



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

5 July 2004

### **Health service “Building Bridges” with Aboriginal women**

Helping Aboriginal women take control of their health, equity and needs are an issue of National priority and the basis for a successful empowerment program implemented by Wingecarribee Health Service.

The *Building Bridges* project was developed to improve the social and emotional well-being of Koori Women living in the Wingecarribee Shire focusing on understanding stress, making changes, dealing with loss, women & stress, women & self esteem and being in control.

Wingecarribee Health Service women's health nurse, Mignon Aistropé said that the sessions were all delivered within a supportive and cultural environment facilitated between Women's Health, Mental Health and an Aboriginal Elder.

“We were able to improve understanding and knowledge of how to identify and manage stressful situations and let the women know how our mental health services could help and support them.

“The program further bonded partnerships between health and associated non-government organizations.

“*Building Bridges* has helped us improve the way we deliver mental health services to the Koori community and we're investigating the idea of employing an Aboriginal community mental health worker,” said Ms Aistropé

An additional exciting outcome was the formation of TAFE accredited indigenous art classes with attendance from the women's group, along with a community based indigenous art program.

“We look forward to continued partnerships, advocacy and lobbying for Wingecarribee's ever-expanding indigenous community,” said Ms Aistropé.

For further information contact Mignon Aistropé on 4861 8084.

**Issued by Public Affairs, South Western Sydney Area Health Service 9828 5700.**