

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 appropriate 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.
- ✧ The Australian, state and territory governments must recommit to the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- ✧ All Commonwealth, state and territory programs and initiatives must consider, reflect and compliment the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan.
- ✧ A National Standard on Culturally Appropriate Health Care should be developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and incorporated into the national accreditation program.
- ✧ 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.
- ✧ Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (as driven by the Recognise Health initiative) is required to help to improve health and well-being, and reduce health disadvantage and inequality.

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