Background: The Pilbara Healthy Kids Initiative was developed late in 2008 by the Pilbara Population Health Newman team in response to the need to achieve better outcomes in Aboriginal health. The initiative was generated by a small team working remotely and expanded into a project that now covers a large section of the Pilbara, based on core primary health care principles such as: access, equity, early intervention, disease prevention and health promotion.

Research indicators and anecdotal/narrative information collected by staff had pointed to declining health standards among Aboriginal children in the Pilbara—across a range of health indicators such as weight, nutrition, skin, teeth, hair, eyes and hearing. The team determined that a combined health promotion and fun approach to these health issues would achieve more than individual/family consultations.

Project aims: The Healthy Kids Initiative aims, through delivery in remote Aboriginal communities and small towns, to:

- provide essential education to families to help promote healthy lifestyles for their children
- provide a platform to engage the local community on matters of health and demonstrate staff roles
- allow parents/caregivers to ask questions about the health of their child in a relaxed, non-threatening environment
- give the children an enjoyable, fun day
- build collaborative partnerships with Puntukurnu AMS, Wirraka Maya AMS, RFDS and with industry partners such as BHP Billiton.

Project outcomes: Project outcomes have included:

- increased recognition of services provided within communities
- informal yarning with family about staff roles and engaging community members and organisations
- messages through actions and modelling, less through words and language
- children experienced new play and learning through a variety of media and toys and demonstrated knowledge of healthy actions and lifestyles
- collaboration and partnership works effectively in remote areas, with services appropriately targeted to priority areas and delivered where people live
• upskilling staff to provide culturally safe and secure services.

**Key learning:** Four years of hard work by PPH teams has demonstrated that the Healthy Kids Initiative is a project that requires long-term commitment from staff to achieve long-term meaningful change in health behaviours as a means of reducing chronic disease.

Ongoing commitment (some staff have been involved since project inception); project evaluation and service review; and community engagement and capacity building are vital components in building bright health futures for Aboriginal families.