

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service opens its first Respiratory Clinic

The first Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service Respiratory Clinic opened Tuesday in the Derbarl Maddington Clinic, as part of the Australian Government's \$2.4 billion health package response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Derbarl provides holistic and culturally responsive health care to more than 10,000 active Aboriginal patients in the Perth metropolitan area.

Respiratory disease accounts for 8% of the burden of disease, and is the third leading cause of death for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people are more than five times more likely to be hospitalised for influenza-related illnesses than non-Aboriginal people, with the highest rate of hospitalisation in children less than five years of age. Derbarl treats more than 1,500 patients each year with chronic respiratory illnesses alone. The opening of the respiratory clinic is therefore fundamental to meeting the health needs of Aboriginal people.

Chairperson of Derbarl Yerrigan, Ms Francine Eades said "Considering these alarming statistics, I am pleased that Derbarl responded to the opportunity to provide this vital service to our patients and the wider community. We have joined the growing number of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services delivering GP-led respiratory clinics to our people."

The Maddington Respiratory Clinic will allow Aboriginal patients and other members of the community in community with respiratory conditions and mild to moderate COVID-19-like symptoms to be assessed, tested and treated.

"During the coronavirus crisis, we have helped our patients identify the symptoms of the virus and directed our people with symptoms to the State's COVID-19 clinics. Now, we are able to provide expert testing and assessment services ourselves" said Ms Francine Eades.

CEO of the WA Primary Health Alliance, Ms Learne Durrington said "We are delighted to have facilitated the establishment of this well-equipped respiratory clinic. It will play a vital role in the front-line response to COVID-19 by monitoring and containing any potential spread among Aboriginal and other local community members."

Staffed by a GP, Aboriginal Health Practitioners and nurse, the clinic can provide care to up to 50 people a day with respiratory symptoms, and provides free COVID-19 testing, away from other patients.

The clinic will complement Derbarl's ongoing efforts in health promotion and alternative health care to keep our people safe and protected from COVID-19.

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