

JOINT MEDIA ALERT

7 March 2023

WYONG AND THE ENTRANCE CANDIDATES TO ATTEND NSW ELECTION ROUNDTABLE

Event details:

- **Date:** Arrive at 10.55am for 11am start – Wednesday 8 March 2023
- **Location:** Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services: 3-5/56-64 Pacific Hwy, Wyong
- **Attendance:** Please confirm your attendance with our media contact Billy Briggs (bbriggs@apa.au / 0474 697 235)

Run sheet:

- Walk through of Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services with candidates (images only, no interviews) – 20 mins
- Roundtable where candidates, NCOSS, LCSA and Yerin Services discuss key issues – 20 mins
- Media Q&A where journalists can ask questions of candidates, NCOSS, LCSA and Yerin Services – 10 mins
- Formalities conclude and media depart

Local candidates vying for the seats of Wyong and the Entrance will attend a roundtable event on Wednesday 8 March to hear from peak social services organisations about the need for core funding for Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) and the many Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that provide place-based services for their communities.

Candidates David Mehan (Labor), Doug Williamson and Hilary Van Haren (Greens), and Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, Adam Crouch (Liberals), will attend the event to hear from Local Community Services Association (LCSA), the NSW Council for Social Service (NCOSS) and Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services.

The key issue to be discussed is that NCCs and ACCOs in NSW must receive core funding from the NSW Government for the essential, local support they provide through programs and services, particularly in times of crisis and for those doing it toughest.

Despite the critically important role NCCs and ACCOs play in supporting local communities, there is no dedicated funding from the Government to keep the doors open.

Instead, these centres rely on program-based funding, one-off grants, fundraising and donations to cobble together sufficient funds to cover the cost of a manager and administrative support. NCCs and ACCOs are often not able to run community development programs at the scale required to the needs and aspirations of their communities.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said: “ACCOs are well placed to provide a raft of services in response to local community need – be it food relief, disability support, social connection, immediate assistance for those experiencing homelessness or domestic violence, or referral to specialist services. But managing such a diversity of service offerings is complex and requires strong oversight and dedicated resources.

“During the floods, fires and pandemic, in many instances Aboriginal organisations were first on the ground and stepped in as a quasi-emergency response team – providing urgent help to those in need.

“These services are critical during hard times including local emergency events, yet they don’t have any guaranteed core funding from the NSW Government that recognises this essential role and enables ongoing, sound management. This is completely unacceptable.

“That’s why we are calling on the candidates in Wyong and the Entrance to commit to providing core funding for NCCs and ACCOs in the lead-up to the NSW election.”

LCSA Acting Executive Officer Anthony Brown said: “When faced with life’s challenges people turn to those they know and trust in their local community for support. Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services provides an accessible, inclusive, and non-judgmental space for people to achieve positive outcomes for their lives, thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers who continue to go above and beyond each day to assist all those who walk through their door.

“Yet despite these efforts – centres are still left without proper resourcing or funding.

“We have joined forces with NCOSS and Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services to raise this issue with local candidates and advocate for change before the State election.

“It’s now time for the local candidates to tell us whether they support our call or not.”

Belinda Field, CEO Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services said: “The last few years of incredibly challenging events has seen local neighbourhood and Aboriginal community centres like ours step into the void.

“Our Aboriginal community hub plays a critical role in improving the social and economic well-being of the Aboriginal community on Darkinjung country.

“Now more than ever, government must prioritise the empowerment of Aboriginal communities, and support the invaluable work that we do in building a stronger, more equitable society for all.”

**Media contacts:
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