Grant Aids Hearing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Patients

Monday 22 August 2016

Brisbane: A new scheme launched today by the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and Deaf Services Queensland is providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in South East Queensland with access to vital hearing aid services.

The launch coincides with Hearing Awareness Week.

Under the scheme eligible patients recommended for a hearing aid by an IUIH audiologist can bypass potentially lengthy waiting periods to have a second-hand, hearing aid bank supplied, hearing aid fitted at the University of Queensland Audiology Clinic, with the fitting cost being paid for by Deaf Services Queensland.

It is being funded by a $10,000 grant from the Deaf Lottery and is supported by Deaf Services Queensland.

IUIH Audiologist Dr Nuala Beahan says that the scheme significantly increases access to a vital health service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“Access to hearing aid technology can make a huge difference in a person’s quality of life”, Dr Beahan said.

“Having a hearing aid fitted and maintained properly is so important to ensure people are able to wear them comfortably and get the best possible outcomes.

“One of our biggest challenges when we have a patient that needs a hearing aid fitted is that, while we have traditionally been able to facilitate provision of a hearing aid, we have not always been able to fund its fitting.

“So for us to be able to help our patients through the entire process of diagnosis, access, fitting and follow up will make a huge difference.”

Adrian Carson, Chief Executive Officer at the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, said that the partnership will result in better health for the community,

“Through the IUIH Model of Care, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to access a comprehensive range of clinical and allied health services, including audiology, through 18 community controlled health services run by our members throughout South East Queensland.
“Partnerships with organisations such as Deaf Services Queensland are essential to support this Model of Care, and for us to ensure our people have access to all the health care services that they need.”

Brett Casey, Chief Executive Officer of Deaf Services Queensland, supported Mr Carson’s comments saying,

“Many people who are unable to access audiological equipment via other programs find the cost of purchasing hearing aids prohibitive. This partnership will ensure that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in South East Queensland will be able to access the necessary audiological equipment and see an important cohort of Queenslanders access appropriate clinical support.”

Community members who think they might benefit from having their hearing checked can access audiologist-provided hearing services at their local IUIH clinic.

About the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health

The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) leads the planning, development and delivery of comprehensive primary health care services to the Indigenous population of South East Queensland (SEQ).

Services are provided through 18 multidisciplinary primary health clinics run by our member organisations:

- Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services (Moreton ATSICHS)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services Brisbane (Brisbane ATSICHS)
- Kambu Health Service
- Kalwun Corporation for Aboriginal Health
- Yulu-Burri-Ba.

www.iuih.org.au

For further information:
Lorraine Pacey
Senior Communications Officer
Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
lorraine.pacey@iuih.org.au
0428 792 535

About Deaf Services Queensland

Deaf Services Queensland services all deaf and hard of hearing people including culturally deaf community members, meaning those who identify as Deaf and use Australian Sign Language (Auslan) as their primary language.
Deaf Services Queensland’s Deaf Lottery raises funds from the sale of lottery tickets to support vital services to the Deaf and hard of hearing community. For further information head to our website www.deafservicesqld.org.au