

# Mark Coulton

## visits WAMS



On 29 September 2009, the Federal member for Parkes Mark Coulton MP, and his wife Robyn visited WAMS during their schedule of meetings in Walgett. They were received by the WAMS CEO, Christine Corby, Clinic Practice Manager, Jessie Richardson and Program Practice Manager, Kylie Gilmore.

Mr Coulton was presented with a variety of WAMS resources and internal reports:

- Briefing paper on the cessation of aerial services
- Pictorials of WAMS events over the past six months
- WAMS Strategic Plan
- Vacancies brochure
- 'Z' Card (summary of WAMS Services)
- Organisational chart
- SDR meeting held August 2009
- Accommodation for auction at Dubbo, 'Manera Heights', costings to purchase



Mark asked how WAMS was placed with the cessation of the commercial airlines. Christine mentioned that WAMS have chartered flights, tickets are sold to other agencies to offset the costs.

He queried if WAMS used the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). WAMS noted that they are not one of the first agencies to be offered seats on RFDS.

Conversation occurred on the visiting services by Dubbo Obstetrician, Dr Tony Geraghty and the midwifery consortia from Canberra who use the charter service. The WAMS Briefing paper presented to Rob Carnegie from NSW Transport in June this year was given to Mark.

Discussion of expenses to secure GP's at WAMS and the fees charged by private GP Consortia's and other locum agencies. It was noted that WAMS have positions for 2.5 GP's to cover both the Clinic, FCPHC and Healthy for Life programs. In the past WAMS had a GP who was the sole Practitioner in Walgett and also the VMO at the local Health Service.

An outline of the 'renal' chairs at the Brewarrina Health Service was identified as not being a public unit, but are privately owned. Walgett was identified as a community which may qualify for a dialysis unit to be installed at the local hospital.



# Mark Coulton's visit

Mark enquired if WAMS and other AMS's had GP Registrars. Christine stated that WAMS are registered to accommodate Registrars. The barrier is the lack of GP's in close proximity to offer supervisory services to the AMS GP Registrar.

It was explained of a current accommodation proposal to cater for pregnant women who are travelling to Dubbo. This proposal does not include accommodation for other members of the family unit. The 'Manera Heights' facility offers a location directly across from Dubbo Base Hospital, has been used for this purpose for a considerable amount of time, as well as having rooms leased to GWAHS and TAFE personnel. To source funding to secure Manera Heights would be ideally for all communities who have individuals travelling to Dubbo for medical care.

Mark asked what was WAMS's association with the Oral Health program at Charles Sturt University (CSU). Christine mentioned that Bila Muuji Health Services (which has a membership of the ten AMS services in the region) have an MoU signed with CSU in the provision of two Bila Muuji Oral Health Scholarships. The Scholarships were self-funded by the BM generating membership fees to their organisation.



It was mentioned that there are now four employment agencies in Walgett, clients are being asked to attend interviews in Melbourne.

Mark gave a compliment to personnel who maintained the lawns and gardens. He was advised that two local Aboriginal men are the Managers of the outdoor facilities. Rodney is Horticulture III qualified, and assisted by 'young' senior citizen, Victor!

Mark and Robyn walked through WAMS premises and viewed the local art work, emu eggs and engraved leather-work keys. It was mentioned of the hard work and dedication offered by local Pharmacist, Val Austin, to train WAMS staff, replenish the dispensary, and also the installation and updating of the computer program.

They were advised that the sound-proofed Ear Health room is the only unit within the several of the neighbouring Shires. Hearing screening is also offered to employees of the Police, Shire and to local pilots.

The photographs of the NSW Aboriginal Health Award recipients in 2008 - Phillip Dowse (Senior AHW, ) the Men's Pit Stop program (a partnership of AMS's at Brewarrina, Bourke and Walgett, staff from Greater Western Area Health Service and the Outback Division of General Practice), and the Cashless Condom Vending Machine (Georgiana Butt)

WAMS staff who had the opportunity to speak with Mark and Robyn Coulton were the Chronic Diseases Manager, Skye Duncan; Transport Officer, Peter Plazina; Dental staff, Naomi Thorne, Samia Baker and Kayla Thurston; Receptionists, Bianca Jacky and Suzi Kennedy; Family Centred Primary Health Care personnel, Margaret Reeves and Trevor Simpson. A special thank you to Executive Support Officer, Sharon Silversides who catered the refreshments for our visitors.