



including...



Greater Western
Aboriginal Health Service

ICN 792—under special administration

NEWSLETTER

Issue 2, November 2021

Dear members and other interested people,

Our names are Jack James and Paula Smith and we are from Rodgers Reidy in Perth. On 20 September 2021, the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations appointed us special administrators of Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (WACHS).

During the special administration, we will keep you informed of progress through newsletters and information meetings. All newsletters and meeting notices will be at register.oric.gov.au/PrintCorporationSearch.aspx?icn=792

PROGRESS OF SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION?

We are now well advanced in stage 2 of the special administration, which is aiming to restore good operational order.

| STAGE | ACTION | STATUS |
|-------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Take control of the assets, including bank accounts; build a complete picture of issues and challenges; and establish a clear plan of action. | COMPLETE |
| 2 | Restore good operational order. | IN PROGRESS |
| 3 | Prepare the corporation for return to members control. | PENDING |

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

FUNDING

WACHS continues to operate as usual. It receives funding—primarily from the Commonwealth Department of Health, the NSW Ministry of Health and the National Indigenous Australians Agency—to deliver important services and programs. There has been no disruption to services and programs during the special administration.

Since our appointment, we have been meeting with the funding agencies regularly to discuss the ongoing operations of WACHS. These meetings have been constructive, and we are pleased to advise that WACHS has the ongoing support of the funding agencies.

STAFFING

Chief executive officer (CEO)

We advise that Mr Darren Ah-See is no longer employed by WACHS, effective from 12 October 2021. For confidentiality reasons, we are unable to comment further on that.

The process to recruit a new CEO has begun. The closing date for applications is 8 November 2021. We'll review applications and select candidates for first-round interviews. Then we'll work with the advisory group through the remaining stages of the recruitment. Members of the advisory group will be on the interview panel.

Once the new CEO has been formally appointed, we will advise members.

Chief finance officer

The recruitment of a new chief finance officer (CFO) is well advanced. Having completed second-round interviews, we are now checking references.

Once the new CFO is formally appointed, we will advise members

Executive management team

During the special administration, we will review the executive management team (EMT) to develop a structure well aligned to WACHS activities, locations and operating structures.

As an interim step, after receiving internal expressions of interest, we have made the following changes:

- Darren Green has been appointed acting executive manager for operations
- Cherie Colliss has been appointed to a new role (pending the EMT review) as acting executive manager of Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service (GWAHS)

As such, the current EMT structure is as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| Chief executive officer (CEO) | |
| Jo Grant (acting; recruitment in progress) | |
| Chief finance officer (CFO) | |
| vacant (recruitment in progress) | |
| Solicitor | |
| Jennifer Conn | |
| Executive manager, service development, Western Sydney & Dubbo | |
| Janet Curran | |
| Executive manager, operations | |
| Darren Green (acting) | |
| Executive manager, Moree Aboriginal residential rehabilitation service—Maayu Mali | |
| Tim Horan | |
| Executive manager, communications, marketing & engagement | |
| Jodie Evans | |
| Executive manager, Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service | |
| Cherie Colliss (acting) | |

OPENING OF KATOOMBA CLINIC

We are pleased to advise that the Katoomba clinic opened for business on Monday 25 October 2021. WACHS is currently looking to recruit a doctor for the Katoomba clinic. We hope this position will be filled in the next week or so.

REVIEW OF MAAYU MALI

Maayu Mali is a rehabilitation centre for Aboriginal adults. It offers a minimum 12-week residential rehabilitation program for up to 14 men and 4 women, with a 21-month aftercare program.

Maayu Mali's program is delivered using the culturally safe Aboriginal drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation model of care. It aims to provide a holistic approach in supporting and healing the whole person. It involves individual and group treatment, individual case management, training, recreation, health and fitness, wellbeing, art and cultural support.

The operations of Maayu Mali are funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

The Glen (an experienced operator in the residential rehabilitation sector) has been engaged to review Maayu Mali operations and provide recommendations to improve systems and processes and ultimately, outcomes for clients. The review should be complete in November 2021.

COVID-19 VACCINATION ROLLOUT

Ensuring the maximum uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations has been a priority for staff at WACHS. For September 2021, the total number of vaccinations (1st and 2nd doses) was as follows:

| CLINIC | DOSES |
|------------|-------|
| Wellington | 5,249 |
| Mt Druitt | 654 |

With the appointment of Cherie Colliss as acting executive manager of GWAHS, further work is being done in Western Sydney, Penrith and Nepean/Blue Mountains with the local health district and other stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to maximise vaccination rates.

MONEY STORY

REPORTING ON 2020-21

We are working with the finance team to get the financial statements and management accounts to September 2021 up to date. We expect to have it done by the end of November and will include this information in our next newsletter.

Once the unaudited financial statements have been brought up to date, the audit can commence.



2021-22 BUDGET

At the time of our appointment, no budget for 2021-22 had been prepared. We are working on a budget now and expect to complete it by the end of November 2021.

ADVISORY GROUP

We are pleased that many people expressed an interest in joining the advisory group. We reviewed the applications and have selected the following people as members:

- Roy Ah-See
- Glen Crump
- Terrieanne Hughes
- Tony Hunter
- Lizzie May
- Ray Messom
- Robert Skeen
- Heidi Spratt
- Kerryann Stanley

We have endeavoured to form an advisory group that represents each area: Wellington/Dubbo, Western Sydney, Blue Mountains/Nepean and Moree. We are still seeking nominations from the Blue Mountains/Nepean area.

Going forward, we will work with the advisory group to:

- recruit a new CEO
- review the rule book to strengthen governance and representation in WACHS.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Our next steps will include, amongst other things:

- finalise recruitment of a new CFO
- complete the 2020-21 accounts and the budget for the remainder of 2021-22
- review EMT structure
- with the assistance of the advisory group:
 - review the governance structure and the rule book
 - recruit a new CEO.

INFORMATION MEETINGS

Usually during a special administration, we would hold regular information meetings and invite all members and other interested people to attend. They provide the opportunity to hear from the special administrators about work being done and allow people to ask questions.

Current government restrictions prevent us from holding information meetings. We will provide regular updates through newsletters and social media channels. With NSW restrictions easing, we are aiming to hold a meeting in December 2021. We will notify members well in advance of the meeting.

CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR CLOSURE

WACHS will be fully closed from 12.00pm Friday 24 December, and reopen on Tuesday 4 January 2022. Maayu Mali will also close at noon on 24 December, with a skeleton staff returning on Tuesday 28 December.

Like many other services during the pandemic, WACHS has worked tirelessly over the past 18 months to ensure its communities had access to the latest information, options, and treatments to keep everyone safe. Staff have worked longer hours and, at times, canceled scheduled leave to maintain the service standard. In line with the roadmap to reopen the state, WACHS is in a position to reward its staff with a much-needed break. Hence the decision to close.

We know that Christmas can be a lonely and difficult time, especially for those who have struggled with job/income loss, health issues and family deaths. WACHS has dedicated emergency contacts at each of its business sites during the closure period, for anyone who wants to reach out.

WACHS will also provide a list of alternative contacts to all members/clients, keep its social media pages updated and clearly display signage on all our office sites.

WACHS has already notified regional primary health networks, local doctors and hospitals of the closure arrangements.

SPECIAL ADMINISTRATORS



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MORE INFORMATION

The Registrar has a fact sheet, Special administrations: what members and directors need to know—See oric.gov.au/special-admins or free call **1800 622 431**.