



26 March Meeting Communiqué

The NHLF held their first quarterly meeting of 2020. Several items were discussed that highlighted a very busy year for members around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy. The first item on the agenda was to confirm the Chair for 2020 with Donna Murray, CEO of Indigenous Allied Health Australia, accepting the role moving from the Deputy Chair position.

The NHLF acknowledges that the current COVID-19 pandemic is challenging all aspects of our lives, including members' activities. NHLF Members' will maintain their activities as much as possible in the current challenging environment focusing on new working arrangements, caring for staff, communities and their membership. The NHLF members' wish to acknowledge and support the leadership provided by Pat Turner the CEO of NACCHO and her team in their role in supporting and advising the Aboriginal community-controlled health service sector and their communities during this challenging time.

The NHLF agreed to support in principle the newly announced plan to develop a new 10 year National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023 (NATSHP), that will include the implementation strategy to commence from 2023. The NHLF support for the new approach is subject to the following:

- the plan upholds Indigenous leadership, this includes engagement of the NHLF in a co-design approach for the Plan and its implementation, the incorporation of relevant community feedback (including both the *My Life, My Lead* Community Consultations and the *Close the Gap Engagement Report*) and the upholding of the recommendations from the Uluru Statement.
- retain the advanced thinking and powerful language of the current Health Plan, including the vision of a system free of racism and a culturally centred approach to health that incorporates the social and cultural determinants of health.
- the plan incorporates high-level policy, translatable actions and measures, funding resources, accountability and governance to ensure its implementation.
- the new plan is cross-jurisdictional, with ownership and actions by all state and territory governments, as well as Commonwealth.
- the plan compliments the new Closing the Gap Agreement and avoids unnecessary government duplication.



The NHLF supports the work of the Coalition of Peaks on delivering the National Agreement on Closing the Gap with the Council of Australian Governments, with the health and wellbeing as a key domain that will be led by the NHLF and supports members to drive health policy and reform. Strengthening the compliance mechanisms under the National Agreement will be critical for government agencies and service providers to be more accountable for improved outcomes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The NHLF continues to engage and inform the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Plan (NATSIHWP). However, there are concerns that the original intent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leadership that spoke to the Council of Australian Governments Health Council in 2018 has been lost. Therefore, the NHLF calls for the National Health Workforce Plan to:

- have the NHLF lead in the development of the National Health Workforce Plan.
- Incorporate the vision and policy directions of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework (2016-2023) and an implementation plan to create one document.
- Include targets and actions to meet the vision with investment in existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that are delivering results in workforce development,
- Address the issues of data availability, data management and sharing of data to capture the broader health workforce, not just those regulated under the National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme.
- the Plan must have long term funding investment, and finally
- The Medical Workforce Plan and the NATSIHWP must be crossed referenced to ensure the cultural elements required to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce are embedded.

The second NHLF meeting for 2020, is scheduled for 18 June 2020.

For further information, please contact the nhlf@iaha.com.au.