

Program a winner

By Soraiya Gharakhani

AN innovative program that provides emotional support and guidance to local indigenous parents won a major award last week.

Sydney South West Area Health Service's Boomerangs Parenting Program has been recognised at the NSW Health Aboriginal Health Awards.

The program is a national first and was developed by Chryne Griffiths and Patricia Glossop (now retired) from the Circle of Security and Marte Meo programs.

Aboriginal program coordinator Chryne Griffiths said it targeted parents with young children.

"It combines existing parenting techniques with the ancient wisdom of Aboriginal culture," she said.

"Families are brought together in more traditional ways, such as gatherings or camps. At the gatherings parents are filmed interacting with their children.

"From this an individualised parenting road map



Help for parents: Sister Alison Bush, with a newborn, was inducted into the Hall of Fame for her commitment in the past 40 years to improving the health of Aboriginal mothers and babies in Australia.

identifying strengths and struggles is created."

Activities included therapies, parent-child-infant interaction guidance, family games, fathering and mothering, self-care, baby massage, parent craft advice, children's games and playing as a family.

"Parents have said to us that they now feel more in tune with their children and can pick up on their cues

better," Ms Griffiths said.

"The program was called Boomerangs because traditionally Aboriginal people always carried two boomerangs - never one - representing the mother and the baby or the parent and the child."

The awards acknowledge the contribution of individuals, teams and organisations which improve Aboriginal health in NSW.

Challenges facing older people under scrutiny

FORMER health minister Craig Knowles will talk about challenges posed by an ageing population at a forum for Macarthur business leaders in August.

Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care senior officer Steven Gal will also speak at the

breakfast forum organised by the Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC).

The event is on Tuesday, August 11 at Durham Green Village, Menangle. Cost is \$35, registration is through MACROC, 4645 4937.