



# Kevin Humphries MP

## Minister for Mental Health

## Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

## Minister for Western NSW

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### STRENGTHENING OUR ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

NSW Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries, has congratulated the State's Aboriginal mental health workers for their efforts in promoting strength and resilience in Aboriginal communities across the State.

Mr Humphries today addressed the 2013 Aboriginal Mental Health Worker Forum in Wagga Wagga and reconfirmed the NSW Government's commitment to working with the Aboriginal community to continue developing a skilled and professional Aboriginal mental health workforce.

"It is the drive, passion and determination of our Aboriginal mental health workforce that is needed to meet the mental health and social and emotional well-being challenges many Aboriginal communities face," Mr Humphries said.

"Closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health and life expectancy will continue to take a concerted effort by the State and Federal Governments, which includes initiatives like the Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program.

"Since its inception the Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program has seen an increase in the number of qualified Aboriginal Mental Health Workers in the workforce and the number of Aboriginal people accessing mental health services."

The two-day Aboriginal Mental Health Workers Forum provides an opportunity for all Aboriginal mental health workers in NSW to come together and strengthen the Aboriginal mental health workforce through training, skill development and networking.

The theme of this year's forum is '*Looking after Ourselves, Looking after Our Communities*', with a focus on the support and further development of the Aboriginal mental health workforce.

Sessions at the forum range from mental health and drug and alcohol issues, child and adult services and programs, and the development of a grief and loss training program for Aboriginal mental health workers.

"The NSW Government is committed to continue working with our Aboriginal mental health workforce, their families and communities to achieve better outcomes and positive change," Mr Humphries said.