



## Media Release

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### Centre for Excellence to Transform Aboriginal Health

Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service's (GRAMS) new 'Centre of Excellence' for Aboriginal Primary Health Care and Training officially opened on Thursday.

Developed in partnership with the WA Centre for Rural Health (WACRH), the new centre blends clinical primary health care with training, workforce development and research opportunities.

It was opened by GRAMS Chief Executive Officer Deborah Woods.

The centre at GRAMS Rifle Range Road premises in Geraldton, offers child and maternal health care, social, emotional and wellbeing care and treatment for chronic disease.

It also includes a newly built training area in which GRAMS and registered training providers can deliver new training opportunities for people working in Aboriginal health.

The centre has been in operation since early 2017 and GRAMS chief executive officer Deborah Woods says it is already being recognised for the role it is playing in creating the Aboriginal health care workplace of the future.

"Such a centre is a huge step in shaping a future workforce that is specifically trained to work within Aboriginal organisations and with Aboriginal colleagues, patients and community," Ms Woods said.

Ms Woods said Aboriginal people faced extreme health disadvantages, with Aboriginal people living an average of 10 years less than non-Aboriginals. Aboriginal people were also more than twice as likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease as non-Aboriginal people, and were more than three times likely to have type two diabetes.

Ms Woods said the Centre of Excellence was a major step forward in GRAMS's vision of overcoming the health problems dogging Aboriginal people.

"By shaping a healthcare workforce that understands the nuances of Aboriginal culture we will be able to encourage more Aboriginal people to access existing health and sickness prevention services which will in turn not only improve existing conditions but prevent them from occurring in the first place," Ms Woods said.

"It's time we took real action to overcome the many health disadvantages facing Aboriginal people."

Indigenous elder, and one of Australia's leading Aboriginal performers, musicians and writers, Dr Richard Walley OAM, was MC for this milestone event. He felt so strongly about attending the event in Geraldton that he gave up the opportunity to attend a launch in Perth for the Fremantle Dockers' inaugural guernsey that he custom designed.

“I would not have missed this occasion for anything and I thank GRAMS for the invitation to be a part of this significant occasion,” Mr Walley said.

“Health is something that is holistic and has been in our culture for some 2,000 generations. What we are actually doing today is tapping into some of that ancient knowledge and putting it together with today’s technology to get a result that will be fantastic for not only for Aboriginal people but for humanity in general.”

*ENDS...*

**Photo link:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/efzzhzzvmo6fggg/AACcbsrk4cBBknKCuu1HXuTNa?dl=0>

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