The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck

MEDIA RELEASE

30 July 2018

Community Control and Local Jobs for NT Health Centres

A local jobs boost is expected in East Arnhem Land, as the final two of six remote health clinics transition to community control, after the Turnbull Government provided up to $1.8 million to the Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation.

Minister for Indigenous Health, Ken Wyatt AM said the grant would allow Miwatj, the largest Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service in the Top End, to take over the clinics in Gapuwiyak and Ramingining from the Northern Territory government.

“The move to community control is promising because both are extremely remote communities, with poorer health outcomes than the Northern Territory as a whole including a higher proportion of low birth weight babies,” said Minister Wyatt.

“We have seen the potential of this approach - since Miwatj transitioned the Yirrkala clinic to community control in 2012, it has increased patient numbers and episodes of care, while improving health including lowering childhood anaemia and increasing immunisation rates.

“This reflects the strength of local community aspirations for self-determination.”

Miwatj currently provides primary health care in Nhulunbuy, Milingimbi, Galiwin’ku, Yirrkala and Gunyangara, with additional outreach services to surrounding communities and outstations.

Miwatj says the transition of the Galiwin’ku clinic led to a staff increase from about 14 to 46 people, while staffing at Yirrkala and Milingimbi also increased by around 30%.

“Approximately half of Miwatj’s 200 staff members are Yolngu,” Minister Wyatt said.

“As with previous moves to community control, it is expected that transitioning the Gapuwiyak and Ramingining clinics will create further local community employment opportunities.”

The funding is provided as part of the Indigenous Australians’ Health Programme (IAHP), which supports the improvement of health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through better access to health services.
“Under the IAHP, we are providing First Nations people with access to effective, high quality, comprehensive and culturally appropriate primary health care services across Australia,” Minister Wyatt said.

The Australian Government announced $3.9 billion to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in the 2018–19 Budget.

**Media contact: Nick Way, Media Adviser 0419 835 449**

Authorised by Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Member for Hasluck.