



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **SydWest meets Zimbabwe delegation to discuss youth engagement programs**

SydWest this week hosted a delegation from Zimbabwe including the Zimbabwean Ambassador to Australia, a senior MP and business leaders to showcase our successful programs for youth.

The visit was organised by Member for Blacktown Stephen Bali MP.

The Zimbabwe delegation was interested in positive youth engagement through sport and other activities and wanted to learn more about what other jurisdictions do.

SydWest Acting CEO Clement Meru shared examples of SydWest programs that help address a range of youth issues, including mental health, and cultural barriers that might prevent youth from accessing services.

‘The delegation was particularly interested in setting up spaces or facilities in Zimbabwe that attracted youth and provided a place where they would feel safe enough to open up about any issues they may be facing,’ Mr Meru said.

‘We were able to provide examples of all the different ways we engage with local youth, including youth from African backgrounds, particularly through sport.

‘We also outlined the success we are having with our New Way Forward program for our youth at risk from culturally diverse backgrounds.’

Other discussions were around ways Zimbabwe could help address skills shortages in Australia, including within aged care where there is a critical shortage nationally.

Across Greater Sydney there are more than 5000 people from Zimbabwe, and the number settling in Blacktown is growing.

As part of the visit, all parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Friendship and Cooperation initiated by Mr Bali and expressed a desire to continue to collaborate and share learnings.

Mr Bali said that while the two countries were separated by more than 11,000 km they were committed to working together to ‘generate initiatives that boost social, cultural and sporting relations that encourage charitable, business and community based partnerships’.

Mr Meru thanked the delegation, led by the Hon. Darlington Dzikamai Chigumbu MP, Member for Budiro South; His Excellency Mr Joe Mhishi, Ambassador for Zimbabwe; and Ruth Pasi, a local community African-Australian leader for visiting and for their interest in SydWest.

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