



Federal Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt in Broken Hill with Maari Ma board directors Cheryl Blore, from Menindee (left), and Fay Johnstone, from Ivanhoe.

Strategy is paying off



GOOD results have been reported from a strategy started more than a decade ago aimed at improving the lives of Aboriginal people in far western NSW.

That success has been highlighted in a new report launched in Broken Hill by Federal Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt.

Called *Opening Doors*, the chronic disease strategy evaluation report shines a light on the work done by the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation in the region.

Maari Ma chief executive Bob Davis said it was validation of the

significance of the health strategy's achievements.

"Back in 2005 Maari Ma's board of directors backed a new way of providing primary care services to the Aboriginal people in far west NSW, re-aligning service delivery to prevent the chronic diseases that were cutting Aboriginal lives short, detecting those diseases earlier and managing them better," he said.

"That leadership has held this organisation in good stead and this evaluation report presents the fruits of that leadership."

Mr Davis said the evaluation, done by Maari Ma and the Menzies School of Health Research based in the

Northern Territory, drew on hospital data held by NSW Health, clinical indicators from quality improvement processes, program administration data and interviews with 68 informants, and took more than 12 months to undertake and document.

"The resulting two-volume report documents key achievements during the chronic disease strategy's implementation, and priorities for further work in the strategy's key program areas of Healthy Start (for mothers, babies and children), Keeping Well (for adults), and health service support," he said.

Opening Doors is available at www.maarima.com.au