

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NURSES AND MIDWIVES LAUNCH STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTHCARE

The Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) will launch the highly anticipated report: *'gettin em n keepin em n growin em': Strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery education reform* (GENKE II) at the CATSINaM 25th Anniversary National Conference to be held Friday, 19 August 2022 on Gadigal Country.

A formative work in CATSINaM's 25 Years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery activism was the original 2002 *'getting em n keepin em': Report of the Indigenous Nursing and Education Working Group* (GENKE I) that aimed to address the detrimentally low numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives in the health workforce. Honoring and reviewing this work, this year CATSINaM developed GENKE II 2022 presenting renewed strategies to address the persistent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare concerns identified in the original report.

The GENKE II report recognises that the cultural knowledges and skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives are intrinsically link to challenging racism in Australian health care systems and to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The report recommendations highlight strategic areas for action to promote Cultural Safety in nursing and midwifery education, practice, and to support the growth of our workforce.

"In 2002, our founding members made it clear, to make the health system safer for our peoples, there needs to be many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives working in health settings providing appropriate care", said CATSINaM CEO, Professor Roianne West.

"Despite their calls, our workforce remains significantly under-represented at just 1.4% of the total Australian nursing and midwifery workforce.¹ Worse still, in 20-years our registered

¹ Australian Government Department of Health (DoH) 2022a, 'Factsheet selector dashboard, nurses and midwives 2021, Australian-born Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander', *Nursing and midwifery dashboards*, viewed 12 July 2022
<https://hwd.health.gov.au/nrmw-dashboards/index.html>

nurses occupy just 1.16% of the greater registered nursing workforce, only a 0.76% improvement since 2002.²

The GENKE II report recommendations aim to address this shortfall through national strategies that privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery knowledges and embed Cultural Safety across all the domains of nursing and midwifery education”, she said.

The GENKE II report outlines key national-level strategic education reforms, including to establish transparency and accountability for future work, to better support and grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery workforce and to improve Cultural Safety in the wider nursing and midwifery workforce. In a similar vein to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, CATSINaM, seeks formalised partnerships with the Australian Government, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) and other key stakeholders to drive the GENKE II reform agenda.

The CATSINaM 25th Anniversary National Conference program centres on the GENKE II report. Conference speakers, who include nursing and midwifery and other health leaders, have been invited to share their professional perspectives on the report and the potential of its recommendations.

Additional information:

For 25 years, the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) has acted as the national peak professional organisation representing the collective voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives in Australia. CATSINaM is a not-for-profit Aboriginal community-controlled organisation.

Our vision is to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

Our purpose is to lead Australia’s nursing and midwifery professions through collaborative processes to improve education, health, and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and particularly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery workforce.

Media enquiries: Ali Drummond, National Director (Education & Practice), CATSINAM

ali.drummond@catsinam.org.au

² Australian Government Department of Health (DoH) 2022, ‘Factsheet selector dashboard, nurses and midwives 2021, Australian-born Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander’, *Nursing and midwifery dashboards*, viewed 12 July 2022, <https://hwd.health.gov.au/nrmw-dashboards/index.html>