

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation

MEDIA RELEASE

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MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC FOR PILBARA THANKS TO GUMALA AND MURDOCH UNIVERSITY

Final year university students will team with health professionals in WA's Pilbara region to deliver an innovative, new mobile health and education clinic for indigenous communities on-country.

The Health In Motion program, a partnership between Gumala Aboriginal Corporation and Murdoch University, will offer allied health care, veterinary services and health education as part of a pilot project due to start in 2018.

Gumala will invest \$450,000 towards capital expenses and operating costs for the four year project, while the Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation's Nyiyaparli Charitable Trust Board will offer \$50,000 for capital costs.

This funding is in addition to a \$1 million pledge and \$250,000 cash donation that Murdoch University has received from philanthropists for the project.

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation executive officer Jahna Cedar said the dedicated mobile clinic for Aboriginal people on-country was a worthy investment given the high level of chronic health conditions experienced by indigenous people living in the Pilbara.

"Gumala is proud to support this ground-breaking trial that will see better access to medical care and better health outcomes for our members, as well as invaluable learnings for the students involved," Mrs Cedar said.

"Statistics show that hospital presentations for Aboriginal people in the Pilbara are higher than other regions in WA and it is known that around 65 per cent of indigenous people have at least one long-term health condition.

"For many of our people, the time, energy and cost it takes to travel vast distances to major towns can be a barrier to receiving health care.

"We believe this partnership will herald genuine benefits and provide a program that will self-empower our people. We hope other government and industry bodies will also come on board."

Health in Motion Project Director Associate Professor Bruce Walker AM said Murdoch University had conducted a health and education needs analysis of Aboriginal people in the Pilbara, which identified the gaps. The research also asked local Aboriginal people what they wanted.

"More than 90% of people surveyed supported a mobile health and education unit that would travel to smaller remote communities," Professor Walker said.

He said the Health in Motion pilot would involve all areas of the university including students from allied health services (nursing, chiropractic, counselling), veterinary and researchers from other parts of the University such as Education, Engineering and IT.

“Murdoch has research groups involved in innovative approaches for remote communities – such as alternative energy and water sources who are keen to be involved,” Professor Walker said.

Professor Walker said Murdoch University was delighted that Gumala Aboriginal Corporation has invested in this important partnership and hoped the investment would attract other partners so that the project could commence in 2018.

Murdoch University has consulted with WA’s other universities to gauge their interest in involving their students in this pilot.

Professor Walker said Murdoch University’s project team had consulted extensively with local Aboriginal communities and corporations, government and industry on the model and proposed route for the mobile clinic.

“Health in Motion is a genuine partnership approach informed by local knowledge, not a model that is dictated by the University,” he said.

“While the overall project is about improving health outcomes and knowledge with supplementary services, our aim is to ensure our final year students gain real-life experience in remote service delivery and Aboriginal health. We want to deliver graduates that can deliver services free of racism and can carry this experience with them for their entire career,” Project Director Professor Bruce Walker said.

Murdoch University Provost Prof Andrew Taggart said that he was excited about the project and would welcome further social investment into this worthwhile program.

KEY FACTS:

- **Health in Motion** is an innovative four-year program that will be jointly managed by a local Indigenous project team and Murdoch University. The project involves health professionals and final year university students delivering allied health services, veterinary services and health education on country and in partnership with Aboriginal Health Workers from Pilbara’s local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS).
- The proposed circuit is to service 12 remote communities in the East Pilbara.
- The program will run for four-years, with plans for the pilot to commence in 2018.
- Further information is available at: <http://www.murdoch.edu.au/Support-Murdoch/Major-projects/Health-in-Motion/>

FACTS

1. The proposed circuit for Health in Motion includes the following communities:

- South Hedland
- Warralong
- Marble Bar
- Nullagine
- Jigalong
- Newman
- Bellary Springs
- Wakathuni
- Paraburdoo
- Tom Price
- Youngaleena
- Yandeyarra

2. Letters of Intent for Partnership have been signed between Murdoch University and both Wirraka Maya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation (South Hedland) and Puntuturnu Aboriginal Medical Service (Newman).

3. Bird Cameron has developed a detailed Five Year Financial and Operational Plan for Health in Motion. The program has been budgeted at \$8.6 million, comprising \$2.2 million capital costs and \$1.6 million operational costs per annum.

4. In addition to Gumala Aboriginal Corporation's \$450,000 investment into Health in Motion, Murdoch University has received a pledge of \$1 million from a philanthropist for the project; a \$250,000 cash donation from another philanthropist, a Letter of support stating that they will seek internal approval for \$400,000 towards operational costs from Mitsui Iron Ore Development Pty Ltd and pledges for in-kind support.

5. Letters of Support for Health in Motion have been received from the following organisations:

- Gumala Aboriginal Corporation
- Wirraka Maya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
- Puntuturnu Aboriginal Medical Service
- Mitsui Iron Ore Development Pty Ltd
- Pilbara Education Regional Officer

5. A full business case is available.