



# CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE COUNCIL

September 28 2022

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Regionally Significant Projects endorsed

At today's monthly meeting Central Darling Shire Council endorsed two Regionally Significant Developments with a combined value of more than \$12 million dollars.

- Construction on a new Community Health and Wellbeing Facility, at a cost of more than \$7 million, for Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, to serve Wilcannia.
- Development of the \$5.57 million Baaka Cultural Centre at Wilcannia.

Each development met criteria to be independently assessed and approved by the Western Regional Planning Panel before going to Council for endorsement.

Central Darling Shire Council General Manager, Greg Hill said it was an exciting day for the Shire with both developments set to result in enormous benefits.

"Both projects have been in discussion for a considerable amount of time. Now today we are moving to the next stage and this is tremendous news. It is a very important day for everyone involved. The benefits will be enormous for local residents in terms of health facilities, tourism and the potential jobs boom that will come from these works," Mr Hill said.

Maari Ma Health interim CEO, William Johnstone, also welcomed the approval.

"Maari Ma is looking forward to the commencement of construction on our new health and wellbeing centre, so that we can deliver quality primary health care services from a purpose-built and community-controlled facility that both Wilcannia and Maari Ma can be proud of," Mr Johnstone said.

The Baaka Cultural Centre project will accommodate a range of activities (public exhibitions, performances, workshop, training and events) while also functioning as a visitor information centre, and meeting/gathering place for the community and a keeping place for artefacts.

Baaka Cultural Centre acting Executive Officer, Grant Leslie, said today's stamp of approval from Council was a "significant leap forward."

"This is very welcome news for the project as there have been significant delays in the project due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the acquisition of the land adjacent to 44 Reid Street," he said.

Mr Leslie said now that the DA had been approved the next very important step was to approach four companies shortlisted for the works. Once complete it will result in an attractive and modern place to showcase Barkandji culture. **ENDS**

Media contacts: Council: Gabrielle Johnston - 0472 787 022

Maari Ma: Philippa Quinn - 0409 929 502.

Baaka Cultural Centre: Grant Leslie – 0432 862 714