

UPK Uwankara palyanyku Kanyintjaku A Strategy for Well Being Public and Environmental Health Program

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Improving population health depends upon reliable and sustained essential services infrastructure including municipal services, food security, communications and roads, safe and reliable power and water supply, health services and income security.

The Health Council's capacity to impact positively on this infrastructure is limited.

Over the last 12 months the UPK program has been able to manage projects or value add to projects that shape some of the social and structural determinants of health.

Environmental Health Workers

A new project that has had a positive effect on the living conditions of Anangu is the Environmental Health Program funded by the South Australian Government. This project met targets for indigenous employment, carried out work activities that directly benefitted householders and was able to value add to other programs that were aimed at improving the living conditions.

Typical work activities include the cleaning of roof gutters to reduce the risk of fire and contamination of rainwater, washing of houses, removal of hard waste from yards and the slashing of grass. Minor repairs to housing have also been carried out and include the fitting of door furniture, unblocking drains, repairing washing machines, fixing toilet cisterns and so on.

Dog Health

The primary aim of this program is to attempt to maintain a healthy population of dogs with a reduced risk of disease transference to the human population. There are three main strands to this program and they include fertility control, overall population control and the treatment of the dogs for zoonotic parasites.

Over the last 12 months the Vet has implanted or injected fertility control agents to 356 female dogs. He has culled at the owners' request 349 dogs. This is a necessary practice for containing the dog population.

Dr Robert Irving continues to provide this valuable service that has received additional funding from FaHCSIA in the past year. Environmental Health Workers assisted with the program work.



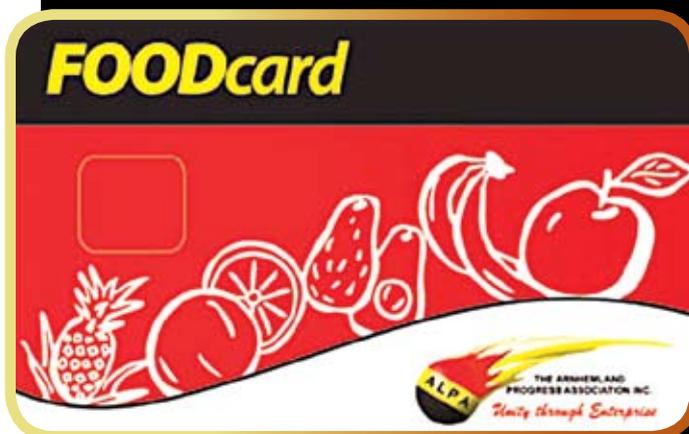


Mai Wiru Stores Policy Implementation: Grocery Manager and FoodCard

Until the installation of Grocery Manager in late 2009 Mai Wiru had little control over retail systems within the stores and restricted capability to implement pricing structures and stock control. Grocery Manager has several major advantages for the stores and the customers. They include automation of several day-to-day trading functions, increased electronic security, customer facing displays, increased transparency and control of store trading practices and ability to generate specific and relevant sales reports. Importantly, Grocery Manager benefits the customer with weight scales at the point of sale. Previously, stores did not have weight scales and customers were paying a flat rate per piece of fruit or vegetable that was fixed, week in and week out regardless of the fluctuating wholesale price. Now customers pay the current price for fruit and vegetables based upon weight of purchase with a resultant reduction in price for the customer.

Installing Grocery Manager into the Mai Wiru Regional Stores provides a security-based mechanism for voluntary income management through a smart card known as FoodCard. The capacity for some form of voluntary income management is critical for people on low incomes especially in remote areas where cost pressures are notably higher than in regional or metropolitan areas.

FoodCard has finite security through photo identification on the card. This means that the photo of the cardholder/s appears when the card is scanned at the point of sale and eliminates the use of a PIN. With FoodCard customers can purchase foods, beverages and health hardware whilst some items such as tobacco, entertainment items and high sugar drinks are restricted. FoodCard is potentially a valuable mechanism for health promotion on the APY Lands and it can provide improved food security for vulnerable groups. FoodCard has the capacity to be credited with cash monies or transfers from Centrelink payments and regional employment agencies.



Reducing consumption of sugar sweetened drink

In 2008, Amata Community Council operating within the framework of the Mai Wiru Regional Stores Policy directed the store manager to remove the two highest selling sugar sweetened soft drinks and the sports drink range from sale. It is now over twelve months since the store ceased selling these beverages and the store sales data shows significant change in the purchasing trends of customers. Total volume of all sugar sweetened soft drinks purchased in one year was reduced by 50% or 23,153 Litres and sugar consumed through store bought beverages reduced from 6.47 Tonnes to 4.63 Tonnes.

Promoting good nutrition

The past year has seen the continuation of several nutrition focused programs. They are

- In store raffles that promote the purchase of healthy foods or drinks
- In store cooking demonstrations
- Relaying fridges so as to promote sugar free beverages
- Professional development nutrition education sessions with the Aboriginal Health Workers, staff at Aged Care and Aboriginal Education Workers and teachers at Pipalyatjara School
- Visiting community clinics in conjunction with the Podiatrist, to educate people with diabetes about best dietary practices and
- Completion of two Market Basket Surveys which monitor store prices across the APY Lands and compare these to supermarket prices in Alice Springs.

There were over 60,000 patient contacts at our clinics during the year.