Maree O’Hara

Maree O’Hara is a registered nurse and has been the Barkly Eye Health Coordinator for Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation in Tennant Creek, in the Northern Territory, for seven years. She is responsible for eye care for approximately 8000 people over 322 500 km² of the Barkly region.

Optometrist clinics are organised and attended by Maree and her assistant. She works with the ophthalmologist six times a year in Tennant Creek.

Maree has worked in Aboriginal affairs for 26 years including health, education, employment and the pastoral industry.

Originally from Sydney, Maree has worked not only in NSW, but Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation has allowed Maree to create a model of eye care that is sustainable for the future, if funding allows. The first year she started (under a different model) 90 people were seen. Last year there were 1200 people seen, the majority Aboriginal.

Maree is the only eye coordinator for the area, which allows her to put all patient information on Anyinginyi’s Communicare system. She also coordinates the surgical list. To achieve this, Maree has had continuous consultation with patients and continuous mentoring and advice given to her by Aboriginal colleagues. This has ensured a culturally appropriate, workable model. However partnerships are crucial to this so that visiting services continue. They include Brien Holden Vision Institute, Fred Hollows Foundation, Tennant Creek Hospital, Alice Springs Hospital Eye Clinic, and RFDS.

The last major achievement was this year. A health promotion DVD was made by Fred Hollows Foundation based on Maree’s idea, using her as a consultant and filming at one of the Barkly Aboriginal communities.