



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW DIRECTION FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH IN NSW

The NSW Government will overhaul the way Aboriginal health care is delivered across the state under a 10 year plan to improve health services and outcomes for the state's Aboriginal people.

The Minister for Healthy Lifestyles and Western New South Wales, Kevin Humphries, today launched the *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023*, which outlines a vision, goal and strategic direction for the state's health system to meet the challenge of closing the health gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

"Through this plan we will reform the way Aboriginal health services are delivered to Aboriginal people and ensure services meet the needs of local communities," Mr Humphries said.

"The unacceptable disparities in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in NSW have been well documented over many years.

"Governments of all political persuasions and at all levels have spent considerable time, resources and money in reducing the mortality and morbidity gap, but major differences in health outcomes remain.

"We have made a commitment to try a different approach to turn around the inequality in health outcomes, which will see us make long overdue changes in the way that mainstream services work with Aboriginal people.

"This plan recognises the importance of this approach and provides an outline for system-wide reform and increased support for local health care workers to help implement changes that will make a real difference to the lives of the state's Aboriginal people."

Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, said the *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023* will provide strategic direction to the NSW Ministry of Health as to how Aboriginal health should be organised, funded and delivered over the next 10 years.

"Implementing this plan and achieving its vision will involve all parts of the health system in NSW," Mrs Skinner said. "We all have a role to play in improving Aboriginal health and ensuring the well-being of generations to come."

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Victor Dominello, said the plan was an important step towards a healthier outlook for the state's Aboriginal communities.

"The hard work will begin now as we work across Government and the health system to implement the plan and reform the way in which health care is provided to Aboriginal people in NSW," Mr Dominello said.

“This will include the NSW Government working more closely with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and with Aboriginal people and communities.”

Chair of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC), Christine Corby OAM, welcomed the NSW Government’s new direction for healthcare for Aboriginal people.

“The AH&MRC commends the NSW Government for its commitment to improving Aboriginal health, which it has demonstrated by developing the *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023*,” Ms Corby said.

“As the peak representative body for the state’s Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, we believe the Plan marks a significant step in the long journey to improve the health of Aboriginal people in NSW.

“Developed in close partnership with Aboriginal organisations and communities, the Plan represents a significant advance in the Government’s approach to meeting its responsibilities to the Aboriginal people of NSW, and the AH&MRC is hopeful that it will enable the knowledge and expertise of the Aboriginal community to guide the health system at every level.

“The AH&MRC looks forward to continuing to work together in partnership with NSW Government to achieve this shared vision of improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people throughout the state.”

The NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023 was launched in tandem with *The health of Aboriginal people of NSW: Report of the Chief Health Officer 2012*.

The health of Aboriginal people of NSW report provides important information on the health of Aboriginal people in NSW and details progress towards key NSW and national closing the gap targets.

The report shows improvements in Aboriginal health in the past 10 years including:

- Decreased infant mortality rates and a narrowing of the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rates;
- Decreased rates for avoidable mortality in Aboriginal males;
- Decreased proportion of babies born to Aboriginal mothers who are of low birth-weight ;
- Decreased smoking rates among Aboriginal people, including a decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal women who reported smoking during pregnancy.

To read the *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023* and *The health of Aboriginal people of NSW: Report of the Chief Health Officer 2012*, visit www.health.nsw.gov.au.