



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday, 19th April 2016**

---

### **Free South West events to encourage regular Pap smears**

A series of free Women's Wellness events in May are aimed at encouraging women in the South West region to have regular Pap smears.

Hosted by the South West Aboriginal Medical Service (SWAMS), these events will be held in Brunswick Junction, Harvey, Bunbury, Collie, Busselton, Margaret River, Donnybrook, Manjimup and Bridgetown.

SWAMS' Nurse Practitioner Jemima Higgins said it was important to encourage all women to have a Pap smear every two years, as four out of five women who develop cervical cancer have either never had a Pap smear or do not have one regularly.

"A Pap smear is a quick and simple test used to check the health of the cells on your cervix and it's your best protection against cervical cancer for all women aged between 18 and 69," Jemima said.

According to the Department of Health's statistics, in 2013-14 the South West region had a cervical screening participation rate of 56.4%, which is greater than the State rate of 55.5%.

"While these statistics are encouraging, it shows there is still a large number of women who do not screen regularly and are therefore at risk of developing cervical cancer, which is preventable with early detection and treatment.

"The biggest risk factor for cervical cancer is not having regular Pap smears.

"We want to encourage women to come along to one of our events, have a free health check and enjoy some healthy snacks. We'll also have prizes and giveaways at each event."

The events are funded by the WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program as part of its 2015/16 Small Grants Program.

For more information about the free Women's Wellness events contact the SWAMS Clinic on (08) 9726 6000, or the toll free number on 1800 779 000 or Jemima Higgins on 0408 912 779.

For more information about the importance of regular Pap smears visit <http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/papsmears>.

**South west events details:**

**3 May:** Brunswick, 10am-2pm, Brunswick Junction Child Health Centre (corner Summers Road and Ridley St).

**4 May:** Harvey, 10am-2pm, GP Down South and IGA car park (Uduc Rd).

**5 May:** Bunbury after hours clinic, 5pm-8pm, SWAMS Clinic (51-55 Forrest Ave).

**9 May:** Collie, 10am-2pm, PCYC car park (105 Forrest St).

**12 May:** Busselton, 10am-2pm, Busselton Community Resource Centre (21 Cammilleri St).

**17 May:** Margaret River, 11am-2pm, Gloucester Park, Arts Margaret River car park (entry from Wallcliffe Rd).

**19 May:** Bunbury after hours clinic, 5pm-8pm, SWAMS Clinic (51-55 Forrest Ave).

**24 May:** Donnybrook, 10am-2pm, Apple Fun Park (southern end parking area, Collins St).

**26 May:** Manjimup, 10am-2pm, GP Down South and SWAMS (next to Department of Housing, 32 Rose St).

**31 May:** Bridgetown, 11am-2pm, Bridgetown Regional Library car park (75 Steere St).

**PHOTO: South West Aboriginal Medical Service employees (from left) Natalie Jetta, Lesley Nelson (CEO), Julie Knipping and Jemima Higgins will promote the importance of regular Pap smears through a series of free events held in May.**

---

For media enquiries please contact SWAMS Public Relations Officer Tahnia Creedon on (08) 9791 1166.