

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aboriginal people have the worst health of any identifiable group in Australia. This situation arises from the profound disadvantages that have been experienced by Aboriginal people. As important as health services are meaningful strategies to improve Aboriginal health and well being necessarily must include a broader range of factors such as employment, housing, family relationships, education, income. More importantly such strategies must be developed and implemented in partnership with Aboriginal communities, if they are to be effective.

This document is but an element of an ongoing process of close collaboration between the local Aboriginal community and health service providers in South Western Sydney. The plan does not contain a set of prescriptions for improving Aboriginal health, rather it outlines key principles for services, identifies major issues and needs of Aboriginal people in South Western Sydney and indicates some important strategies to advance their health and well being. Development of this plan has included the input of a wide range of agencies and groups and has involved close co-operation between Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation, the Office of Aboriginal Health of the NSW Health Department and the South Western Sydney Area Health Service.

The main principles underlying preparation of this plan are:

- there is evident disadvantage and clear need to improve the health status of Aboriginal people.
- there is a need to correct the inequity of resource allocation.
- there is better service provision if health services have Aboriginal participation and control.
- there is a need to address health problems across many, different service sectors and agencies.