awards in November 2018. The award is presented to a community not-for-profit organisation each year in recognition of their contribution to the local community in one or more of the following areas: leadership, advocacy, capacity building, partnerships and wellbeing. ABSEC is the peak body for Aboriginal child protection and family support services in NSW. The award recognised the vital role AMS Redfern play in helping to ensure Aboriginal children grow up healthy, safe and surrounded by family and community.

Youth Surfing Program – Summer 2018/19

The youth surfing program was a big hit over the summer months for our 8–15-year-olds with 28 registrations and 18–20 attendees each week. This year we were joined in the surf by our Yurapinya visitors from the Northern Territory youth group to show them the beautiful coastline and teach water safety awareness. At the end of the program, participants were rewarded with a trip to Wet and Wild in Western Sydney for a fun day out. The program aims to promote an active and healthy eating lifestyle to set kids up for a healthy life ahead and to focus on preventive health.



Spotlight on James: Personal choice Personal gains!

AMS Koori Exercise Clinic

The exercise clinic has enjoyed a number of big changes over this last year. We moved from the smaller location at 132 Redfern Street to the much larger meeting room in the main AMS complex. The new larger space allows people to exercise comfortably, run bigger groups and provides a much-improved atmosphere for mob to yarn and connect. The service also recently expanded to five days a week full-time. There has been an improvement in attendance since these changes, servicing on average 110 exercise sessions a month, up from an average of 88 per month in the year of 2017-2018. The regulars are enjoying great benefits with some losing weight, others finding their pain has improved, many are getting better results with managing their diabetes and everyone is reporting an improved sense of wellbeing. We even had one of our regulars enjoy getting healthy so much, that he felt inspired to do a course and become a Fitness Trainer, starting his own journey as a Personal Trainer!

The service hosts a number of programs each week:

- In consultation with the Elders we developed a Yarning Circle for everyone involved in the clinic. Once a week on a Monday everyone trains together in the gym first, then a sharing circle formed for people to connect and share stories.
- The other is a women's health group so ladies can train comfortably and talk about their health in a safe space.

- During the rest of the time the open gym service is very popular for people to get help with their exercise programs, and to use the exercise equipment.
- In late 2019 we are planning a heart health program for people with heart problems.

Success Story – Spotlight on James Mundine

This is James Mundine, who is 23 years old. After attending our exercise clinic for seven months and getting help from other AMS health services, he has enjoyed some amazing results. We interviewed James recently and would like to share his perspective:

Why did you start coming to the Koori Exercise Clinic?

'Because I wanted to be healthier, lose weight, and feel good about myself again. The doctors told me what I had to do to be healthier, but it was something I had to do for myself. I really wanted to get fitter for football as well, that was the main focus.'

What do you like about going there?

'It has something other gyms just don't have, it's got that culture here. You can feel the culture when you walk in, and you're surrounded by good people, people that you know. There's a sense of belonging that you feel.'

What good has it done for you so far from a health perspective?

'It has made me feel better about myself. I've lost 33kg of weight, I've reversed my diabetes and come off the tablets, and it's just made me feel happier throughout the day. I've just fallen in love with life all over again.'

Do you have a message for anyone thinking about starting their own health journey?

'You always have to do it for the right reasons, you have to do it for what makes you happy. It's all good to lose weight and try to look better, but if you're not doing it for the right reasons, it just won't feel right for you. It's important because you have to have that hunger, that dedication to see it through. You can't just give up after not seeing any changes for a few weeks, you've got to keep going!'

Congratulations James and thank you for contributing to our success stories!

NSW Aboriginal Knockout Health Challenge 2019

The NSW Aboriginal Knockout Health Challenge is a statewide community led healthy lifestyle and weight loss challenge for Aboriginal communities across NSW. The challenge is delivered in partnership with Barwon Aboriginal Corporation who have strong connections with Country Rugby League (CRL) and National Rugby League (NRL).

The challenge aims to motivate Aboriginal people to manage their lifestyle-related risk factors for chronic disease and reduce prevalence of overweight and obesity through a weight loss competition and physical activity challenges. These activities may include weekly boot-camp style workouts, cooking classes, walking groups and educational and information sessions. It is up to the team committee and the auspicing organisation to decide what works best for your community. Teams are made up of 30 Aboriginal participants and there were 29 individual teams that registered for the first of two 10 week challenges that took place in April – June 2019.

A team from AMS Redfern registered and committed to train 2 nights per week at the NCIE gym. Meals were provided every Thursday to promote healthy lifestyle choices. There was a total of 45 participants (across 2 separate challenges) aged between 20-68 in the AMS Redfern team.

Results

Most participants reported weight loss and reduced body fat, improved feelings of health and wellbeing and gained enjoyment for being a part of a team with a common goal. The challenge also involved the preparation of healthy meals for participants to improve their understanding of making healthy food choices and cooking nutritious meals.



NSW knockout: Redfern Rebels Representing



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