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## Blue Care strives for better Indigenous care

**Two prominent issues for Indigenous communities – access to health care and employment – have been grabbing headlines around Australia for years. The issues are plentiful, the solutions are not. Now a Queensland not-for-profit care provider has stepped up to make a difference. And it's getting results.**

Blue Care, one of Australia's leading providers of community health and residential aged care, is working to improve access by Indigenous people to health care and increase the number of Indigenous people in the aged care industry workforce.

In 2005/06 the organisation made it a priority to meet its responsibilities to provide culturally appropriate services for Indigenous people across Queensland.

"Three years on, we have made significant headway," Executive Director Stephen Muggleton said. "Under our contract with the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, we have increased our Indigenous workforce from eight to 160, making us a national leader in the employment of Indigenous staff in the aged and community care sectors.

"There are opportunities for Indigenous people to work in a range of roles and progress their career. We employ Enrolled Nurses up to Nurse Practitioners, as well as allied health professionals, hospitality and administration staff through to management personnel.

"We have also extended our services to Cape York and Thursday Island communities and significantly increased access of Indigenous people to Blue Care services across Queensland.

"At the coalface have been our Indigenous Coordinators and Project Officers, among them Lyn Cullinane, Gavin Kum Sing and David Conlon. Their role is to mentor and support our Indigenous staff and progress collaborative partnerships between Indigenous providers and our organisation.

Chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and Deputy Chair of the newly formed National Indigenous Health Equality Council, Dr Mick Adams, said Blue Care was at the forefront of positive change for Indigenous people.

"By 2010 Blue Care aims to have its Indigenous employees make up at least 3.5 per cent of its workforce, equivalent to the percentage of Indigenous people living in Queensland," he said.

"More Indigenous people in the aged care workforce will mean more Indigenous people tapping into Blue Care services, a necessary goal if we are to achieve Indigenous health equality."

On Thursday (August 14), Minister for Employment Participation the Hon Brendan O'Connor said Blue Care had proven itself to be a leader in Indigenous Employment.

"Blue Care has made a substantial contribution to successfully supporting Indigenous jobseekers to find and retain employment within their organisation," he said.

### Ends

For further information about this release please phone

Krista Janson  
P: 07 3720 5604  
F: 07 3377 3366  
E: [k.janson@bluecare.org.au](mailto:k.janson@bluecare.org.au)



# Media Release



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## **Blue Care background:**

Blue Care started as the Blue Nursing Service in 1953 and has grown into one of Australia's leading providers of community health and residential aged care.

As a not-for-profit organisation, Blue Care supports the elderly, people with disabilities and others in need in the community to remain independent for as long as possible.

Blue Care staff and volunteers provide care for more than 12,500 people every day through nursing, allied health, personal care, domestic assistance, respite, social support, pastoral and volunteer services.

This support is offered to people in their homes, in the community, and in Blue Care's centres, clinics, residential aged care facilities and independent living units across Queensland and northern New South Wales.

The organisation employs more than 9800 staff with a range of specialist skills who deliver care that is personal, trusted and compassionate.

Central to Blue Care's commitment to evidence-based practice is the University of Queensland/ Blue Care Research Practice and Development Centre. Through the centre, the organisation pursues a range of research activity that helps Blue Care be a national leader in quality care.

Blue Care services are available to all regardless of socio-economic, ethnic, religious, or spiritual background.

As an agency of UnitingCare Queensland, Blue Care is committed to care services that express the Christian values of the Uniting Church and address clients' physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs.

Blue Care's services are subsidised by the Australian and State Governments, however, as the costs of caring are substantially more than the funds provided, Blue Care relies heavily on financial support from the community and a dedicated team of volunteers.

For more information, visit [www.bluecare.org.au](http://www.bluecare.org.au)

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