



A healthier outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

The Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) is pleased to announce receipt of Commonwealth funding to run a national program to improve the sexual health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by reducing the transmission of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and blood borne viruses (BBVs).

ASHM CEO Levinia Crooks will officially launch the program at the Rural Health West Aboriginal Health Conference at Perth's Duxton Hotel, Sunday 4 July 2010.

The Department of Health and Ageing, through the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) has awarded ASHM \$332,659 to manage the one-year project which aims to increase awareness, skills and knowledge among healthcare providers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the areas of STIs and BBVs.

"This funding will allow us to draw together a number of our one-off training and resource projects and will help build sustained engagement with the workforce in BBVs and STIs," said Crooks.

"It gives us the vital opportunity to expand our mentoring and training programs and establish durable relationships with colleagues in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and research organisations," said Crooks.

Key to the program is an Expert Reference Group, with representation from key stakeholders including the National Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA).

"ASHM is already committed to a number of training activities in Western Australia in association with Rural Health West and the Western Australian Department of Health and is to be congratulated on receiving the opportunity to drive this integral program," said Belinda Bailey CEO, Rural Health West.

"This additional investment will allow ASHM to contribute to sustained and supported clinical education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical practitioners, nurses and health care workers and non-indigenous medical practitioners, nurses and health care workers servicing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities across Australia."

"A strong primary healthcare workforce is essential in reducing rates of infection and this funding will help to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare providers have the information they need to prevent, diagnose and manage treatment effectively.

"It is rewarding for ASHM to have the opportunity to make an impact in this area," said Crooks.