



COAG Health Council

Indigenous Roundtable Communiqué

1 August 2018

On Wednesday 1 August, COAG Health Council (CHC) members met with Indigenous health leaders for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Roundtable. All Ministers welcomed and valued this momentous opportunity to hear collectively from Indigenous health leaders.

The COAG Health Council welcomed Minister Ken Wyatt, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Health to the meeting and expressed its deepest thanks to those Indigenous Leaders from across Australia who participated.

Ministers thanked Kumalie Riley for her welcome to Arrernte country and Janine Mohammed, the Chief Executive Officer of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) for her powerful and thought provoking keynote address, urging Ministers to consider the future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Ministers also thanked Charlie King OAM for facilitating the discussion.

Ministers acknowledged the breadth and depth of Indigenous health knowledge, experience and leadership represented at the Roundtable, as well as the proven record of Aboriginal controlled health organisations in improving the health and wellbeing of indigenous Australians.

Indigenous leaders spoke of the importance of mutual trust and respect, the need to increase cultural capability and eliminate racism in all health settings and services, and the importance of cultural safety in improving the health and wellbeing of indigenous Australians.

Ministers welcomed this message and agreed that cultural safety in providing healthcare to indigenous Australians was essential.

Ministers agreed to progress cultural safety training within their own jurisdiction and committed to explore the requirement for cultural safety training in health professionals registration.

Ministers agreed to progress initiatives to implement a Safe Patient Journey through the health care system within their own jurisdiction and committed to explore the requirement for cultural safety training in health professionals and tasked the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency to develop options

for the next CHC meeting in consultation with national bodies and indigenous health workforce representatives.

Indigenous leaders clearly outlined the importance of a workforce plan to guide action and inspire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to a successful career in health.

Ministers agreed to develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Plan with a first draft to be considered at the CHC's next meeting, to be followed by consultation.

Ministers agreed to work with Indigenous leaders to develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Medical Workforce Plan.

Ministers acknowledged the many successes and achievements in Indigenous health outlined during the Roundtable and welcomed the expressions of hope for the future. Equally, Ministers acknowledged the challenges faced by indigenous people across urban, rural and remote communities.

Ministers acknowledged the experience of Indigenous people in health settings and noted the importance of a safe clinical and cultural health journey for Indigenous people.

Recognising the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and medical research and researchers, Commonwealth, states and territory Health Ministers commit to working together to strengthen Indigenous led health and medical research. This should include an enhanced focus on specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and medical research to improve outcomes for the community.

In recognition of the significant value of continuing to build mutual trust, respect and understanding, Ministers committed to an annual dialogue with Indigenous health leaders with the next Roundtable to occur in 12 months' time.

Further, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health has been established as a standing item on every COAG Health Council meeting.

Ministers further strengthened the accountability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by agreeing to invite the Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Health to every COAG Health Council meeting thus embedding consideration of these matters in all health discussions.

Ministers acknowledged the strong contribution by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in advancing improvements in Indigenous Health and the achievements of the Commonwealth, states and territories.

Ministers concluded a strategic discussion in the CHC meeting on Thursday 2 August by reaffirming their commitment to addressing gaps in Indigenous health outcomes.

The summary themes from the discussion are listed below:

- Develop a National Indigenous Health and Medical Workforce Plan that provides a career path, national scope of practice and builds more balance of indigenous and non-indigenous people across all health professions, make health an aspirational career for Aboriginal people. This should include a specific focus on a national scope of practice for Aboriginal Health Workers and Practitioners.
- Trust, hope, faith and strong relationships important to ensure services meet needs.
- Need for deep listening at all levels.
- Important to recognise and share the good things that are already happening and some of the recent positive announcements.
- Tap into the centres of excellence that are already operating and build on success.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are invested in success and seek same investment from non-indigenous partners.
- Need to have different approaches for urban, regional and remote communities to reflect the diversity of local needs, resources and capability across all settings.
- Primary health care services critical to wellbeing to prevent the need for subsequent acute services, tackling chronic disease essential.
- Make sure cultural capability and cultural safety are within legislation and policy frameworks.
- It is important that there is collaborative, needs based planning and implementation rather than vertical disconnected programs, and funding needs to be long term to support sustainability.
- Need a range of measures: personal health interventions as well as community strategies such as supply reduction of hazards.
- It is important that other determinants such as housing, electricity and water are addressed.
- In recognition of the importance of connection to country, services should also be on country where safe and appropriate.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait community leadership is critical to success.