

Grant for Aboriginal service

THE World Council of Churches has made a grant of \$25,000 to the Port Augusta Aboriginal Medical Service. The grant from the WCC Christian Medical Commission was made in response to a request from the medical service through the Federal Council of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Port Augusta Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) was established in August 1976 by members of the Aboriginal communities of Port Augusta and Davenport reserve. According to Mr Lance Coulthard, the chairman of the AMS, "The existing health services failed to deal adequately with the health problems of these communities".

During the first nine months of operation the service discovered a high incidence of chronic malnutrition, alcoholism, chronic infections, diabetes and hypertension. The alarmingly high prevalence of diabetes and hypertension exemplify, according to an AMS report, "the serious nature of the population's present health status, and the urgency of medical treatment and prevention programs".

To date, the Port Augusta AMS has had to rely on donations from the Sydney AMS and receipts from Medibank to finance operations. Requests for assistance to the Federal and State Governments have brought no response.

The World Council grant will assist in paying salaries and administration expenses as well as assist in purchasing much needed equipment.