



MIWATJ HEALTH *25 Years*
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION
Rrambaŋi djäma - working together

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MEDIA RELEASE
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Miwatj celebrates 25 years of working collaboratively in Aboriginal health

This year Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation (Miwatj Health) celebrates its 25th anniversary of providing holistic, comprehensive primary health care to the people of East Arnhem Land.

Miwatj Health's 25 year celebrations on the 25th and 26th of May will acknowledge the vision of Yolŋu, Warnindilyakwa and Nunggubuyu leaders from across the region in working together to create a successful and region-wide health service controlled by Aboriginal people.

Since its inception, Miwatj Health has continued to pursue this collaborative approach, working with government, the higher education sector and other Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people. On 25th May the partnership with Top End Health Service will be strengthened at the opening and transition to community-control of a brand-new health centre at Galiwin'ku. This clinic has been funded by the Commonwealth's Health and Hospitals Fund Regional Priority.

Eddie Mulholland, CEO of Miwatj Health said, 'The collaborative arrangement between government and the community-controlled sector is something I have always believed in. The contract funding arrangement between government and the Aboriginal Medical Sector (AMS) ensures accountability and compliance in health service delivery. Governments have the machinery, within their departments, to review and support operations to ensure our sector is operating within legislation and best practice'.

The model benefits Aboriginal communities by empowering them to deliver services to themselves. The answer to good health is enabling people to take control and accountability for their own healthcare. Control and self-determination are key to better health, as highlighted by Sir Michael Marmot, in his 2015 book, *The Health Gap*. Over the long-term, both government and Aboriginal people benefit from this partnership, and that is what both want to achieve. The evidence is that the model works.'

This year will also mark the tenth year of a successful working relationship between Miwatj Health's CEO of 11 years and the Chairperson of ten years, John Morgan. This ten year partnership has seen Miwatj Health grow from one clinic to six, with the transition of four clinics (Nalkanbuy, Gunyaŋara, Yirrkala, Malmalधारra) from government to community-control.

Miwatj Health's mental health program will be celebrated as part of the 25 year anniversary events. The Galiwin'ku/Nalkanbuy mental health team has been providing comprehensive mental health services as well as social and emotional wellbeing support for almost 20 years. The award-winning Yolŋu managed service will be presented with a Resilient Australia Award for the development and implementation of a trauma-informed disaster relief program in the aftermath of two cyclones that hit Elcho Island in 2015. The service has also been made the subject of an innovative new video resource produced by ARDS on best practice models being launched this week following a review by the Mental Health Commission.

Another significant milestone for Miwatj Health has been the partnership forged with Western Desert Dialysis to expand nurse-assisted dialysis in community. Miwatj Health runs a renal program in Yirrkala and a pilot program is now underway on Groote Eylandt, with funding for three years from Aminjarrinja Enterprises Social Investment. This service has been developed in response to strong community demand for treatment on country and Miwatj Health continues to advocate for funding for this model.

The new Galiwin'ku Health Centre will be opened by Assistant Minister for Regional Health Delivery and Homelands, Lawrence Costa, on Thursday 25th May. Celebrations will continue as part of the annual Miwatj Day on Friday 26th May in Nhulunbuy.

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