



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck**

Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

26 September 2018

Reaffirmed Commitment to Partnering for Good Health and Wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Australia's peak bodies for Indigenous health and specialist medicine have reaffirmed their commitment to working with the Australian Government as partners in reducing the current gap in health outcomes and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians under the Closing the Gap strategy.

Introducing the forum held on Wednesday 12th September at Parliament House, Minister Ken Wyatt AM, welcomed the opportunity to continue discussions under the National Partnership, highlighting the Australian Government's commitment to Closing the Gap as the platform for improving the health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The decision by Australian Health Ministers through the Council of Australian Governments Health Council to develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Plan by 2019 was welcomed by the collaborative partners.

Discussing the key areas of the partnership, cultural safety and access to services remain top priorities. The Chair of the Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges (CPMC) Dr Philip Truskett AM reported that the key focus area of increasing the Indigenous specialist medical workforce by focussing on support, mentoring, role modelling was core business for Australia's specialist Medical Colleges.

Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt AM said the collaborative group was ideally placed to play an essential role in the COAG Health Council resolution to develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Medical Workforce Plan – to ensure more Aboriginal doctors, nurses and health workers on country and in our towns and cities, local warriors for health among our families and communities.

Ms Patricia Turner, CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) stressed the importance of continuing to grow the depth and number of Indigenous people in the health sector. Improving the health of Indigenous people can only occur through partnership, and integrating health care providers with community controlled services is the key.

Dr Kali Hayward, President Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association (AIDA) reflected on building culturally appropriate health workforce and the need to discover champions in the system to support training.

Ms Janine Mohammed, CEO Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSiNaM) highlighted the merit in greater coordination of services to deliver improvements in health outcomes.

Mr Karl Briscoe, CEO, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association (NATSIHWA) highlighted the importance of building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and strengthening alliances to address the health priorities of Indigenous Australians.

All partners acknowledged a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Plan will form the framework for furthering collective action to increase the Indigenous health workforce and embed a cultural safety capability in Australia's health system.

Background

On 31 May 2017 the Australian Government joined with the Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges, the Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation as partners to improve the good health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Focussing on Tier Three of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan, partners are working in collaboration to improve system performance by focussing on two key comprehensive areas for collective strategic action: increase the health workforce and embed cultural safety and competency in the system.

For a copy of the signed agreement is available from the [Department of Health's website](#).

Contacts:

Office of the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP: Nick Way |Media Adviser 0419 835 449

Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges: Ms Angela Magarry 0437 227 422