

Media Release

23rd March 2017

Strengthening services to support people with alcohol and other drugs concerns

As part of its region-wide strategy to address western Sydney's alcohol and other drug challenges, the Western Sydney Primary Health Network (WSPHN) recently announced the recipients of \$1.5 million in federally funded grants targeting localised needs and priorities.

According to the latest National Drug Strategy Household Survey, it is estimated that over 200,000 people across western Sydney are using alcohol and other drugs at concerning levels. With increased resources announced following the National Ice Taskforce, WSPHN has funded treatment services for the most vulnerable communities in western Sydney.

WSPHN CEO, Walter Kmet said of the grant announcements, "We are pleased to be supporting a broader network of services to combat our community's varied alcohol and other drug challenges."

"We will be working closely with the funding recipients towards better outcomes for the most vulnerable people in western Sydney," said Mr Kmet.

Among the initiatives funded are:

- **Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation** will provide "Healing Minds, Healing Spirits" – an extension of an ongoing initiative supporting the local Aboriginal community that helps families navigate multiple barriers to accessing alcohol and other drugs & mental health services
- **Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre DAMEC** – will deliver culturally appropriate drug and alcohol treatment and support for families in the client's first language for western Sydney's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- **Hello Sunday Morning** – will provide free access to the smartphone app *Daybreak* through the affected person's GP. The initiative enables access to a support network and trained coaches to help reduce alcohol intake.
- **Salvation Army** – will work with headspace to provide the *headfyrst* service in Castlehill, Mount Druitt and Parramatta to provide treatment services to young people with alcohol & other drugs and also mental health challenges



- **The Ted Noffs Foundation's Street University** – will now provide an extended drug and alcohol treatment service from Mount Druitt with 8 outreach sites for young people, aged between 12 to 25 years. The service offers young people ease of access and ongoing support through the arts and music programs.
- **Odyssey House Community Services Blacktown** – will deliver counselling and group support to people affected by alcohol and other drugs including co-occurring mental health issues. The service will provide support for the general community including: marginalised people, pregnant women including with children, homeless and prisoners to support reintegration into society within the Blacktown and Doonside areas.

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Additional information:

Following the announcement of these services, WentWest is set to host a region-wide conference, discussing the many complex challenges for western Sydney in regard to mental health and alcohol and other drugs. Titled the **“Connections Conference”** the one-day event on **Tuesday, 30th May** will feature many of the service providers featured above and as well as new mental health services.

For more information please contact:

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About WentWest

WentWest's focus on providing better health care in the community was strengthened with its appointment as a Tranche 1 Medicare Local in July 2011 to now operating as the Western Sydney Primary Health Network. WentWest has built on its experience as a Division of General Practice in supporting GPs and their practices, connecting health services to meet local needs, and striving for better health outcomes for western Sydney.

The population living in western Sydney is culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse, and we also have the largest urban Aboriginal community in Australia. WentWest works closely with doctors, allied health professionals, the Local Health District and many others to improve the coordination of local health and human services for these patients and their families.