

MEDIA RELEASE
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NHLF celebrates the new Health Plan and its focus on Strengths Based Discourse and Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures

The National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF) supports the release of the new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031 providing a national policy framework to improve health and wellbeing outcomes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the next 10 years.

The 2013-2016 Health Plan was the first national policy and health document to name racism as having an impact on health outcomes. The new Health Plan is the first to embed the social determinants and cultural determinants of health into national policy and linking it to the priority reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Chair of the NHLF, Donna Murray, said the focus on culture and demonstrating the relationship between culture and good health and wellbeing is an important milestone in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy.

“Culture is central to sense of identity, to self and community, and the connections people have between and within community and country. We are committed to achieving health equity, we draw strength from cultural integrity, community and our ways of knowing, being and doing.”

The Healing Foundation CEO, Fiona Cornforth, said The Healing Foundation welcomes the new Plan’s emphasis on embedding strengths-focused, trauma-aware and healing-informed approaches across programs, policies, and services.

“These approaches are about creating supportive environments that ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lead their own health, wellbeing, and healing journeys. They are strongly grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values and determinants of health.

“We look forward to the opportunity to co-design and implement a national intergenerational healing strategy to address the impacts of the colonial legacies on our health and wellbeing. We must make healing happen,” Ms Cornforth said.

Lowitja Institute CEO and NHLF Deputy Chair Dr Janine Mohamed said “Research demonstrates that culturally safe, community-driven and strengths-based approaches work to enhance our health and wellbeing. The Health Plan centres these approaches, and the leadership of Aboriginal community-controlled health services and peak bodies. We welcome the strong focus on culture in all policies, including workforce and the important recognition of culturally informed research, evaluation and practice.”

“The Health Plan sets an important course for governments and mainstream health services to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes for our Peoples.” Dr Janine Mohamed, CEO, Lowitja Institute

“It is time for all Governments to step back and let Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in deciding their own priorities and solutions, with governments transforming the way they work” said Ms Donna Murray, Chair of NHLF.

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NHLF membership

- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA)
- Australian Indigenous Psychologists' Association (AIPA)
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM)
- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA)
- Indigenous Dentists' Association of Australia (IDAA)
- The Healing Foundation
- The Lowitja Institute
- National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHW)
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health (NATSILMH)
- National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists (NAATSIP)
- Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA).