



Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service

INCREASING HEALTH CHECKS

**“It’s making services accessible to the people and really knowing what the people want”
Christine Corby, Chief Executive Officer**

The Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS) started their Pit Stop Program six years ago, with a focus on holding a specific day for men to have health checks through a ‘one stop shop’. The program specifically targets those men in the community who would not usually see a doctor or get a health check.

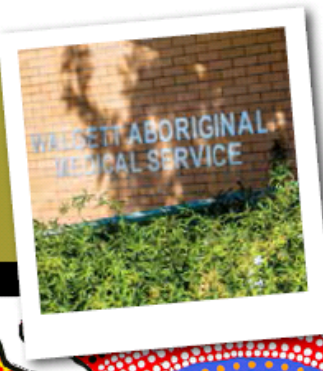
Due to the success of the program WAMS adapted this model to design a health check day for women, and then adapted this model again for children.

“If someone was going to have a health check I would just tell them to come along on the day, it’s a friendly environment. They don’t have to be nervous or anything, they will be fine. We look after them”- Lillian Gaiter, RN, Brewarrina Aboriginal Medical Service

The Pit Stop Program health check days are extremely popular; their growth can be easily tracked through attendee health check numbers. These started at 12 when it first began, currently 203 checks are conducted across the region, with many people coming back to attend the service regularly.

“When it all first started we (only) got a few through but it’s more well-known now and you’re getting a lot more roll up” – David Kennedy, Ear Health Worker

Focus on the needs of the client
Keep looking for ways to improve
Build on and share success stories



WAMS are continually looking to improve their services and local decision making and local planning are very important so patients are encouraged to give their feedback as to what they would like to see at the Pit Stops. One example was when the community voiced concern about the oral hygiene of many of the children, WAMS arranged for a dentist to be present at the health check days. Another example has been the establishment of a crèche so that mothers could more easily participate. Also, incentives such as food vouchers are given to those that participate in the health days.

"We're always looking for an improvement. At the end of the day we sit down and discuss where things went well, where things could be better, and we do our best to make that happen".
Trevor J. Simpson, Public Health Worker



WAMS recognises the importance of local people having services close to home, in their own community. To meet this need, WAMS has worked with other services in the region, so that they can run the Pit Stop Program too. The Pit Stop Program events have become more than just a 'health check day' but a social event for the whole community.

"It's a good thing for all communities to try and get involved in. I recommend it to all Aboriginal communities" – **Retta Ferguson, Brewarrina AMS, Healthy for Life Aboriginal health worker**

