



GOVERNANCE VITALS POOR AT NSW ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE

The acting Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Mike Fordham, has today placed the Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre (Biripi) under special administration.

Biripi was established in 1981. In 2017–18 it had income over \$17.7 million, of which more than \$13 million was from government sources to provide services. The local community in Taree, New South Wales relies on the important services including clinical health, aged care, community support programs and maternal health care. It also provides out-of-home care for approximately 100 Aboriginal children in and around Taree and Inverell.

Responding to complaints from various stakeholders, the Registrar authorised an independent examination of the corporation’s books and records in August 2018. The examiners found serious concerns with governance arrangements and relationships, which were causing operations and vital services to deteriorate to unacceptable levels.

After the examination, the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian advised the Registrar that because of concerns about governance and quality of services that they had decided not to renew the corporation’s accreditation as an out-of-home care provider for children and young people.

‘Biripi is an important organisation in the Aboriginal community—both for its members, and its clients and stakeholders,’ Mr Fordham said. ‘It’s vital that Biripi’s problems be addressed to ensure they can provide the best possible standards of care and service to Aboriginal children, for the carers and families, as well as for the clients of the medical service.’

The acting Registrar has appointed Peter McQuoid from PDM Consultancy as the special administrator of the corporation until 26 April 2019.

‘Our aim is to get Biripi back under the control of the members, operating efficiently and effectively, as soon as we can.’

Background

Special administration is a unique regulatory safeguard under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* which helps corporations to fix their problems. The aim of the process is to restore a corporation to good health and once this is achieved to return control to members as soon as possible.

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