

## YOP Shaana Daley case study content

### Empowering people, empowering communities: the journey of a wellness worker

**In the heart of Waiwan Country, nestled in Warren, NSW, resides a passionate advocate for mental health support. Shaana, a proud Aboriginal woman, shares her experience of being one of the first graduating learners in our Youth Outreach Project (YOP), as it not only transformed her own life but also left an undeniable mark on her community.**

### Embracing opportunities

Shaana's introduction to the YOP program came unexpectedly through a phone call from a former colleague. Intrigued by the prospect of making a difference in her community, she embraced the challenge with open arms. Growing up in Warren, NSW, Shaana recognised the dire need for youth accessible mental health supports – a need she was determined to address.

Throughout the program, learners lived in underserved communities across Western NSW and were provided on-the-job training, upskilling, mentoring and development opportunities alongside support to complete their studies – ultimately unlocking better outcomes for our Aboriginal Communities and contributing to Closing the Gap.

Shaana faced various challenges while undertaking the program – from balancing study sessions away from home as a single mother to navigating unfamiliar topics. Yet, with unwavering support from her parents and siblings, her fellow YOP team led by Todd Marr, Marathon Health Education Support Officer, and the guidance from her host employer, Kelly Sinclair at the Warren Youth Centre and Community Hub, Shaana persevered.

***“Without this whole team I can 100% say with confidence we wouldn't have gotten here today.”***

Despite the hurdles, Shaana's biggest achievement is in completing her Certificate IV in Mental Health as a single mum. Hearing her son say he was proud of his mum only highlighted the significance of her accomplishment.

***“As a group we have had many laughs...[we] used each other for support when we would start to get stressed, especially with our studies and not understanding questions and just generally become our own little work family.”***

The program provided Shaana with invaluable career development opportunities, including training sessions by Tim Carr, Marathon Health Training and Engagement Officer, and being able to listen to the experiences of First Nation's Elders – which deepened her understanding of mental health support in the community.

Reflecting on her journey, Shaana acknowledges the challenges she faced, particularly being away from home for extended periods. However, with the comradery of her fellow learners and the unwavering encouragement from her family, she overcame every obstacle.

If given a chance to rewind time, Shaana would do things slightly differently – slow down, cherish every moment, ask more questions and soak in the experience fully.

## Looking to the future

Shaana's journey through the YOP is filled with gratitude. Gratitude for the opportunity, gratitude for the support, and above all, gratitude for the chance to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around her.

***“Working in my hometown and being able to support the youth will always be the best feeling for me. Being based at the Warren Youth Centre and Community Hub has been so beneficial.”***

As she looks towards the future, Shaana remains committed to empowering her community and advocating for mental health support for Aboriginal families. She plans to continue her studies and obtain a Diploma of Mental Health.

To those considering joining YOP, Shaana offers words of encouragement, “every effort made to uplift your community will have a positive intergenerational effect, especially for First Nation’s families.”

“While the road may be challenging, the rewards are immeasurable,” she said.

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### NEWS

## Grads making a difference to mental health in the bush

Orlander Rumung

GROWING up in Warren, Shaana Daley found there weren't a lot of places to get support for your mental health.

She's one of 13 Aboriginal people who graduated from Marathon Health's Youth Outreach Project with a Certificate IV in Mental Health.

The trainees were employed by Marathon Health for the 12 months while they completed their studies. They were also provided on-the-job training in under-served communities across western NSW where they were able to upskill, while also getting mentoring and development opportunities.

The ultimate goal is to unlock better outcomes for Aboriginal communities and continue towards closing the gap.

Ms Daley, a single mother to a seven-year-old, said completing the program had been challenging but she could “finally see the finish line”. She joined the Youth Outreach Project because as a teenager in a small community she didn't have “the

supports that probably could have been helpful to myself and hjnbnmany other people,” she said.

“You're out so far and away from services,” Ms Daley said.

Now through her working in Warren she's already starting to help kids in need.

“I'm a pretty proud Aboriginal woman and anything

that can help our people is good. So I wouldn't say [working in] mental health was at the front of mind but I enjoyed the challenge,” she said.

Ms Daley said she was going to continue her studies to get a Diploma of Mental Health.

Travis Hill, another of the graduates, said the project

would have great benefits for rural and remote communities.

“We've been pretty clear on that message from the start. We want to train local people and keep them in the local communities,” he said.

“It's very important, especially for those communities. There's very little mental health support out there.”

Youth Outreach Project program manager Brendan Cubby said the initiative had not been designed solely by Marathon Health, but in conjunction with the western NSW communities. “We've been visiting every community and getting input from each community. Every community is different so we need to get in touch

with the local service providers, community members, elders, young people, just to get input on their needs in the particular community,” he said.

Marathon Health chief Megan Callinan said the healthcare force needed to grow to support the needs of regional communities. She said employer-led, innovative programs helped to meet the need.

“This First Nations workforce initiative is a first for Marathon Health. Through deep community and stakeholder consultation, we have co-designed a traineeship program to build a strong First Nations workforce that is well-equipped to deliver mental health services now and into the future,” she said.

“We know that people cannot afford to leave a job and their communities to study - that's where this project has been crucial in breaking down the barriers to becoming qualified to work in the healthcare sector.”

The initiative is supported by the Western NSW Primary Health Network and the Regional Aboriginal Partnerships Program.



Shaana Daley, Brandon Cubby and Travis Hill at the graduation ceremony in Dubbo. Picture by Belinda Soole