

## **Communiqué**

### **20 September 2023 Meeting**

The NHLF held its third quarterly meeting for 2023 on 20 September. This meeting was presided over by Marilyn Morgan, Deputy Chair of the NHLF.

The NHLF would like to announce Karl Briscoe the CEO of the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIWHP) as the new Chair of the NHLF for a term of two-years, with Marilyn Morgan continuing as Deputy Chair.

Members thanked Fiona Cornforth, the CEO of the Healing Foundation for her role as Chair and more importantly her contribution to the NHLF for six years during her time as the CEO of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation. Members wished Fiona all the best in her journey in the new role at the National Centre for Epidemiology & Population Health within the Australian National University.

This meeting discussed principles the NHLF for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stakeholder Engagement Framework. The need for a new way of engagement by the Australian Public Service was highlighted in the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This report confirmed what the NHLF already knew, which is, that many government agencies do not understand what is meant by partnership, co-design, shared decision-making.

Another key discussion was a response to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Closing the Gap. Of interest is the proposal of an independent accountability mechanism for the National Agreement, given the failings of government and their agencies to fully grasp the changes being sought under the priority reforms areas, and shifting service delivery to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs). Consequently, the NHLF supports the proposal for an independent authority, with teeth, to sort through the failings of agencies and the gaps within the National Agreement.

The NHLF also reaffirmed the need to eliminate the racism that obstructs their equal access to health, economic opportunities, education, and all other resources associated with self-determination and healthy sustainable outcomes. A Voice to Parliament, government and agencies will always be needed, regardless of it being constitutionally protected. A voice is to advocate for good policy, programs, and services, to avoid harm and past mistakes by having politicians, government and the bureaucracy listen and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A voice will enable policy and decision-making to be co-designed and to foster partnership approaches. Accepting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices would demonstrate respect.

The fourth quarterly meeting will be an online meeting on 6 December 2023.  
For further information, please contact the [nhlf@iaha.com.au](mailto:nhlf@iaha.com.au).