Aboriginal Health in Aboriginal Hands

Winnunga News

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CEO Update

The Australian Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion announced on 7 July that it was his intention from July 2018 only Aboriginal owned, managed and controlled organisations and businesses would be funded by the Commonwealth to deliver services under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. This decision by the Minister is one of the most profoundly important policy decisions to have been made for years in relation to the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In making the announcement Minister Scullion said it was a decision taken on the back of incontrovertible evidence that the best outcomes being achieved under the IAS were those that were being delivered by local, community focused Indigenous managed and led organisations and businesses. The Minister effectively asserted that the evidence was in, and that the practice of Governments in turning to mainstream and church based businesses, ahead of Aboriginal organisations, was producing sub-optimal outcomes for Aboriginal people and that the Commonwealth would from the beginning of the next financial year only make funding under the IAS available to Aboriginal businesses.

The next step in this process must be its extension to other programs and funding including of Indigenous specific programs managed by the States and Territories and of funding dispersed through the Public Health Network.

It was perhaps no coincidence that the Minister’s announcement coincided with the tenth anniversary of the disastrous and racist bi partisan ‘intervention’ in the Northern Territory. Ms Pat Anderson, one of the authors of ‘Little Children are Sacred’ and currently chairperson of the Lowitja Institute has previously summarised the rationale of Minister Scullion’s decision to turn to Aboriginal organisations for the delivery of services as being that one of the most important determinants of health is ‘control’. She said: ‘Practically this means any policy aimed at reducing the disadvantage of our communities must ask itself how it will increase the ability of Aboriginal people, families and communities to take control over their own lives.’

This is the point I have made repeatedly to ACT Government Ministers and officials, most particularly and forcefully in recent times in relation to the exclusion of any Aboriginal community involvement in programs such as Strengthening Families, A Step Up for Our Kids, Throughcare, supported housing, care and protection, childcare, aged care or justice. The default practice in the ACT is for the Government to turn to precisely the organisations that Minister Scullion has said the evidence shows produce sub-optimal outcomes for Aboriginal people, namely non-Aboriginal mainstream businesses and church backed businesses. Organisations which the Minister has now said will, on the basis of all the evidence, no longer be funded by the Commonwealth.

Bravo Nigel Scullion!
Non-Indigenous Businesses Given Notice on IAS Contracts

From July 30 next year, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs says he’ll refuse to do business with any organisation that’s not Aboriginal. Nigel Scullion said he’s having tough conversations with organisations like church groups, who currently have contracts to provide some services in Aboriginal communities.

He said he’s already been asked by some church groups how they can become an Indigenous business.

(http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-07/non-indigenous-businesses-given-notice-on-ias/8689622)

Shadow Minister Linda Burney Visits Winnunga AHCS

Winnunga AHCS opens its doors to hundreds of visitors each year but welcoming the Honourable Linda Burney MP to Winnunga AHCS provided even more significant meaning for CEO Julie Tongs. Both Ms Tongs and Minister Burney’s people are Wiradjuri, and they are from the same small town of Whitton, located in south west New South Wales.

The visit to Winnunga AHCS was the first for the Labor MP and Shadow Minister for Human Services. Winnunga AHCS staff were left impressed by Ms Burney’s energy, easy going nature, and inspired by her career and journey to Federal Parliament.

Fact: Linda Burney was as the first Aboriginal Woman to have a seat in the Commonwealth Governments House of Representatives
ACT Govt Must Commit to Support of Families at Risk of Losing Child

Canberra Times, Letters to the Editor, 4 July 2017

It is wonderful, of course, to see Canberra families stepping up to provide foster care to children deemed to be in need of care and protection, (“Plea for more foster families to help our children grow”, July 4, p2). The greater need is for the ACT government to make a genuine commitment to supporting those families at risk of having a child removed, among whom Aboriginal families are scandalously over-represented, so that the child does not need to be removed.

That prosperous ACT has the highest rate of Indigenous incarceration and the second highest rate of Aboriginal children in care and protection in Australia, is not just a sign that current policies in the ACT are failing Aboriginal people but is a matter of national shame.

The ACT government has just announced another inquiry into why the current policies and programs in the ACT for the care and protection of Aboriginal children continue to fail. It is beyond dispute that one of the major reasons for that failure is the refusal of the ACT government and its public service to work with or engage in a meaningful way with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery organisations such as Winnunga Nimmityjah.

The ACT child protection service, Step Up for Kids, is the only state or territory-based service in Australia for the support of Aboriginal families and children at risk that is managed, led and run by non-Aboriginal, mainstream organisations without involvement of the local Aboriginal community. If the ACT government is seriously looking for a reason for its consistent failure to address Indigenous disadvantage in Canberra that would be a good place to start.

*Julie Tongs, CEO Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services*

Fact: ACT has the highest rate of Indigenous incarceration and the second highest rate of Aboriginal children in care and protection in Australia
SNAICC-Family Matters

The SNAICC Family Matters initiative represents the most significant attempt nationally to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have every opportunity ‘to grow up safely in their home, receive a good education, and grow healthy and proud.’

A raft of data in the ACT across areas as diverse as child protection, education, justice, incarceration rates, drug use and housing reflect just how poorly the ACT is performing in ensuring equality of opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A key aspect of the Family Matters initiative is the Family Matters Statement of Commitment through which organisations and individuals who are engaged in any way with the provision of services designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, make a signed commitment to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to achieve the goals of the Family Matters campaign. In making this undertaking signatories commit to six core principles, one of which is:

‘Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations participate in and have control over decisions that affect their children.’

In the ACT the Government’s strategy for dealing with the incidents of entrenched disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families which leads to contact with the care and protection system and the removal of children from their families, is known as ‘A Step Up for Our Kids’.

There are only two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander managed and led service delivery organisations in Canberra, Winnunga AHCS and Gugan Gulwan. Each of these organisations is of long standing, highly regarded, well governed and managed. They are totally committed to serving the needs of the local Aboriginal community from which they emerged and which constitute the majority of their workforce.

Winnunga AHCS sought, unsuccessfully, to be involved in A Step Up for Our Kids. Winnunga AHCS’s interest extended only to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children for whom the program was relevant.

For reasons that have never been made clear, the ACT Government chose instead to engage a consortium, which operates under the name ‘ACT Together’, comprised entirely of non-Aboriginal mainstream organisations.

One of the partners in ACT Together, Uniting Care does have as part of its corporate structure a business arm known as Jaanimili. Through this business unit Uniting Care apparently employs Aboriginal people but it is not in any sense an Aboriginal organisation nor is it connected to or recognised as representing the local Aboriginal community.

Fact: SNAICC was formally established in 1981 after the creation of such a body was proposed by at the ‘First Aboriginal Child Survival Seminar’ held in Melbourne in 1979.
Most of the ACT Together consortium appear, however, to have signed the Family Matters commitment to ‘ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations participate in and have control over decisions that affect their children.’

Despite this, ACT Together participated in a tender process for the provision of services, under A Step Up for Our Kids, to Aboriginal families and children, in opposition to Winnunga AHCS, an Aboriginal community controlled and managed organisation which had also tendered and had existing rapport and trust with the majority of families the Step Up for Our Kids was designed to support.

It is moot to ask on what basis those members of ACT Together who have committed to the Family Matters charter, but who have entered into arrangements for supporting Aboriginal families and children which exclude Aboriginal organisations from participation, could argue that they have not breached the charter.

It is worth noting that in the almost three years since the ACT Government committed to A Step Up for Our Kids, without Aboriginal participation, that the rate of removal of Aboriginal children in Canberra has increased 1% a year and is now, at over 26% from a population base of just 1.5%, the second highest in Australia.

Fact: SNAICC is the national non government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
Lessons Still to Learn Fifty Years After the Referendum

Professor Ian Anderson, Deputy Secretary in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, in his keynote address at a seminar held in Canberra on the fiftieth anniversary of the 1967 referendum insisted that there was a need for new approaches from policy makers and public servants if the stubborn challenges still being faced by Indigenous Australians were to be addressed.

In his remarks Professor Anderson said that while there has been progress in some areas there were also consistent failures of policy and in achieving outcomes for disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

In remarks which could be interpreted as applying to the ACT Government, Professor Anderson said, among other things:

‘The key to Indigenous disadvantage is not just what governments do, but what Indigenous people and communities do.’

‘Governments need to work collaboratively with Indigenous Australia – and learn to share leadership and accountability in new ways that might be uncomfortable at first.’

Professor Anderson said that his vision for the future was modelled on a ‘collaborative partnership... founded on robust, accountable and professional working relationships’, that featured shared decision making and mutual accountability as core principles.

This is a vision that the entire Aboriginal managed and led community sector share, including in the ACT. It is a future that is dreamed about but after decades of bitter disappointment at the continuing patronising and paternalistic approach of Governments across Australia few are prepared to believe will be realised anytime soon.

Professor Ian Anderson is an Aboriginal Tasmanian, but has spent the majority of his life in the Koori community in Victoria, where he has extensive family and community networks. During his 25 years of working in Aboriginal (Koori) Health, Ian has been an Aboriginal health worker, a health educator and a general practitioner.

Fact: In March 2017 Professor Ian Anderson was appointed as Deputy Secretary in Prime Minister and Cabinet

Do it with us, not to us
House Call Doctor is launching the $10 000 Futures in Health Indigenous Scholarship, specifically aimed at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students considering a career in health and medicine.

Indigenous Australians currently comprise just 0.3% of our national healthcare workforce, and the Futures in Health Scholarship has been designed to address this imbalance.

At House Call Doctor, our team believes that healthcare professionals should reflect the diversity of patients they care for. Health experts from diverse backgrounds offer unique perspectives that enable the medical workforce to be more understanding and responsive to patient needs, both on an individual and community level.

We want to ensure that our Scholarship is available to as many eligible students as possible. Students can apply via:

To be eligible for The House Call Doctor Futures in Health Scholarship, applicants must:
- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Be an undergraduate student studying a health / medical field at an Australian university
- Be entering at least the 2nd year of study in 2018
- Be able to provide written documentation

Applications open on 15 June 2017 and close on 15 December 2017

Dr Mark Wenitong, founder of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association and a member of the Kabi Kabi tribal group, said that Indigenous Australians have a vital role to play in our national healthcare workforce.

‘I would encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to apply for the Futures in Health Indigenous Scholarship, along with other programs like it, and aim to make a difference in your own life along with that of your community.’ Dr Wenitong said.
ACT Auditor-General, Dr Maxine Cooper has announced a forward performance audit program which will focus on a number of areas of critical importance to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Dr Cooper has announced her office will aim during 2017-18 to audit services and programs designed to provide educational support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT.

Significantly the announcement of this audit came in the same week that the Canberra Times reported remarks made by Dr Chris Sara of the University of Canberra in which he noted that an analysis of the latest NAPLAN results reveal that on average an Aboriginal child in Year 9 in the ACT is on average two years behind a non-Aboriginal student in educational achievement. Dr Sara found that the educational outcomes being achieved by Aboriginal students in Canberra were worse than those being achieved in all State capital cities in Australia.

The findings of Dr Sara reinforce the findings published by Jon Stanhope and Khalid Ahmed earlier this year, including in the Winnunga News, that educational outcomes for Aboriginal students in the ACT have been in steady decline over the last six to seven years and that in the 2016 NAPLAN report the gap in achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the ACT has widened in six of the eight NAPLAN measures.

Dr Cooper has also foreshadowed performance audits in relation to early intervention and prevention initiatives for children as well as a specific inquiry into the implementation of the ‘A Step Up for Our Kids’ strategy as applied to Indigenous children at risk.

As the Winnunga News has reported previously the situation of Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory in contact with the care and protection system is currently the subject of a Royal Commission. The fact that all of the statistics in relation to the care and protection of Aboriginal children in the ACT are far worse than those in the NT indicates that as a minimum a full audit of the ACT system is warranted.

An audit has also been foreshadowed into the protection of human rights which Dr Cooper has also included in the performance audit program.

Fact: The Auditor-General is responsible for the audit of all ACT public sector agencies.
Cooper suggests might look at the effectiveness of selected directorate’s compliance with human rights. Winnunga AHCS would be interested in ensuring that any such audit focussed on ACT Corrections and the Community Services Directorate after the worrying revelations in the Moss report into the care and treatment of Steven Freeman while detained in the AMC, the recent deeply disturbing revelations of the treatment of young people in Bimberi and the dysfunction in its management.

In addition Dr Cooper has foreshadowed an audit of the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2007 in addressing housing affordability in the ACT. This is a most important audit and one which will resonate very strongly with the Aboriginal community, which as a separate identifiable community within the broader Canberra community, has disproportionately low levels of home ownership. A difficulty the Auditor-General will face with this audit is that from all appearances the ACT Government abandoned the Affordable Housing Action Plan years ago.

Winnunga AHCS looks forward to assisting the Auditor-General in any way it can with these audits.

Fact: The Office of the Auditor General provides advice and recommendations for improving the management of ACT public sector resources.
What do you get when you have a Doctor of Medicine and a mad Broncos supporter in the one team? Apparently a winning team!

Well that’s what happened when Dr Sean White and Social Health Team Manager Ian Bateman teamed up and entered into Reconciliation Australia’s inaugural NAIDOC Camp Oven Damper Cook Off.

Dr Sean and Mr Bateman made a mozzarella and ham damper and the judge’s liked what they served up awarding them with the ‘Judge’s award’.

Mr ‘Damper King’ Bateman said he was stoked to take out the award. ‘It was a great day. We were quietly confident going into the cook off’ he said.

Dr ‘Damper King’ Sean echoed the sentiments of his fellow Damper King. ‘We enjoyed the day. It was a close competition but we knew we had the winning recipe going into the cook off’ he commented.

Reconciliation Australia were pleased with how the cook off turned out. ‘The day was a huge success with a great turnout’ said spokesperson Kirby Summerell.

Some firm rules were put into place for the cook off. ‘No spoons or mixing utensils were allowed’ said Mr Summerell. He further added that ‘there was no set cooking timeframe but the damper had to be cooked in a campfire oven over the hot coals of the open fire’.

The competing teams were encouraged by the organisers to bring their imagination and creative cooking spirit to inspire that next level of damper, with secret ingredients being welcomed.

And the competitors didn’t disappoint. There were four team winners on the day. The ‘Glamper Dampers’, a team comprised of Reconciliation Australia staff members, took the top prize for the day, with a delicious spinach, cheese and pumpkin damper.

Fact: Originally made from flour of crushed Spinifex seeds, bush damper has been a diet staple for tens of thousands of years.
Other winners were:

- ‘Encouragement award’ to Lynley and Kennedy (chocolate chip damper)
- ‘Best flavour’ went to Indigenous Business Australia (Nutella centred damper)
- ‘Judges award’ was awarded to Winnunga AHCS (yummy mozzarella and ham damper)

As for what their winning recipe was, the Winnunga AHCS Damper Kings remained tight lipped and weren’t sharing any secrets or tips any time soon! ‘Yeah no sorry, I know it’s NAIDOC Week and all that but we can’t share this with you’ Mr Bateman said.

‘All I can say is you’ve got to pick the right flour. But that’s all I’m saying. Nothing else because we’ve got our eyes on the prize for next year’ Dr Sean added.
Meet Winnunga AHCS Audiologist

Brooke McIntosh

My name is Brooke McIntosh. I have been an Audiologist for nearly 25 years. In all that time I have never lost my passion for helping people hear better – it’s one of the best jobs in the world.

I began work at Winnunga officially in April this year as the audiologist (Wednesdays and Thursdays). I work closely with Reeion, our Hearing Health Worker, who is also available to see people with concerns for their ears or hearing.

For two years I have visited Winnunga as part of my role with Australian Hearing, fitting hearing aids once a month. When the opportunity came up to work at Winnunga on staff I was really excited to join the fantastic team here. I have three areas that I am focussing on during my time at Winnunga:

* CHILDREN – the earlier we can identify hearing and ear issues in young babies, kids and toddlers, the better their outcomes for speech, language and learning for school. If you can’t always hear well, you can’t always speak, listen and learn well. We have an amazing early childhood team here, consisting of GPs, Paediatrician, Paediatric nurses, Psychologists, Allied Health workers and the Social Health Team. We meet regularly to focus on the best way to support families and their children in our community. Families can help by bringing in any toddlers or kids to Winnunga that have sore, blocked or runny ears, are saying ‘what?’ a lot or have a delay in their speech and language. We can arrange referral to an Ear Nose and Throat specialist if needed. We can also fit suitable hearing aids for babies and kids through Australian Hearing if required. This is a free service for everyone under 26.

* ADULTs over 50 – hearing aids these days are small, stylish, discrete and fully automatic. Aboriginal adults over 50 years of age are eligible for government funded hearing help too. This hearing aid service for eligible adults can be accessed at Winnunga now.

* INCARCERATED JUVENILES AND YOUNG ADULTS - Research shows there is a high instance of hearing loss in young prisoners. Young adults are eligible for government funded hearing help, including tests and hearing aids until they turn 26.

All Winnunga clients, regardless of age, are welcome to come in for a free hearing and middle ear assessment with me. I look forward to seeing you!

Fact: Please ring us on 6284 6222 to book an appointment with Brooke McIntosh
Every Mothers Son is Guilty

A recently published history of the role of the police in supporting the suppression and removal of Aboriginal people from their traditional land to make way for farmers and graziers makes compelling reading. The book, Every Mothers son is Guilty: Policing the Kimberly Frontier of Western Australia 1882-1905, is by historian Chris Owen.

Paul Daley, in a review of the book published in the Guardian makes the point that Owen is seeking in the book to respond to other narratives of the era which celebrated European exploration, pioneering, colonisation and conquest.

Owen writes for example; ‘Aboriginal people were part and parcel of the environment: an element to overcome by force if necessary, along with drought, wild animals, hunger and thirst. Unspoken in these accounts is the extreme violence between colonists, police and Aboriginal people…the difficult aspects of colonisation.’…. there are ‘references to violent interactions involving the killing of Aboriginal people… though events are spoken of in euphemisms (the term dispersal being the most obvious) or clouded under a veil of allusion.’

Owen also details the widespread imprisonment of Aboriginal boys in the Kimberley and notes that they were chained in the same way and were forced to work building roads and fences and in clearing land.

Owen noted: ‘In Hall’s Creek Aboriginal children as young as 10 were arrested, charged and imprisoned for periods of up to six months, sometimes with hard labour. One 15 year old boy was sentenced to nine months for killing a goat and another eight children between 14 and 16 years received two years goal with hard labour for cattle killing’.

Owen has included contemporary photographs of Aboriginal men and boys chained together by the neck. Owen’s research suggests that neck chains were still being used in Western Australia until 1956.

Fact: This country can’t ‘move on’ until there’s a reckoning with our past, which we must acknowledge culturally, in the way we do history, and for the terrible generational legacy that manifests in Indigenous disadvantage and extreme poverty and social dysfunction. Paul Daley

The pastoralists might’ve had their euphemisms - such as “dispersal”, when what they really meant was killing.’ Photograph: State Library of Western Australia
Inspector of Custodial Services

Winnunga AHCS CEO Julie Tongs has responded to a request from Corrections Minister Shane Rattenbury MLA, in relation to the establishment of an ACT Inspectorate of Custodial Services.

In her submission Julie has recommended that the Inspector of Custodial Services have the full range of statutory powers and independence, and that all reports of the Inspector should be made public.

Julie has also recommended that for the sake of administrative efficiency and to ensure that the Inspector operates within a human rights framework and is cognisant of human rights practice, that the Inspectorate be incorporated into the Human Rights Commission.

Review of Official Visitors Scheme

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate is currently undertaking a review of the ACT Official Visitor scheme and has sought feedback from stakeholders about its effectiveness and options for reform. The aim of the review is to determine whether the Official Visitor scheme is achieving its purpose of providing independent oversight of visitable places, increasing transparency, and reporting to government about conditions and concerns in visitable places.

Winnunga AHCS CEO Julie Tongs will be making a submission to the review which will focus on aspects of the findings of the recent Moss review into the care of Steven Freeman and the evidence before the coronial inquest into his death.

Beanies for Brain Cancer Round

The Touch Footy community put team rivalry aside recently to support the Beanies for Brain Cancer round at Deakin. The round brought awareness of brain cancer to the forefront and was also a fundraiser, that took on a personal meaning, for Touch Football ACT and the Tuggeranong Vikings, as Tuggeranong Vikings player Amanda Ingram was diagnosed with a primary brain tumour in late 2016.

The Winnunga AHCS Possums and Warriors teams together with over 600 others supported the fundraiser by purchasing the beanies, buying a sausage sizzle or a hot drink or just making a donation. Almost $2900 was raised with all the money going to The Sydney Neuro-Oncology Group (SNOG) and Cure Brain Cancer Foundation.
Buroinjin Sports Days

The ACT Schools annual Buroinjin Sports Days proved to be a great success when it was held over two days at the Deakin and Kambah Ovals late last month. Social Health Team Manager Ian Bateman attended the Sports Day on behalf of Winnunga AHCS and said it was an enjoyable day.

‘We have attended for a number of years and it was great to be invited back again this year by ACT Schools’ Mr Bateman said.

Approximately 120 junior and 150 senior students made up the 22 teams who came together to compete for the title of Buroinjin Sports Day champions.

‘Not only did we provide the winners and runner ups medals, we also held a No More Boondah information stall and provided water and fruit for the students to stay hydrated and keep their energy levels up’ Mr Bateman explained.

Mr Bateman, a keen sportsmen himself said he liked what he saw from the competitors.

‘The games were fast-paced. There were many talented young players competing, it was exciting and entertaining to watch’ he said.

Garran Primary were crowned the junior champions, followed by runner ups Namadgi School. In the senior championships, the year 7/8 winners were Wanniassa School and runners up Canberra High. Gold Creek School proved too good, taking out the Year 9/10 champions, with Wanniassa School coming runner up.

Well done to all the students who competed and to the organisers for a great event. We look forward to the next ACT Schools Buroinjin Sports Day.

Fact: Buroinjin is a running-and-passing ball game.
Indigenous Specific Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation

The ACT Health Directorate has confirmed in its latest communiqué, dated 7 July, that the Bush Healing Farm will be a place ‘for healing that aims to strengthen cultural identity; provide a safe place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can talk and access support to address life challenges; and rebuild and strengthen sense of self.’

As commendable as these aims may be they are a long way short of the decision which the then Government took in 2007 to establish an Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation facility and service in Canberra.

The press release (on page 16) which was issued on 13 October 2007 by then Chief Minister and Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jon Stanhope, sets out explicitly the Government’s intention to fund and build a specialist drug and alcohol rehabilitation service which would cover the spectrum of rehabilitation from recovery from addiction to transition back into the community.

Jon Stanhope has advised that his intention that the Bush Healing Farm would be a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility, as traditionally and commonly understood, was explicit and unambiguous and that his press release and the relevant budget papers mean exactly what they say.

The current Government has, however, now used the funding provided for the construction and operation of the drug and alcohol facility to support a non-therapeutic healing place.

Be that as it may the need for an Indigenous drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation facility is nevertheless even greater now than it was in 2007 and Winnunga AHCS has resolved to begin again the development of a case for the Government to recommit to the construction and funding, as a matter of urgency of, of an Indigenous drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation facility.

Fact: The ACT has no Aboriginal specific residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation service available to the community
$10.8 M FOR INDIGENOUS DRUG REHAB SERVICE

The Government has today earmarked $10.8 million for the establishment of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation service for Indigenous Canberrans, with the first $300,000 to be spent in coming months finalising a model in close consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jon Stanhope has announced.

"The service will fill a gap identified by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and is in line with the Government’s determination to provide services that are culturally appropriate," Mr Stanhope said today.

"Drug and alcohol abuse are complex health and social issues, and it has become clear that we need a range of services and treatment options which reflect this complexity and maximise our chances, as a community, of helping individuals and families overcome substance abuse.

"This residential rehabilitation facility will take a holistic approach. The therapeutic program will support those who use the service through the rehabilitation and recovery process, and then help them make the transition back into the wider community. The new service will link with a range of existing services, including detoxification, diversion and methadone services.

"Significant consultation has already been undertaken with members of the community and the Government hopes to now broaden its consultation as it finalises a service model. A search for an appropriate site for the service will start soon."

The ACT Government has committed $10.8 million to the project over the next four years — $5.8 million in capital funding and $4.9 million in recurrent funding — with $300,000 committed this financial year to finalise the model.

Statement Ends

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Aboriginal Health in Aboriginal Hands

Winnunga AHCS NAIDOC Event Photos

Winnunga AHCS CEO Ms Julie Tongs with Aunty Louise Brown

Uncle Johnny Huckle

Chanel Webb and Beth Sturgess manning the No More Boondah Stall

Consultants Elisabeth and Nathan Judd together with Austin Lynch Vice President of the Old Narrabundah Community Council discussing Boomanulla Oval

Aunty Louise Brown, Julie Tongs and Winnunga AHCS Board Director Aunty Lynette Goodwin
Do you find it difficult getting to Winnunga AHCS during work hours?
Come see our Doctors and Nurses during our new extended clinic opening times.

We are now open 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.

*Appointments not necessary!*

63 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah
02 6284 6222
Name: Mick Ella

Position: Transport Officer

Who is your favourite singer/band?
Led Zeppelin

What do you do on the weekends?
Watch sport, dabble in a bit of Golf

What is your favourite food?
Duck A’Laronge

What do you like most about working at Winnunga?
Payday and helping clients

What is your pet hate?
ROOSTERS! And Dragons

Who is your most respected Aboriginal leader/hero and why?
Arthur Beetson – best footballer going and all round good bloke