

13 October 2017

Stories of Indigenous nurses to be recorded through HESTA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

HESTA has reaffirmed its commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, launching its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) at the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) conference this week.

A significant action in the HESTA Innovate RAP will shine a light on the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses in Australia, with HESTA working with CATSINaM to help record and celebrate their stories.

HESTA CEO, Debby Blakey said they were proud to launch the Innovate RAP and were looking forward to working with associations like CATSINaM to help showcase the contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made to the Australian health care system, specifically in the field of nursing.

“Committing to this action is our way of recognising the incredible contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses past and present to our health care system,” Ms Blakey said.

“By collaborating with associations like CATSINaM to record and share their stories we hope to help acknowledge the barriers they may have overcome, whilst raising awareness of the pivotal role they continue to play in achieving health equality in Australia.”

“We are so pleased to launch our Innovate RAP, which builds on the work of our 2015 Reflect RAP and reinforces our commitment to reconciliation and increasing equity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.”

Another key action from the HESTA Innovate RAP is a commitment to supporting the development of Indigenous nurse leaders in the health care sector.

“We’re proud to promote initiatives and programs that support future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders within the health sector. We recognise the vital role these future health professionals play in achieving health equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community,” Ms Blakey said.

CATSINaM CEO, Janine Mohamed said the collaboration between HESTA and CATSINaM was important to help tell the stories of Indigenous nurses from their own perspective and highlight their contribution to health equity.

“It’s really important our stories are told by our people. So much of Australia’s history is told through a non-Indigenous lens,” Ms Mohamed said.

“HESTA’s partnership with CATSINaM will make a difference in that it’s really important for our Indigenous nurses and midwives to see their predecessors’ contributions to their professions. We hear so much about Florence Nightingale and non-Indigenous nurses. It’s vital that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous nurses know the beautiful rich history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives in this country.”

“Their stories need to be elevated so that we can know and have pride in them.”

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Reconciliation Australia CEO, Karen Mundine said through the Innovate RAP HESTA is displaying its commitment to reconciliation, embedding strategies throughout the whole organisation.

“By adopting an Innovate RAP, HESTA is demonstrating its readiness to develop and test innovative approaches to reconciliation, and champion reconciliation at every level of the organisation,” Ms Mundine said.

Ends

HESTA

HESTA is an industry superannuation fund dedicated to those working in the Health and Community Services Sector. HESTA has **over 830,000 members** and manages more than **\$40 billion** of members' assets.

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