



WAPHA
WA Primary Health Alliance

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Media Release

Red dust kicking up a storm in the Great Southern

13 September 2017

An innovative social and emotional healing program aimed at young people will be rolled out across the Great Southern region, following a recent one-day workshop in Albany attended by more than 80 representatives from health, education and social services agencies.

Following the workshop, 13 facilitators, ten of whom are Aboriginal, will undergo intensive training so they can run the Red Dust Healing program for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people.

The program uses a self-evaluating tool derived from an ancient Aboriginal perspective that helps individuals deal with hurt, anger, grief, loss and other issues. It places the participant both in the position of being hurt, the victim, and then as the one doing the hurting, the perpetrator.

Program designer Tom Powell, who led the workshop, says participants are encouraged to examine their own personal hurt and heal from within, addressing family and personal relationships and what may have been lifelong patterns of violence.

“It examines the intergenerational effects of colonisation on the mental physical and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal families and encourages individuals to confront and deal with the problems, hurt and anger in their lives,” Mr Powell said.

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) has commissioned the program to run in the Great Southern led by the Palmerston Association who, along with many other locally-based agencies, has formed the Great Southern Youth Outcomes Forum.

Federal Member for O’Connor Mr Rick Wilson MP says the program, which has been made possible by \$100,000 of Australian Government funding, is a great example of local service providers understanding local problems and implementing innovative solutions.

“This program is aimed at a particularly vulnerable group who need our wholehearted support. I commend everyone involved and look forward to seeing the results in the coming months as it gains traction,” Mr Wilson said.

WAPHA’s regional manager for the Great Southern Lesley Pearson says the organisation could clearly see the need for and potential benefits of the program.

“Following an approach from the Department of Education’s engagement and transitions manager Lindsay Campbell, a passionate advocate of Red Dust Healing, WAPHA found a way to engage a consortium of agencies led by the Department.



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“This meant we could award more substantial funding than initially envisaged which is a great outcome all round,” Ms Pearson said.

Palmerston Association’s manager Ben Headlam says their project officer will report back to the Youth Outcomes Forum regarding progress and overall implementation of the program.

“We are delighted to be involved in this new program and look forward to working with the other agencies to roll it out across the region,” Mr Headlam said.

The program will be delivered as far north as Katanning as part of a trial that aims to expand services for at risk youth and increase the number of trained Red Dust Healing facilitators in the future.

To find out more about the program and how to access it, contact Ben Headlam, Manager, Palmerston GSCADS Albany on 9892 2100.

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