



**IAHA RELEASE:**

**Indigenous Allied Health Australia welcomes funding for mental health during COVID -19**

**Available for Immediate Release**

**1st April 2020**

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), the national organisation for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health workforce, welcomed the Federal Government's announcement this week for the \$74 million package for mental health.

Facing challenges are not new for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, however with COVID-19, the challenge is particularly significant as our older generations, people with chronic health conditions and remote communities are especially vulnerable. IAHA support and work closely with Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia who have been tasked to develop culturally safe and responsive mental health and wellbeing resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Nicole Turner Chair of IAHA, shares *"Keeping our mental health and wellbeing strong also means making sure we do things to keep up our physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing. Mental health is critical to all domains of our holistic health and wellbeing. It means we're taking care of ourselves in mind, body and spirit, and staying strong allows us to support others."*

IAHA is finding new ways to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health workforce. Working with our partners Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia, we look forward to a comprehensive and useful set of tools that have been developed by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They will not only support the workforce but our broad and diverse communities. Relevant information, tools and resources are critical during this time and IAHA is committed to providing the most appropriate and relevant supports and professional development to our members.

The wellbeing of the allied health and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce is at the forefront of our priorities during COVID-19. IAHA, our members and partner organisations must stay strong, connected and keep our communities safe and well through this pandemic.

This is particularly important and critical, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still face racism at all levels of the health system and increasingly with COVID-19. IAHA supports the call from the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association to ensure that health professionals are delivering and providing culturally safe and responsive healthcare at all times. Racism cannot be tolerated and costs the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



We are all facing some difficult times ahead. We must stay mentally, physically, culturally, spiritually and emotionally well. Culturally safe and responsive healthcare, resources and tools designed and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and services are essential.

**END MESSAGE**

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