

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW HEALTH TRAINEESHIPS AND IMPROVED HEALTH CARE
FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

Western Sydney-based general practice training and services provider, WentWest Limited, was host to the recent announcement made by Federal Minister for Employment Participation, Senator Mark Arbib, regarding funding for new Indigenous health traineeships to support general practice and community care for Indigenous people in New South Wales.

Senator Arbib said that Federal Government will provide \$485,000 to train and employ 50 Indigenous trainees, who will be placed in regions with large numbers of Indigenous people and work with both individuals and communities.

"Increasing the employment of Indigenous people in the health sector is a vital part of the Australian Government's agenda to make a difference to Indigenous health, which aims to help us close the gap in Indigenous life expectancy and mortality rates for Indigenous children", Senator Arbib said.

The traineeship program is part of the national 'Closing the Gap' Initiative, to provide sustainable employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

The initiative also includes a program to employ project officers and outreach workers to support general practice and community care in an effort to improve Indigenous health.

WentWest has employed one Closing the Gap Indigenous project officer and will be recruiting two Indigenous outreach workers to facilitate health programs for the Indigenous community in western Sydney, aimed at improving health outcomes and managing chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes and kidney disease.

In addition, WentWest will provide training, mentoring and support for its Indigenous workers to retain skilled Indigenous workers in western Sydney.

More than 10,000 Indigenous people live in Western Sydney with the largest community based in Blacktown. On average, the life expectancy for both Indigenous males and females is estimated to be almost 17 years less than for the general population.¹

¹ 2006 Census

To obtain further information, please contact Micheal Kundukulam, Manager Projects and Partnerships, on (02) 8833 8031 or email: micheal.kundukulam@wentwest.com.au

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About WentWest:

Covering the full spectrum of general practice training, education and support, WentWest offers both the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program to general practice registrars in the Western Sydney region as well as providing division of general practice services to more than 200 general practices in the local government areas of Auburn, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta.

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