Dr Chris Burns
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

16 August 2007
Aboriginal Health Workers Start New Apprenticeship

The Health Minister Chris Burns today welcomed the Territory’s first group of apprentice Aboriginal Health Workers.

Dr Burns said the 27 men and women will train for 18 months. Upon graduating, they will be based in health centres across the Territory.

“This program is a real example of creating employment opportunities in the bush and at the same time addressing health worker shortages,” he said.

“The program will train and develop Aboriginal people to become qualified health workers and contribute to improving health and community services outcomes in their communities.

“More than half of the apprentices are men and this will be very important to the Territory Government’s efforts to improve Aboriginal men’s health and wellbeing.”

The apprentices will learn how to use medical equipment, apply first aid, undertake health assessments, plan and implement health care, provide information about social and emotional support, and facilitate communication between patients and other service providers.

The workers will also learn health skills to help build capacity in remote areas including child development and family support.

Previously, AHW students were paid through a mixture of Abstudy and CDEP. The new apprenticeship scheme is designed to employ and train these participants within DHCS.

On successful completion of the course, participants will gain a Certificate IV Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice) – a nationally recognised qualification that will enable them to register and practice as Aboriginal Health Workers in the NT.

“This initiative is an example of how an innovative project developed here in the Territory can make a difference to Aboriginal health and wellbeing,” Dr Burns said.

There are 109 Aboriginal Health Workers currently employed by the Department of Health.

Contact Andrea Adlam 89014078

Moving the Territory Ahead