

## **Explanation Resolves Complaint**

A complaint was received about dental services provided in a remote community in the NT.

Following the removal of two teeth, a woman developed an abscess in her mouth, and she had to be transferred to hospital where she underwent an operation.

The woman complained that the removal of the teeth had caused the abscess and the distress associated with it. She wanted an explanation of how this happened and compensation as she had missed a number of weeks of work while in hospital.

The complaint was referred to conciliation.

The conciliation was held in a regional town and dental and medical specialists from Darwin travelled to the town to meet with the woman. Independent advice from a specialist confirmed that the abscess was not caused by or related to the dental treatment as it was in a different part of the mouth. It was a coincidence that the abscess had developed soon after the dental work had been completed.

The woman did not know that this was the case, and told us that had she known that she would not have gone ahead with the complaint. The hospital acknowledged that they should have explained what they knew about the abscess more clearly at the time and used an interpreter to ensure the woman understood what had happened. They agreed that in future where possible, interpreters would be used in situations such as this.