



Media Release

6 February 2017

Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (WACHS) new provider of Aboriginal health services in Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains.

WACHS is pleased to announce that it has been successful in its bid to tender for the provision of culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services to Western Sydney and the Nepean Blue Mountains, through a joint tender process led by the Commonwealth in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health.

The Commonwealth funding has been awarded to WACHS under the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme for Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains regions for 2016-17 and 2017-18. The NSW Ministry of Health is also providing funding for the provision of culturally safe services for Aboriginal people including population health, Chronic care, mental health and drug and alcohol.

Under this arrangement, WACHS will formally take on these services from the 1 April 2017.

"We are very pleased to have formally signed off on the funding agreement following negotiations with the Commonwealth and State Governments," said WACHS CEO Darren Ah See.

The scope of the arrangement includes operations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Health Services provided from the Mt Druitt premises as well as Aboriginal health services to Penrith and the Healthy4Life services to Nepean Blue Mountain areas," he said.

Currently the Western Sydney Primary Health Network (WentWest) over sees the operations of the Sydney West Aboriginal Health Service (SWAHS), which is supported by funding from both the NSW Ministry of Health and the Commonwealth Government.

"WACHS will work closely with WentWest to transition their current operational arrangement to WACHS for the 1 April deadline."

WentWest CEO, Walter Kmet welcomed the funding announcement.

"WACHS has a long-standing reputation for a strong business model which delivers culturally appropriate services. WentWest will work closely with WACHS during the transition of these services in line with the new arrangement."

Western Sydney Local Health District CEO, Danny O'Connor also confirmed a commitment to working closely with WACHS and the PHN to strengthen Aboriginal health services in the city's west."

"WSLHD has already developed a relationship with WACHS and is looking forward to the opportunities that this new arrangement will bring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Western Sydney."

CEO of Nepean Blue Mountains PHN, Lizz Reay said she was looking forward to the continuation Healthy4Life program in the Blue Mountains region.

Mr Ah See said that core primary health services continued to be provided from Mt Druitt and will continue to be provided during the transition period to WACHS.

“WACHS looks forward to working with the local Aboriginal communities of Western Sydney and the Nepean Blue Mountains as the service is established.”

For 25 years, WACHS under the guidance of a community appointed Board of Directors, have been providing primary health care, allied health and health promotion services to the Aboriginal community across NSW. In recent years WACHS has built a reputation for applying its successful business and operational model to enable the viability and stability of a number of community controlled Aboriginal health services.

These include:

- Establishing Aboriginal Medical Services in Orange, Coonamble and Dubbo
- Au spicing operations at Tamworth Aboriginal Medical Service which is now independent
- Re-establishing the services at the Moree Aboriginal Residential Rehabilitation Service which had been closed for a number of years.

WACHS Board Chair, Marsha Hill said, “WACHS is very excited about the opportunity to extend its service capacity and is committed to working with staff at Sydney West Aboriginal Health Service, WentWest, Wentworth Healthcare Limited, Nepean Blue Mountains PHN, the Western Sydney Local Health District and other key stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition to support the continuity of Aboriginal health services to the Aboriginal community of western Sydney, and Nepean Blue Mountains regions”.

Further information about WACHS can be found at www.wachs.net.au

Media Contact: Rebekah Bullock 0407959781