

MEDIA RELEASE

9 August 2022

CATSINaM MAKING NEWS AT 25th ANNIVERSARY NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Bold recommendations for transforming nursing and midwifery education will be unveiled in a new report to be launched at the 25th Anniversary National Conference of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM).

The report, *'gettin em n keepin em n growin em' - Strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing and Midwifery Education Reform*, will include strategies to privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery knowledges and embed Cultural Safety across all domains of nursing and midwifery education.

"Its recommendations are bold and practical, emphasising who should act and how," says Professor Roianne West, the CEO of CATSINaM, a descendant of the Kalkadoon and Djunke peoples.

Professor West said the National Conference and Gala Dinner, celebrating 25 years since the organisation was founded on Gadigal Country in 1997, will commemorate and honour both individual and collective activism by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

Significantly, the conference will also include a National Apology from the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery about the role of nursing and midwifery education and research in contributing to the harm and ongoing suffering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

Conference participants will also have the opportunity to hear from new Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health, Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy.

Returning to the Country where CATSINaM was founded almost to the day, the conference opens on 18 August with a welcome reception and includes the official opening of the "In Our Own Right: Black Australian Nurses and Midwives Stories National Exhibition", which will run for the duration of the conference.

The exhibition will share the stories of the founding members, the contributors to the 2005 In Our Own Right: Black Australian Nurses Stories and the 25 individual acts culminating in nearly 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery stories across 7 decades.

"The exhibition will be a 'must see' for every nurse and midwife in Australia," said Professor West. "It brings the opportunity to see nursing and midwifery in Australia through the eyes of Australia's first nurses and midwives."

The welcome reception will also include the release of the report *'gettin em n keepin em n growin em' GENKE II - Strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing and Midwifery Education Reform*.

Since the release of the first iteration of this report in 2002, Professor West says there has been negligible improvement in the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registered nurses and midwives.

"We are far off the necessary numbers completing tertiary programs to ensure parity is reached in the near future," she said.

The Gala Dinner on Saturday, 20 August, will be hosted by actor and TV personality Luke Carroll and will include an awards presentation, three-course meal and entertainment by CATSINaM member Rochelle Watson.

In the lead up to the conference, CATSINaM have been celebrating 25 Collective Acts of Activism, including significant events such as coordinating the establishment of an international alliance of First Nations nurses and midwives in 2016 and CATSINaM becoming a founding member of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council in 2009.

Similarly, 25 Individual Acts of Activism have been recognised, acknowledging the contributions and achievements of CATSINaM members such as Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, the epitome of nursing activism, Aunty Dr Mary Martin, a trailblazer in Aboriginal health, and former CATSINaM board director Renee Blackman, who has worked for 30 years in Aboriginal Health.

Professor West said: "Recognising and commemorating these Acts of Activism highlight the important role CATSINaM has historically played and continues to play in nursing and midwifery Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and we look forward to celebrating these achievements at our conference and gala dinner."

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Jay Kelly

Acting Chief Operating Officer

0439 215 477

jay.kelly@catsinam.org.au