



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme transitioning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control

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Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), alongside partners the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) and Rural Doctors Network (RDN), is excited to be announced as the successful provider of the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme (PHMSS), as the scholarships transition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control in mid-2024.

In making the joint [announcement](#) with the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, Yanyuwa woman, Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, said "In his role chairing the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Dr Arnold 'Puggy' Hunter devoted his life to improving health outcomes for First Nations Australians. Today, I am sure he would be very proud that the scholarship scheme named in his honour will soon be Indigenous led. This will ensure the next generation of First Nations health students are well-equipped to work with communities to provide quality, culturally safe and appropriate care for better health outcomes".

Kamilaroi woman and IAHA Chairperson, Nicole Turner, said "many of our members have benefited in their studies as Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship recipients and IAHA is excited to work in partnership to support the next generation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce. We know the important role that financial assistance plays in student success, but we're excited to wrap our culturally safe and responsive supports around recipients to ensure that they're supported culturally, personally, and professionally, across their journey".

Bundjalung man and NAATSIHWP Chairperson, David Follent, added "NAATSIHWP have a long history with the Puggy Hunter Scholarship and is pleased to be working with IAHA and RDN to ensure that we grow our future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across all disciplines, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This scholarship plays an essential role in equitable access to education, training and employment, and its recipients make positive impacts in their communities daily.

"RDN is privileged to continue to work alongside two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations which share such an important relationship," said Wiradjuri man and RDN Chair, Professor Peter O'Mara. "We are proud to be able to offer program delivery expertise and technical support, to contribute in our way to the success and longevity of the program, and most importantly the scholarship recipients, including our students coming from or working with our rural and remote communities."

The Commonwealth funded PHMSS program is named in honour of Dr Arnold 'Puggy' Hunter, a significant leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing, whose many contributions include being the inaugural chairperson of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. Consortium members look forward to working with the Hunter family and others to deliver a culturally safe and responsive scholarship program which empowers our future workforce.

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