WINNUNGA WELCOMES NEW MINISTERS

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service (Winnunga AHS) welcomes the appointment of Greg Hunt as Minister for Health, and the appointment of Australia’s first federal Indigenous Minister with Ken Wyatt’s elevation to the role of Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health.

Winnunga AHS CEO, Julie Tongs, says Mr Hunt's appointment offers a “real opportunity” for a fresh start in the health sector.

“He comes in fresh and hopefully keeps an open mind and that between him and Ken we can really make some progress,” Ms Tongs said.

With a sorry history of funding cuts in the health sector, Ms Tongs hopes the new minister, working with his newly-elevated colleague, Ken Wyatt, will see that keeping funding in “preventative health” will continue to save substantial money in the longer term.

“Greater effort, and resources, are crucial to preventative health so that we are not forever dealing with the impact of chronic disease,” she said.

Ms Tongs praised the appointment of Ken Wyatt as Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health as “an excellent move by the Prime Minister”.

“I think that as minister for Indigenous health Ken will work in collaboration with our community.

“As an Aboriginal man I believe that he is aware of the challenges that face the Aboriginal health sector and Aboriginal health needs. He sees how valuable our sector is as an integral part of the health system right across the country,” Ms Tongs said.

CEO, Julie Tongs is keen for both of the new ministers for health to come and take a tour of Winnunga AHS.

“I know that Minister Wyatt is keen to come to Winnunga AHS, and it would be good if he brought Mr Hunt with him.

“It's about us and Minister Wyatt educating Minister Hunt about our sector,” she said.

Ms Tongs stressed that the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health sector, more than being value for money, actually saves the community much more than it costs.

“We’ve had an economist look at our numbers, and we've got child protection, and a lot of other unfunded services that we provide here, so the $8.5 million we are funded actually provides a $40 million benefit to the ACT.

For further comment please contact:

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Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service is an Aboriginal community controlled primary health care service operated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the ACT