



Annual Report 2021 - 2022



BIRIPI ACMC



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Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Biripi people as the Traditional Custodians of the Country where we work.

We acknowledge and respect our Elders past and present for fighting to get us where we are today and for the vision to make it all happen. We thank them for creating a lasting legacy that continues to go from strength to strength with good health, culture and connection to the Biripi country.

Artwork Story

"The design is a mix of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal circular art that represents 'special place' and 'families'. The circles are connected by lines to represent a sense of home, community and belonging."

"I really enjoyed creating this special piece for Biripi ACMC. Celebrating the connection of families and community to this highly valued, and much-needed service. I wanted to show that there is a place to go to for help and healing for everyone."

RAEHEL SAUNDERS —



Raechel is an Aboriginal artist from the Biripi Nation on the Mid North Coast of NSW. Her artworks are based on a love for her people, animals, nature and all of God's Creations.

Art has been a major part of Raechel's life growing up in the home of an artist with her father - Pastor Russell Saunders OAM - who inspires her abstract style and creativity.

Warning: This report may contain names, images and voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Yarning and Reflections with Board Chairperson, Aunty Veronica Saunders

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Aunty Veronica Saunders has high hopes and aspirations to bring Biripi APMC back to the community and intimately connect the people, cultural practices and the medical centre to undertake a journey together to ensure a culturally safe, respected and enlightened environment. Here is her vision, in her words.

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I joined the Board in April 2022 and I am enjoying the role. It was something I wanted to do.

I've got six grandkids and I do things in a blackfella way. I believe in my ancestors.

My mother being part of the stolen generation was a role model, and I know how much she did for us and protected us.

I really care about my Elders in the community and it's important the Elders are treated differently. In my day, we loved our Elders and they were good Elders, we have respect for them. I've joined aged care and that's what I want, to build our Elders back up to that status again because it's important that kids must learn from their Elders. They have a lot of knowledge. Our kids today are confused, they don't know enough about culture and they need this.

When I worked at Taree High School, we used to get Dad to take the boys out bush teaching them how to hunt, and make spears and they'd sit around the fire at night and talk about culture. That needs to happen again. My brothers still go hunting kangaroos and it's something we would like to introduce again for the young boys.

We have women's groups and also for young mums and bubs. I'm pushing for the Elders to be involved in these groups and in the schools.

For me, a healthy Biripi community means a happy one. A lot of our people are sick today. When we were growing up there was no obesity. We used to walk out to the bush and be home by dark. We were lean, healthy and happy kids. We had bush medicine back then, so I hardly went to the doctor, as my grandfather and women in the community would make bush medicine for us. I still make it today, called sarsaparilla, it's good for colds and flu. You won't get any chest problems and it gives you energy. I want to bring this back into the community. Bush Medicine for everybody.

I'd like to set up a garden, as vegetables are too expensive. I'd like to get the kids involved in the garden, when they grow they can bring their parents or grandparents down. The kids can deliver the veggies around the mission. It's a community. Everyone is involved. It's a good program if we can keep our people healthy.

COVID-19 has had a big impact on the community as we are used to being around each other. It kept the community apart and it was hard to deal with. Some of our people were also affected by the flooding.

I've noticed a real change in the medical centre since we've had Angie as the CEO. A lot of people don't know her but are now getting to know her. She's been meeting with the Elders, and that's important she becomes well known in the community. People have to know who's who.

We want the men to have their own space. We have a space for women. We are going to push this for men's and women's business. Making sure not only us women are looked after but the men also. They want to start doing things with the men's shed, like building boomerangs.

Once a month we would like to have a day down at Saltwater with all the men and women and staff from aged care to get to know each other better.

A portrait of Veronica Saunders, an elderly woman with long, wavy grey hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue patterned top with red and yellow dots. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green grass and trees. Overlaid on the image are decorative elements: a yellow and black concentric circle on the left, a red dotted line across the middle, and a large red stylized sun or fire symbol on the right.

“For me a healthy Biripi community means a happy one.”

For me, dealing with transgenerational trauma is important for our kids. Our kids are our future and we're going to be gone soon and I want to make sure the kids understand our culture and are not confused. We have got to do some things our way and if we can work together as a community that would be better. We've got to push forward as a community that works well together. Everyone is important in our community.

At Chatham High School they invite the Elders in, it's fantastic and the children know we care. We will connect with the primary schools as the younger kids are important also.

I would like Auntie Alice Briggs' plaque back up in the clinic as I would like to acknowledge her as the founder and any other Elders involved in the early days. It's important for our community to know the history of Biripi APMC and who did what.

I'd like to thank the workers at Biripi APMC, they do a wonderful job. It's hard work but I really appreciate the workers and the work that they do. Some of the staff members like Auntie Donna-Maree are amazing, you know that they care about you.

I love being involved in the community and I especially love being part of the community. I'm from here, lived here and it's my community. It's really important to me.

Veronica Saunders
BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Our Vision

For our people to heal, be healthy and live a life they feel has value.

Our Core Purpose

To improve the Wellbeing of the Aboriginal People within the Biripi Nation area. We will do this through engaging, empowering, and providing knowledge, skills, belief, support and hope.

Our core beliefs

CULTURE

We will embrace Aboriginal history, beliefs, and cultural expectations in the way we support our Community.

EMPOWERMENT

Enabling our People through knowledge, skills, belief and instilling hope.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Biripi ACMC Board and staff have a collective accountability to deliver on their core purpose and to act with integrity.

RELATIONSHIPS

We will develop collaborative partnerships with our communities and all contributors to the work of Biripi ACMC.

Our Behaviours

RESPECT

We will recognise the uniqueness of each individual we support including their histories and perspectives.

COMMITMENT

We will take our work seriously and personally and have high expectations of the wellbeing outcomes of our service.

COMPASSION

We will make people feel valued and welcome.



Our Reach

*Areas where we can
provide services*



Inverell



Wauchope



Port Macquarie



Taree



Gloucester



Tuncurry



Forster



Bulahdelah

Meet our Board of Directors



Veronica Saunders

BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Elected at the 2021 AGM

Aunty Veronica Saunders is a proud Biripi woman, who was born and raised in Purfleet.

Aunty Veronica has a background in Nursing and has participated in 5 years of research with Cancer Council NSW, and research with NSW University. She has also worked as an Aboriginal Education Officer at Taree Highschool for 13 years.

Aunty Veronica has a strong focus on culture and is passionate about improving the physical and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people through addressing the cycle of intergenerational trauma.

As the Chairperson, Aunty Veronica's goal is to ensure health services are appropriate for the Biripi community and will push for better health outcomes. Already she can see an improvement with dental and aged care services.



John Clarke

BOARD OF DIRECTOR

Elected at the 2021 AGM

John Clarke is a true local, born in Biripi Country from Purfleet. He is one of the longest-serving directors of Biripi APMC, serving for over 20 years.

John is the current CEO of Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (TIDE) and the previous CEO of Purfleet Taree Local Aboriginal Lands Council.

His goal on the Biripi APMC Board is to achieve stability for staff and clients and continue the high standard of service being provided to the community.

“The staff of Biripi do an excellent job servicing the community.”

Outside of work, John enjoys spending time with his family.



Trent Jennison

SPECIALIST NON-MEMBER DIRECTOR

Appointed by the Board of Directors in 2022

Trent was born in Scone and after school trained as a woolclasser before training as a nurse, after which he obtained a Bachelor of Health Administration. He moved to Taree to take the position of CEO at Mayo Hospital where he was for 15 years and then moved to Valley Industries 12 years ago.

“My goals and aspirations for Biripi APMC are to deliver good corporate governance.”

Outside of work, Trent enjoys fishing and gardening.



Craig Tapper

**SPECIALIST NON-MEMBER
DIRECTOR**

**Reappointed by the Board of
Directors in 2022**

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Craig Tapper is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the business school of the University of NSW and has taught there for over 26 years.

As well as teaching he has also had a 25+ year career as a manager, executive and Board Member on a number of not-for-profit boards and has been involved in numerous consulting assignments with Commonwealth and State / Territory government departments, specialising in reviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, community, and aged care programs.

Daniel Morrison

**Stepped down as a Board of
Director at the 2021 AGM**

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Daniel is of Aboriginal descendant of the Murriwarri people in Brewarrina, he grew up in Western Sydney and now lives in Port Macquarie. Dan has a keen interest in building capacity within Aboriginal communities.

Dan completed a Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health) from Charles Sturt University School of Nursing and Midwifery, Post Graduate Degree in Indigenous Health (Substance Use) from University of Sydney, School of Medicine, Post Graduate Degree in Health Service Administration from Latrobe University School of Public Health and a Master's in Health Service Management from the University of NSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Dan currently delivers Aboriginal Primary Health Care qualifications to Aboriginal people all over the state.

Michael Saunders

**Stepped down as a Board of
Director at the 2021 AGM**

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Michael Saunders (Uncle Mick) is a proud Biripi man, one of his many talents is being an Aboriginal Resource Teacher, with over 20 years in teaching.

Uncle Mick has a Diploma in Primary Education, is currently studying a Postgraduate in Counselling and has also completed a Certificate in Gathang Language (TAFE).

Uncle Mick is passionate about improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal people, keeping Gathang language alive by teaching language and building strong connections with the local community and Aboriginal families.



CEO Report



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I am privileged to be appointed by the Board of Directors as the Chief Executive of Biripi ACMC. I joined the organisation in 2019 as the Connected Beginnings Coordinator, moving on to the role of Health Services and Programs Manager and later, in 2022 I became the interim CEO.

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I will bring great passion and commitment to the role of CEO. My aim is to create leadership stability for the community, and a holistic health service that meets the needs of our people to lead long, healthy and happy lives.

I acknowledge the journey of the organisation and the challenges we have faced in recent times. We have had changes with a new Board in April 2022 and I believe we have a strong team to move Biripi ACMC forward and continually deliver on service improvements.


Over the past 12 months, we showed our ability to work together as a strong and unified community and service throughout the challenges of COVID-19 and localised flooding. I am pleased we were able to maintain our health service delivery and the safety of the community by delivering 44,252 vaccinations administered at the height of the pandemic.

I would like to acknowledge our frontline workers, who also battled illness and family commitments during uncertain times to continue essential service delivery and care for the community.

As Aboriginal people, we have a cultural obligation to look out for each other and our Elders. I am pleased to report our aged care clients have grown twofold from 40 to 150 in 18 months. Our support workforce has also grown from 8 to 25 providing employment opportunities for the Biripi community.

Another pathway for employment was through our traineeships with several trainees completing courses in Business Administration and Community Services across the various divisions and many moving into permanent roles.

We refined our medical model of care for improved access to GP appointments, prescreening with an Aboriginal Health Worker and improved our follow-up mechanisms for continuity of care.



When you visit a Biripi APMC clinic or service, we want you to feel safe, relaxed and supported along your health care journey. Our new patient information system, Communicare, supports this to provide a patient-centric view across the entire patient journey through health services.

Over 100 patients accessed our Integrated Team Care (ITC) program to assist with managing a chronic disease. The support provided is designed to prevent acute illness and hospital visits, allowing the individual the care and access they need to live with a chronic illness.

We commenced our journey to better understand the needs of the community through feedback and learning opportunities. Make sure you watch this space and look out for opportunities to connect with us and provide your honest and valued feedback on ways we can improve, enhance and grow services. Internally we have introduced mechanisms to capture this feedback and make real changes.

Community engagement and programs such as the men's fitness group, women's yarning circle, connected beginnings playgroups and the stolen generation group, continue to provide a way of coming together and providing a safe space for yarning and connection.

As an organisation, we've introduced clinical governance, a management system for our policies and procedures and started the journey towards aged care accreditation and ISO accreditation. What this means for the patient is the ability for us to identify new opportunities and challenges as they arise and quickly respond to the changes needed.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank the Biripi APMC Board of Directors and Senior Management Team for guiding our vision for our people to heal, be healthy and live a life they feel has value.

I look forward to working with you all and creating programs for the community to continue on the path to good health, culture and connection to Biripi country.

Angie Stewart
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Key Highlights in 2021-22

Aged care clients have grown from

40 to 150
in 18 months



Aged care support workforce has grown from 8 to

25

Introduction of intranet for policies, procedures and forms for the workforce



OVER 100 PATIENTS

access the Integrated Team Care (ITC) program to assist with managing a chronic disease

Women's Group gatherings held weekly with 10+ participants

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WORKFORCE GREW FROM

74% to 79%

67

new employees completed cultural induction training

Commenced path to aged care accreditation over the next 18 months



2 Cultural Officers from the Biripi nation join Biripi Aboriginal Children Services

Maintained service delivery throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with the introduction of telehealth and home visits



INTRODUCED CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

Leadership changes with a new CEO and Board of Directors

44,252 COVID-19 vaccinations administered

Commencing ISO Accreditation



176

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN SCREENED BY THE BIRIPI ORAL HEALTH UNIT AS PART OF THE SCHOOL DENTAL PROGRAM

Introduction of a new patient information system, Communicare, to provide a holistic, patient-centric view across the entire patient journey through health services



Refining the medical model of care to meet the community needs for improved access to GP appointments, prescreening with Aboriginal health workers or nurses and improving follow-up mechanisms with patients



Introduction of a client feedback database for continual service improvements



Our success stories

Continuous service improvement and reporting for the community

Biripi ACMC has recently commenced the journey to aged care accreditation and developing a quality management system for improved reporting and client feedback.

The Aged Care Quality Standards cover 8 standards; consumer dignity and choice, ongoing assessment and planning with consumers, personal care and



clinical care; services and supports for daily living, organisation's service environment, feedback and complaints, human resources, and organisational governance.

Quality Assurance Manager, Jocelyn 'Joi' Ventura-Ward, said preparing for aged care accreditation will occur over the next 18 months.

Since joining Biripi ACMC in 2021, Joi has introduced several quality measures for the corporation to develop policies and procedures, centralise these



for the workforce and assist with document management.

"I have developed an intranet for staff as a central point for document management and forms. The goal is to develop unified policies and procedures and for our workforce to look at service improvements.

"I've been working alongside our staff to educate them on how we gather the evidence for accreditation and to allow them to complete their roles effectively and efficiently."

Joi has also created a complaint and feedback database for the aged care caseworkers to ask clients important questions such as 'are they happy with the service and are there any areas to improve?'.

"We are seeing clients are generally happy and there is not a high volume of feedback.

"I hope to continue working with the case workers to look at different ways to gather feedback through yarning opportunities with the clients."



“It’s not about me, it’s about what the community wants and they’ve got to be comfortable with who is in this space. I’m here as long as they want me here, and I love it, it’s my passion.”

Andrew’s commitment to building capacity and services for the aged community

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The Biripi Aged Care Service has experienced extraordinary growth over the past 18 months with proud Biripi man Andrew Fitzgerald-Forbes at the helm.

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Andrew put his hat in the ring for the role after working 16 years in health as a wardsman and domestic services supervisor at Manning Base Hospital. Andrew worked in all areas of the hospital from the emergency department and supporting the Aboriginal liaison service after hours.

Working within the community has been a goal for Andrew and he now feels very much at home.

“I see this as a role until retirement. I’ll be here as long as the community wants me.

When Andrew joined Biripi ACMC the aged care service had around 40 clients, this has now grown to 150 clients as part of the service. The staff has also grown from a team of 8 to 25 with the goal to provide employment pathways for the Aboriginal community.

“Out of my staff, 90 per cent are from the community.

“We do a lot on the job, we also assist them with TAFE so they can be upskilled in the position. It gives people a lot of confidence and passion for it.”

Adding registered nurse, Wendy Dowse, to the team has further boosted the service allowing the development of nutritional programs and diabetes education. Wendy also delivers one-to-one education in the home for those not able to attend the activity centre.

Andrew said despite the challenges of COVID-19 and floods across the region, serving the community was possible through a partnership with GIVIT.

GIVIT is a national non-profit organisation matching generosity with genuine need through their online platform. GIVIT connects donors and community organisations to make sure people and communities get exactly what they need, when they need it.



Aged Care ladies' group

Top Row: Susan Peanna, Roxanne Richards, Irene Haggarty, Patricia Schubert, Gail Lean, Sharon Gerald (Volunteer)

Front Row: Aunty Kathleen Morcome, Melissa Buchanan, Aunty Barbara Clarke

"I'm a person if it's not covered in the box I look for alternatives. When we couldn't cover everything in our funding with the floods, I reached out and partnered with GIVIT.

"Over the last 12 months they've supplied close to \$200,000 in goods and services to assist the community with clean up and if they need things like blankets."

Andrew and his team kept in touch with clients over the phone during the COVID-19 lockdowns and delivered food drop-offs and cleaning supplies by partnering again with GIVIT.

He said the rental crisis was a challenge with increasing homelessness and the team had been supporting community members, even if they are not clients, by providing them with swags to sleep on.

"The rental crisis is making it unaffordable, and we have people sleeping at places like the turtle (local Aboriginal site) set-up in a shack or sleeping on swags."

As for the next 12 months, Andrew has a long list of 'to-do's' including service expansion to the Forster and Tuncurry region and growing services in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) space.

One change he hopes to continue building on is the days out for Elders.

"The outings have been popular as it allows more people to get outside their homes, particularly those with mobility issues. We've been getting them out to traditional places like Saltwater. We hire different equipment and get them down on the beach to put their feet in the water and go to more traditional places in the area."



Biripi Elders Group at the football



Dental Team

Left: Amelia Lunney (dental assistant),
Middle: Khushboo Agarwal (Oral Health Manager),
Right: Mikaylee Towers (Dental assistant)



School dental screenings

As of January 2022, Biripi Oral Health Unit conducted six school screenings and has scheduled two more to be completed in September 2022.

The unit collaborated with Aboriginal Health Practitioners to ensure school children were screened holistically for eyes, ears and dental.

From the six schools in the Greater Taree region, a total of 176 Indigenous children were screened and provided with basic oral hygiene kits for ongoing maintenance.

Several oral health issues were identified and subsequent appointments are being organised to address the oral health needs of the Indigenous children, provide preventative care, and create oral health awareness.

Providing life saving care for those living with chronic diseases

The Integrated Team Care (ITC) provides much needed coordination and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with chronic diseases.

The program helps clients understand their chronic condition and how to manage it by interpreting medical jargon at appointments, assisting with allied care providers and access to medical aids, and providing ongoing education opportunities with the client and extended family.

The support provided is designed to prevent acute illness and hospital visits, allowing the individual the care and access they need to live with a chronic illness.

ITC Service Manager, Janine Cochrane, said in the last 12 months the program had provided support to over 100 patients living with a chronic disease.

One client Janine is particularly proud of is a young lady getting her health back on track after being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. The care coordination program was life saving in her case after a loss of sight, feeling in the feet and poor dental health. The client also has cardiovascular disease and was unwell after failing to attend specialist appointments.

“When we took her on, she was very unwell with bad eyesight and her feet were poor. She also has cardiovascular disease and hasn’t seen a cardiologist in over 4 years.”

By working with her family and kids, Janine and her team were able to support the client to attend her appointments and put her health first.

“It has been life-changing for her to be able to see clearly now, she’s also getting dentures to chew properly and her feet have been seen too. She’s really doing well and has come a long way getting back on track and being compliant with her medication and attending all of the specialist appointments.

“Between us and her kids, we did a lot of nagging! We kept relaying the importance of attending appointments and making sure she is the priority to be healthy for her kids.

Janine said it was a team effort with Murray Carle and Health Practitioner Ryan Anderson.

The ITC program runs with Janine and Ryan building relationships with the specialists and providing continuous education to the client.

“We involve the family, as appropriate, and we encourage medication compliance, develop chronic disease self-management skills and connect with community-based services.

“Our goal is to educate our clients and for them to take control of their chronic disease and to look for their signs and symptoms.

“I’m really proud of this young lady getting her health back on track.”



ACCESSING THE ITC PROGRAM?

Ensure you have completed the following:

- ☉ Have a current Aboriginal Health assessment/ completed by a GP. Ask your GP to refer you to the Integrated Team Care program. They may know this as the ITC program.
- ☉ Your GP will create a GP Management Plan and a referral form and forward it to Biripi AMS
- ☉ The Care Coordinator will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss ways in which they may be able to help.

Women’s Group providing support and connection

Each Friday, women from the local community gather together to yarn, share stories, weave and connect together.

The women’s group is coordinated by the Biripi ACMC social, emotional and wellbeing service and the clients receive wrap-around support for other areas of need such as domestic violence support and mental health wellbeing and counselling.

Aboriginal Health Worker/ Family Violence Prevention/ Cultural Officer, Leonie Morcome, refers clients to the group as a way of coming together and providing a safe space.



Women join together from the Women's Group creating a mural at Taree High School.

Keeping children in care connected to culture and family

The Biripi Aboriginal Children Services (BACS) provides culturally informed out of home care services to Aboriginal children in Taree and Inverell.

"We make sure it's fun. It's a good place to come together for healing and support each other and recognise trauma they identify with and a wellbeing safe space."

"Children come along as well and we provide arts and crafts, different subjects such as other services, networking and providing a cultural space for yarning."

Leonie said up to 15 women attend the group at any time, with other services joining to deliver workshops.

"We continue right up to the end of the year and it's good for the women to have something in their calendar to look forward to. I make fun quizzes to share and we have a good laugh and yarn."

Leonie said hands-on activities such as weaving have been popular and something she hopes to showcase the talents of the group in the future back to the community.

"The weaving area is more hands-on, we have a lady come in to explain how to do it, tell us stories and express support for the yarning that we do."

As a proud Aboriginal organisation, BACS acknowledges the impact of intergenerational trauma and advocates that healing can and will take place in the context of a safe, nurturing and responsive environment that is connected to family, culture and land.

The service has recently grown to include two cultural support officers from Biripi Country and a new Operational Manager at the Walanbaa Gaayli Children service.

Interim Principal Officer for BACS, Penny Kay, said the goal of BACS was to create positive services for kids in care and for their carers to have access to support. The service works intensively with the children and families to ensure the connections are strong.

Families and relatives are involved in decision making, even if they are unable to provide placements.

"We ensure children are supported and provided information about their culture and family connections.

“This includes family group conferencing, developing kits and genograms, information on where they’re from on their mother and fathers’ side. All of this provides them with an understanding around family, culture, language, background and history.”

Penny said they have experienced many success stories with carers who have become guardians and the ultimate goal, to restore the children to their parents’ care.

“Our continued focus is on the development of family preservation services across Taree and Inverell and to have more intervention before a child is removed.

“It’s about working with families and children to keep them with their families and investing in this area.”



Maintaining service delivery throughout COVID-19

GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM

Working towards a reputation across the Biripi and Inverell communities to attract people to provide foster care and extensive search of children’s families and kinship groups.

Ongoing continuous improvement based on feedback from the Office of the Children’s Guardian and Department of Communities and Justice to continue improving operations and supporting our staff.

Supporting our staff and carers in their cultural understanding and knowledge, and the children have comprehensive cultural plans.

Continually working with stakeholders and other culturally appropriate groups to support closing the gap and kids are getting the education they need from preschool and staying on to year 12.

Focusing on the health needs and working with young people to develop their independent living skills.

Supporting our Aboriginal staff to develop their own confidence and succession planning for opportunities for promotion and advancement.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic reached every part of the nation over the past three years, placing strain on the health system to navigate through lockdowns and service delivery for the most vulnerable community members.

Despite the significant challenges, Biripi APMC was able to navigate and pivot service delivery through telehealth, home visits when able, and be a trusted source of health information for the community.

The organisation was faced with health workers and families also being unwell and the need to adapt to changes behind the scenes to maintain service delivery.

Director of Medical Services, Dr Vlad Matic, said at no stage was Biripi APMC shut for business.

“If services were unable to be delivered, we were always able to deliver some form of health care.



Dr Partha Baruah (General Practitioner Registrar) examining Jessica Maher (medical receptionist)

“We introduced new measures such as laptops for staff, teaching them how to facilitate a Teams meeting and rolling out telehealth consultations. There was so much work behind the scenes.”

The challenges also extended to flooding in Taree in March 2022.

“We’ve faced fires, COVID-19 and floods over the past few years.

“If anything we’ve come out stronger, more resilient and capable because of COVID-19, it toughened us up and enhanced us. That set the tone for us to maintain service continuity despite the challenges of natural disasters such as the flooding,” Dr Matic said.

Community members were kept up to date via social media and ongoing dialogue was maintained as the changes happened rapidly at an international, federal, state and local level.

“Biripi ACMC was a trusted source of information, we translated medical jargon so that community could understand what was going on.”

Creating a healthy Biripi Community

Biripi ACMC is focused on creating a healthy Biripi community that takes into account the holistic approach to care for the individual and building solid health foundations for the community as a whole.

Listening to the needs of the community has been key to refining the medical model of care to enhance access to appointments, pre-screening with an Aboriginal health worker or nurse and improving follow-up mechanisms with patients.

Director of Medical Services, Dr Vlad Matic, said the changes take a whole approach to meeting the needs of the Biripi community, recognising that health is not just clinical but also incorporates the wider determinants of health.

“We’ve put Aboriginal health workers front and centre in our model of care and by taking the load off the GPs to allow better access.



Director of Medical Services, Dr Vlad Matic

“It’s increased the availability of appointments to the community. We’ve altered the appointments to meet on-the-day requests and improved capacity to follow patients up.”

In addition to the enhanced model of care, Biripi APMC has transitioned to a new patient information system called Communicare, which is designed specifically for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.

“It recognises that health care delivery is a team-based approach to care. Communicare has empowered the organisation to better capture data about the health burden suffered by the Biripi community and then we are better able to understand that data and allocate resources to what the data is telling us.”

Vlad said one immediate change was improving efforts at screening for the delivery of the ‘715’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Check.

“In response to what the data has told us, we have refocused the delivery of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health check as it is the holistic starting point for care and to better understand the overall health needs rather than a reactive model of disease management.

“The 715 check assesses the individual in a holistic framework and we collate that data in response to reinvigorate areas such as aged care, immunisation, cervical screening, child and maternal health.”

To support this need, Biripi has recruited additional highly qualified GP’s, added more nurses and enhanced capacity for the pre-consult screening.

“Our patient numbers are growing and new clients are joining. I believe we are being rediscovered by the community as their preferred provider of health care.”

Vlad said by refining systems, the aim is not only to create a healthy Biripi person but a healthy Biripi community.

“I’m proud to work for Biripi APMC and along with my colleagues, we’re giving it our very best. As we innovate, we might make mistakes and we ask for the community’s understanding.

“Our heart is true and our wish is to improve, and please stay on the journey with us as we all want the same thing.”

Dr Vlad Matic has worked as a GP for the past 32 years within Aboriginal health. He joined Biripi APMC in 2021 and now works at a systems improvement level. His vision for creating a healthy Biripi community is –

“An unborn community member having a safe antenatal journey and is born well, immunised, screened at least once a year and that their health needs are met rapidly and appropriately. That they are empowered to start their educational journey at no disadvantage to any other Australian resident and they are given the same employment opportunities and financial opportunities and in time, we no longer talk about closing the gap, as there is no gap.”





Families at the Biripi ACMC Playgroup





Health Services Manager,
Tania Slack-Smith

"I'm passionate about trauma informed care and being able to support a culture to understand trauma and supporting this in the workplace."

Connected service delivery from the clinic to the community

Biripi APMC successfully delivers a range of community based programs including a men's fitness group, stolen generation group, Connected Beginnings playgroup and oral health checks delivered at local schools.

Health Services Manager, Tania Slack-Smith, hopes to provide a link between the community health programs and the Biripi APMC health centre as a safe place and base for service delivery.

Tania recently joined the Biripi APMC team and brings a wealth of experience to the role. She is a trained Occupational Therapist with over 30 years of experience working across rural areas including Dubbo, Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett and Lightning Ridge. Her most recent role was in Port Macquarie with St Agnes' Parish working with community services and NDIS programs, and managing a team of 10 Aboriginal staff to provide community and family support services.

Tania was drawn to the opportunity at Biripi APMC to oversee the Purfleet and Bushlands clinics and supporting programs.

"I have an absolute passion for working with Aboriginal communities and the opportunity to work for Biripi APMC is a real privilege.

"I bring an understanding of rural health needs to the role as well as the impact of chronic disease and trauma informed care in my experience as an occupational therapist."

Tania aims to provide a continuity of care model to ensure the individual needs are met from the minute they open the door and all along their health journey. She believes this has a profound impact on long term health outcomes and people feeling safe.


"I want Biripi APMC to be a place where the community walks in the door and they can relax.

"It's about addressing the acute needs but also the holistic needs of the community and supporting those needs."

A large focus over the next few months will be on gaining feedback from the community to make sure the quality of the services meets the needs of the community. More community days will be held as a hub to come together, gather and connect.

"While we are connecting, we will have a yarn about your health and what we need to do to support you."



 Carole Faugeras, Human Resources and Corporate Manager

Supporting the workforce and growing Aboriginal jobs

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Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce has been a key focus for the Biripi ACMC Human Resource Team, with an increase from 74% to 79% in the last financial year.

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Biripi ACMC HR Manager, Carole Faugeras said over the next year Biripi ACMC would like to continue to grow the Aboriginal Workforce by offering traineeships for community members and engaging more with local schools to encourage student traineeships with a view to further increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment numbers.

“Several Trainees completed courses in Business Administration and Community Services across the various divisions which has proved to be beneficial not only in the trainees gaining a nationally recognised qualification whilst gaining valuable practical experience but also for the organisation as quite a few of the trainees have moved into permanent roles.”



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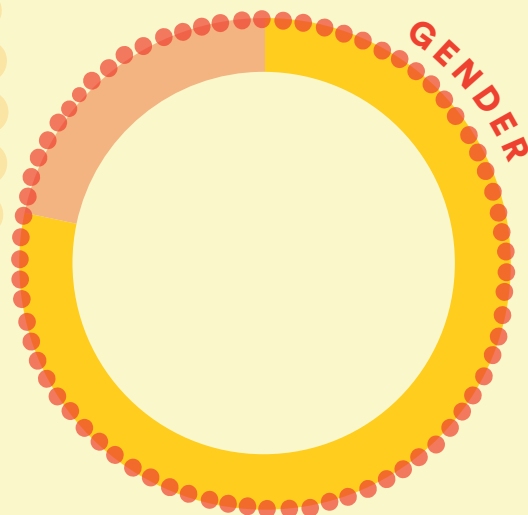
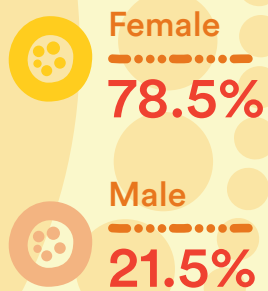
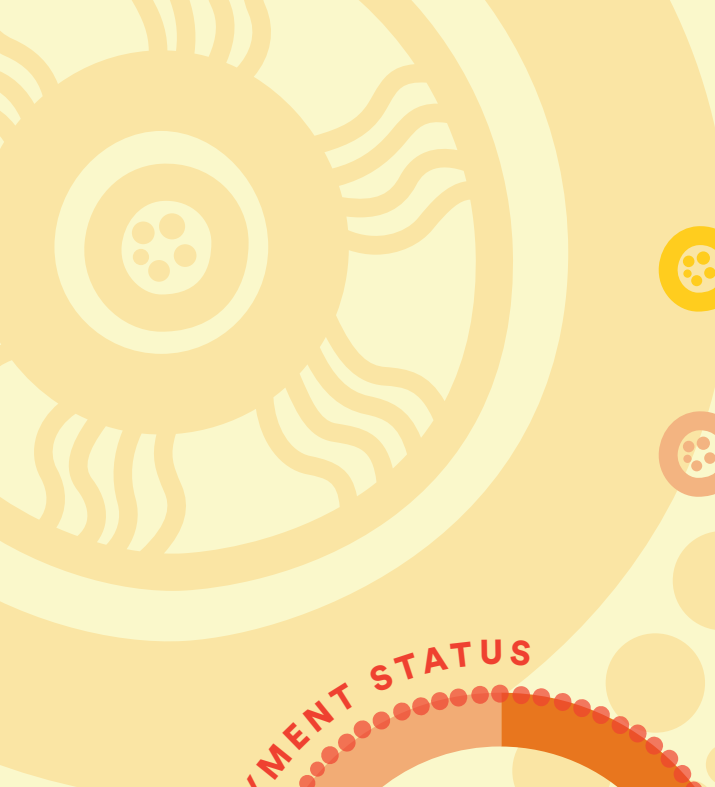
Noah Pholi-Harris completed his traineeship through the Biripi ACMC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee program and is now employed as a permanent finance officer.

The human resource team at Biripi ACMC is responsible for the strategic and operational management of all human resources activities and ensuring that human resources systems and practices support the functionality of the organisation in achieving business objectives. The team also incorporates Corporate Services, Facilities and Maintenance.

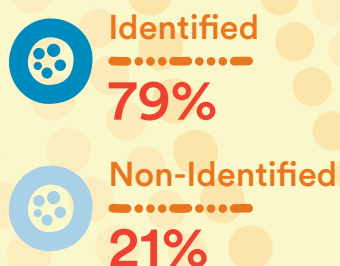
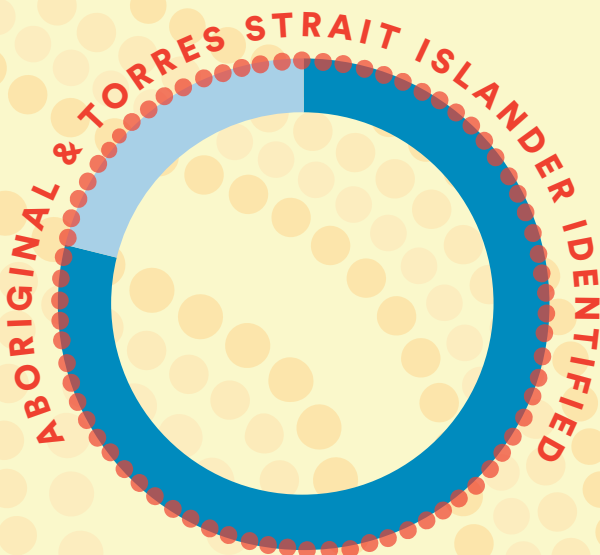
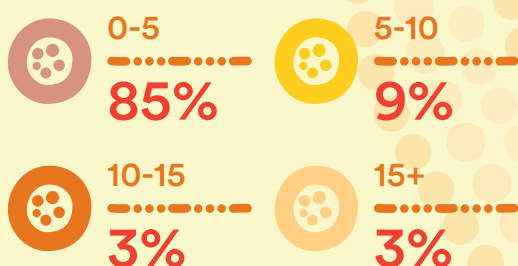
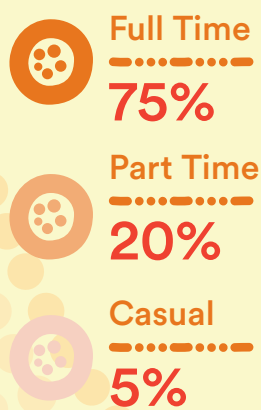
“We are continuing to support those in the organisation that have worked for a long time by offering training and career development opportunities, promotional opportunities and flexible working arrangements where we can.”

Biripi ACMC has recently introduced 12 weeks of paid parental leave, whereby the employee can elect to take this as half pay for 24 weeks. This option supports employees to spend time with their families before returning to work.

The service has become more proactive in managing worker's compensation claims which have reduced significantly from 25 Claims 3 years ago to 3 claims last financial year.



EMPLOYMENT STATUS



The Biripi ACMC Workforce

Building a culturally capable workforce

At the core of Biripi APMC is the need for all of the workforce to know the proud history, culture and achievements of the organisation.

Biripi APMC delivers corporate and cultural Inductions throughout the whole organisation. The corporate induction provides staff with important information regarding the organisation, their role and Biripi procedures. This assists staff to transition into their new role, enabling them to feel supported while they adjust.

In addition, Biripi APMC has a training portal delivered through Safetyscare (Safety HUB) to provide training courses to Biripi Staff in areas of Work Health & Safety including but not limited to Chemicals, Electrical, Covid-19, Food Safety, wellbeing, and Manual handling. Staff can access and complete their allocated courses at a time that suits them and at their own pace.

As services continue to grow, each employee is delivered a cultural induction of Biripi Country, the Taree Region and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories, values, belief systems, experiences, and lifestyles and finishes with a tour of Biripi Country including Saltwater.

Having Biripi APMC staff participate in these inductions enables staff to develop relationships with other staff members from other divisions and gain knowledge of other roles and services throughout Biripi APMC.

Aboriginal Health Worker/ Family Violence Prevention/ Cultural Officer, Leonie Morcome, leads the training and works with the administration team to book sessions for new employees. 67 staff members participated in the cultural inductions last year.

"Working in an Aboriginal organisation, they may not understand the cultural side. For example, Aboriginal people may not want to be looked at straight in the eye, they may talk and not look at you.

"I talk about the knowledge of our health workers as people coming from the Biripi community. I discuss our holistic approach to health."

Leonie finishes the sessions by taking the staff out into the field to show them the local significant sites including Saltwater.

"It's a good yarning session and they really absorb that information in and appreciate the cultural side.

"We all must work together and everyone has got to be part of this learning for our organisation."



Baagi Milaygiin “Grandmother Spirit”

Biripi APMC organised a self-care day for the Women’s Group by collaborating with Baagi Milaygiin “Grandmother Spirit”. There were 20 Women aged from 20 years old – 60 years old who participated in the group.

Deb Munson is the Founder of Baagi Milaygiin “Grandmother Spirit”, and used her products and knowledge to connect and give women a cultural perspective of mind, spirit and body.

Each participant received a pamper box with products made from Australian Native plant-based ingredients and Ochre.

Biripi APMC Team Coordinator Programs, Aunty Donna-Maree Elliott, said the products made the ladies feel good about themselves and connected them back to culture.

“Participating in the group gave the women the opportunity to try the beautiful cultural beauty products that otherwise were not able to afford financially.

“Some of the ladies mentioned that it felt good on their skin, it gave them a cleanse that their face needed and also allowed them to take the time to do something for themselves and their health and wellbeing instead of doing their daily chores of looking after family and putting their wellbeing after everyone else.

“The ladies thoroughly enjoyed themselves and were grateful for the positive benefits the session had on their social and emotional wellbeing,” said Aunty Donna-Maree.

“My skin felt nice and soft after using these products. I definitely don’t have the time to do this for myself being a mother, and it felt good to take time to better my wellbeing for the day.”

“I really enjoyed myself today taking care of my social, emotional and wellbeing. It was nice using native beauty supplies for the first time.”

“I feel that it has connected me more to my culture and how we used to look after ourselves before colonisation happened.”

“What an amazing experience to be using these beautiful products. After using these products I feel it has cleansed my mind, body and spirit and made me feel so much better.”



Financial Update

Our main source of funding is provided by Government Grants. Funding received this year was from:

Aust Govt Dept of Health
Dept of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
Hunter New England Local Health District
NSW Ministry of Health
NSW Rural Doctors Network
Hunter New England and Central Coast
Dept of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Aust Government Dept of Human Services
NSW Ministry of Health
QUMAX
AH&MRC
NACCHO
ABSEC

Medicare Revenue:

Medical
\$1,089,767

Dental
\$51,094

Medicare Incentives
\$365,650



Where our money comes from:

Commonwealth Government	\$6,986,316	29.96%
State Government	\$13,251,090	56.83%
HNECC Primary Health Network	\$399,300	1.71%
NACCHO Grants	\$147,677	0.63%
Medicare Income	\$1,506,510	6.46%
Wage Subsidies	\$651,334	2.79%
Rental Income	\$6,628	0.03%
Other Income	\$367,281	1.58%
	\$23,316,136	100.00%

Where our money goes:

Wages & Other Employee Expenses	\$12,393,576	54.55%
Expenses from Ordinary Activities	\$7,585,501	33.38%
Administration	\$919,065	4.04%
Occupancy Expenses	\$1,028,311	4.53%
Depreciation Expenses	\$465,707	2.05%
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$177,483	0.78%
Assets Write off	\$152,770	0.67%
	\$22,722,413	100.00%



Biripi APMC would like to acknowledge and thank our funding bodies for their support and commitment to allowing our services to grow from strength to strength and deliver our core vision to ensure our people heal, be healthy and live a life they feel has value.

2021-22 Financial Statements

A full copy of our 2021-22 Financial Statements is available from our website at <https://biripi.org.au>

If you would like a hard copy, please email info@biripi.org.au or call us on (02) 6591 2455

Increase in Funding:

Most of our funding streams saw an increase in funding in 2022.

Funding for Programs such as Oral Health, Family Health and Population Health Program increased by 2.7%. Funding for children's services from the Department of Community and Justice increased by 4.3% and Department of Health funding for the Medical Centres increased by 20% from the previous year.

There was also extra funding received to help with Covid 19 vaccination clinics from the NSW Ministry of Health, NACCHO and the PHN. Other programs we received one off funding for were for 'Mental Health support for flood affected communities' from NACCHO.

How our finances are approved

Most invoices arrive by email to the Accounts inbox from suppliers or other Biripi divisions.

Once received, the invoice is matched with the purchase order, if applicable and recorded in the MYOB accounting program.

The invoice is then stamped and sent on to the relevant divisional manager for approval. The manager checks the invoice against the goods or services that have been provided and, if approved, the manager electronically signs the invoice and sends it back to the account's inbox. Approval limits for managers can be found in Biripi APMC's Delegations of Authority Manual. All invoices over \$10K will also need to be forwarded to the CEO for further endorsement.

Once the invoice has been approved it can then be processed for payment. Supplier payment runs are done every Thursday. Before the payment is sent to the supplier, a report is generated which is checked and signed off by the Finance Manager.

Contact us

Biripi APMC Corporate Services

2a Edward Drive,
Purfleet, New South Wales

Phone (02) 6591 2455

Email info@biripi.org.au

For more information about Biripi
APMC, visit our website at
<https://biripi.org.au>

To get a copy of this report you can
download it from our website or **email**
info@biripi.org.au

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/BiripiAPMC>

SERVICES

Purfleet Clinic

2a Edward Drive,
Purfleet, New South Wales

Phone (02) 6591 2400

Fax (02) 6551 4142

health.services@biripi.org.au

Biripi Aboriginal Children Services (BACS) Taree

102 Victoria Street,
Taree, New South Wales, 2430

Phone (02) 6591 2411

bacsreception@biripi.org.au

Town / Bushland Clinic

Shop 3, 39 Mudford Street,
Taree, New South Wales, 2430

Phone (02) 6591 3000

Fax (02) 5555 7038

health.services@biripi.org.au

Walanbaa Gaayili Children Services (Inverell)

15 Oliver Street,
Inverell, New South Wales, 2360

Phone (02) 6721 1600

admininverell@biripi.org.au

Aged Care

151 Manning River Drive,
Taree, New South Wales, 2430

Phone (02) 6550 0788

info@biripi.org.au

Dental/Oral Health

2a Edward Drive,
Purfleet, New South Wales, 2430

Phone (02) 6591 2400

health.services@biripi.org.au

Maternal Health

2a Edward Drive,
Purfleet, New South Wales

Phone (02) 6591 2400

health.services@biripi.org.au

Community Support Programs

2a Edward Drive,
Purfleet, New South Wales,

Phone (02) 5525 6070

intake@biripi.org.au



