

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a significantly higher burden of disease and a reduced life expectancy in comparison to other Australians.

The social determinants of health play a significant part in these inequities.

The concept of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health includes, as well as the individual, the health and well-being of the whole community.

The ability to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues is dependent on the availability of culturally safe health services.

## AHHA POSITION:

- ✧ Sustained comprehensive action is required to address inequities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes.
- ✧ Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) have an integral role in community-focused service provision.
- ✧ Effective service provision requires a holistic approach incorporating a combination of ACCHOs and culturally appropriate mainstream services.
- ✧ Long-term comprehensive community level programs are required to reduce the impact of the social determinants of health on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes.
- ✧ COAG's recent commitment to prioritising improving Indigenous outcomes must be supported by appropriate funding and support for locally developed responses from Commonwealth, state and territory governments.
- ✧ All Commonwealth, state and territory programs and initiatives must consider, reflect and compliment the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023.
- ✧ A National Standard on Culturally Competent Health Care should be developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and incorporated into the national accreditation program along with assessment and reporting on institutional racism.
- ✧ AHHA supports the development and implementation of Reconciliation Action Plans by health services.
- ✧ Targeted long term programs are required to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the health workforce.
- ✧ The knowledge-base of effective service models, community engagement strategies and health policy should be enhanced through the allocation of research funding to investigate community-identified service and policy issues.
- ✧ A Makaratta Commission to oversee treaty negotiations, and tell the truth about our history, plus constitutional change to establish a First Nations Voice to the Australian Parliament is required to improve health and well-being, and reduce health disadvantage and inequality.

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Released November 2017