



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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INCREASING THE STATE'S ABORIGINAL ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

More Aboriginal people will be trained to work as oral health professionals in regional communities across NSW under an initiative launched today by the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, Kevin Humphries and Member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall.

Mr Humphries said the Aboriginal Oral Health Scholarships will provide financial assistance to at least 24 Aboriginal people living in regional and rural areas of NSW to train in oral healthcare.

“The new scholarships will ensure a significant number of Aboriginal people will be trained to deliver oral health services in the communities in which they live, as well as provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in regional and remote communities,” Mr Humphries said.

“Not only will this initiative provide training for a large number of Aboriginal people to become qualified dental assistants, it will also provide the opportunity for them to pursue further studies in oral health therapy or dentistry.

“With levels of untreated dental decay more than twice as high among Aboriginal people as non-Aboriginal people and significantly fewer Aboriginal adults accessing dental care than non-Aboriginal adults, it is absolutely vital that we continue to look at ways at reducing the disparity in oral health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

“The most effective way to improve the oral health of Aboriginal people is by increasing the number of Aboriginal oral health clinicians working on the ground in Aboriginal communities.

“By doing that through these scholarships we will see start to see a genuine improvement in dental health outcomes in our Aboriginal communities.”

Mr Marshall said the initiative is the result of a partnership between the NSW Government, the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and the Rotary Club of Sydney.

“The NSW Government has matched the funds raised by Rotary Sydney and will commit \$200,000 to the Indigenous Oral Health scholarships over the next two years,” Mr Marshall said.

“By ensuring more Aboriginal oral health professionals are working in Aboriginal communities across the state, the NSW Government has demonstrated its commitment to closing the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.”

To apply please contact the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health: (02) 9114 0829, poche.admin@sydney.edu.au or visit www.facebook.com/pochecentre