



248 Oxide Street  
PO Box 714  
Broken Hill NSW 2880  
Phone: 08 8087 9330  
Fax: 08 8087 9332  
Email: bardiv@bigpond.net.au  
ABN: 71 071 395 536

Office hours:

9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

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## About the Barrier Division

The Barrier Division of General Practice (BDGP) is a not-for-profit organisation, funded primarily through the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. Its role is to support and advocate for General Practitioners, and through the provision of education, information and services to enhance the role of the GP in the delivery of quality primary health care to its communities.

The hub, based in Broken Hill, is a major regional centre of outback (Far West) NSW and the Division is so named because of the Barrier Ranges which surround the City. The Division was formed in 1995 and aimed to assist rural General Practitioners in improving the standards of health care for people living in the region.

The Barrier Division encompasses the towns of Broken Hill, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Wilcannia, Ivanhoe and Menindee. The area covered by the Division is approximately 120,000 square kilometres. The population within the Division boundaries is approximately 25,000, with 21 General Practitioners including 6 Royal Flying Doctor Service Doctors who serve a much broader area than that covered by the Barrier Division.

## Our Programs

### Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program

Access to medical specialist referral points in areas of identified need provides GPs and primary health care providers with the opportunity to provide appropriate and timely care without the cost and inconvenience of having to travel to a major centre.

- Obstetric / Gynaecology Clinics
- Dermatology Clinics

### More Allied Health Services Program

Access to allied health referral points in areas of identified need provides GPs and primary health care providers with the opportunity to develop care plans, provide multi-disciplinary care and to enable people, particularly those with chronic health needs, with the support and services they require to improve their health outcomes / management.

- Podiatry Clinics
- Asthma Educator /Chronic Care Links Nurse

### Better Access in Mental Health

The aim of the Better Access in Mental Health Care Initiative is to support General Practitioners in improving the quality of care provided through general practice to people with a mental health illness by providing mental health education and training for General Practitioners and more support for them through GP referral to Psychologists.

### Aged Care GP Panels Initiative

The Aged Care GP Panels initiative, introduced as part of the Australian Government's Strengthening Medicare package, started on 1 July 2004. The Panels initiative aims to improve access to General Practitioner (GP) services for residents of aged care homes and to enable GPs to work with aged care homes to assist with quality improvement strategies for the care of all residents.

### Blood Pressure Monitoring

Evidence shows that ambulatory blood pressure monitoring helps to differentiate hypertension from white coat hypertension and data generated helps GPs to review and adjust patient medication levels.

- 24 Hour Blood Pressure Monitoring

### Medication Management Review (MMR)

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia in partnership with the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) has funded an MMR facilitator to provide support and information to Pharmacists and GPs on Home Medicines Reviews.

### National Prescribing Service (NPS)

The NPS is an independent not-for-profit organisation established in 1998 to provide services to prescribers to assist in making the best prescribing decisions. These services include:

- easily accessible evidence-based information on changes in knowledge of therapeutics
- educational activities that integrate therapeutics with broader range care
- objective feedback on actual prescribing practice

### Immunisation

The National General Practice Immunisation Program hosted by the Australian General Practice Network aims to improve the quality of vaccination services provided by general practice, with the overall goal of improving immunisation rates Australia wide. The major focus of the Immunisation Program is participation of General Practitioners in the General Practice Immunisation (GPII) Program with the outcome of improving overall immunisation rates to >90% for children under seven years of age.

### Workforce Support – Rural General Practitioners

Supporting local general Practices, practice nurses and practice staff through a range of activities relevant to their day to day Practice needs will help Practices to provide quality, evidence-based medical / primary care.

### Diabetes Centre

The Regional Diabetes Centre is a joint project of the Barrier Division of General Practice and the Broken Hill Health Service. Operating since 1997, it now services an active client base of approximately 1800 people within Broken Hill and its surrounds.

The Centre offers a comprehensive recall program where registered clients are sent annual reminders to seek diabetes checks. The Centre then provides reports to their GP. We provide diabetes education and support, pre-admission advice for those undergoing surgery, comprehensive lifestyle assessments, dietetics advice and annual complication screening. Working with the University Department of Rural Health and other health services, the Centre also provides numerous learning opportunities with placements for medical, nursing and allied health students.

## Our Staff

### Our dedicated team consists of:

#### *Eureka van der Merwe*

Acting CEO and Quality Programs Officer  
(NPS Facilitator, MMR Facilitator / Aged Care GP  
Panels Initiative Coordinator / Better Outcomes in  
Mental Health – Access to Psychological Services  
Coordinator)

*Elizabeth McClure* – Finance Officer

*Vicki Edgecumbe* – MAHS and MSOAP Coordinator

*Meryl Robertson* – Diabetes Administrative Officer

*Joanne Roberts* – Chronic Care Links RN

*Tania Roberts* – IT/IM Administration Officer

*Jenni Evans* – Administration Officer

*Janet Dalby* – EO Administration Support Officer