



**Valerina Mungatopi, Anne-Marie Lee, Nina Black, Angela Kelly and Segora Babui**

Strep A infections of the throat or skin can lead to acute rheumatic fever that can cause sore joints, fevers and inflammation of the heart. Subsequent episodes of ARF may damage the heart valves further and lead to a chronic condition known as rheumatic heart disease (RHD). 30% of people with RHD die before the age of 30.

Adding a 'plus' to the standard secondary prophylaxis regimen of 4-weekly long-acting penicillin injections, locally employed Aboriginal Community Workers (ACWs) provide education about prevention of ARF in those receiving long-acting penicillin and their families, including the roles of crowding, functioning health hardware and early recognition and treatment of sore throats and skin sores.

The ACWs are learning to operate in the following 6 domains:



## WELCOME

To our first newsletter, August 2019

## WHAT IS THE PROJECT CALLED?

SP Plus: An expanded model of secondary prevention for individuals with rheumatic fever (ARF) or rheumatic heart disease (RHD) and their families.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

We work in 3 remote communities in the NT talking to people about the causes of ARF: the Strep A germ, and how to achieve a Strep A free zone at home.

## WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

To reduce recurrences of ARF and first cases of ARF in participating households and thereby, reduce new cases or RHD and to arrest the progression of RHD.

## WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

We work closely with the Health Centres at Barunga and Milikapiti; Sunrise Health Service, Tiwi Land Council and END RHD at Telethon Kids Institute.

## WHO FUNDS THE PROJECT?

BUPA Foundation, the END RHD CRE at Telethon Kids Institute

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

The Investigators: Associate Professor Anna Ralph (Menzies), Associate Professor Vicki Krause (Dept Health), Angela Kelly (Menzies), Dr Kate Hardie (Dept Health), Marea Fittock (Dept Health), Dr Rosemary Wyber (Telethon Kids Institute), Christine Fitzgerald (Dept Housing, John Havnen (NACCHO), Vicki Wade (RHDAustralia).

## CONTACT

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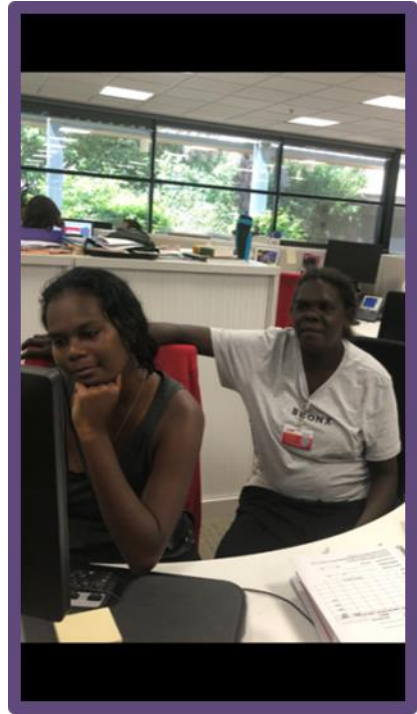


**Angela and Anne-Marie educate each other**

The project commenced at Barunga and Milikapiti in February 2018. The small community of Manyalluluk joined the project in October that year.

Much on the job training continues and the ACWs have met in Darwin twice for intensive education about ARF/RHD. Anne-Marie and Valerina are also Champions4Change – a nascent and developing program run by Indigenous people for their people supported by RHDAustralia.

<https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/news/champions4change-sharing-caring-and-inspiring>



**Segora and Valerina complete a RHDAustralia e-module**

24 households are participating at the moment. Over 600 household interactions have occurred. 27 skin sores and sore throats have been self-reported. Analysis of the first year of implementation is forthcoming.



**ACWs learn about Strep A**



**Two mothers talking about ARF**

Strong and ongoing links have been established with school, housing, other community groups. A song and video about the early detection and management of skin sores and sore throats has been produced by the children of Barunga



Barunga children singing their song *Boom Boom* on stage at the Barunga Festival in June



The Barunga kids with collaborator Justine Clarke at the Festival.

The link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7HqzJafAr8>