

WA ABORIGINAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP FORUM

“Working Together to Improve Outcomes for Aboriginal Western Australians”

Sustainable Health Review (WA)

December 2017

INTRODUCTION

The WA Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum (‘Partnership Forum’) welcomes the opportunity to inform the Sustainable Health Review (WA) 2017 (‘Review’) of the purpose of the Partnership Forum to support a collaborative and coordinated approach to delivering effective health services.

BACKGROUND TO THE WA ABORIGINAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP FORUM

The Partnership Forum has been in existence for over a decade, meeting quarterly. It brings together high-level key stakeholders from across the health sector including representatives from the Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA), Australian Government Department of Health and the Western Australian Department of Health. The Forum also extends membership to associate members, such as the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The primary purpose is to work in partnership with a spirit of goodwill, commitment to co-operation and effective communication in order to effect real and sustainable improvements in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in WA.

It exists to:

- Act in an **advisory capacity** and offer a balanced, considered and evidence based view of the health issues and priorities in their jurisdiction.
- Provide advice on **implementation and partnership** working arrangements to ensure that the multiple elements of the agreement work together in a coherent, integrated and collaborative manner to enhance the health outcomes of Aboriginal communities, families and individuals in Western Australia.
- Make recommendations or advise on **ways to strengthen cross sector partnerships** for improving the social, economic and environmental determinants of health inclusive of the whole of government approach.
- **Discuss, monitor and identify possible issues, programs and initiatives** that may provide the best means to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people in Western Australia.
- Discuss and **share information** on initiatives, programs being planned or undertaken to increase their effectiveness and reduce duplication.
- Facilitate the development of accessible, accurate and affordable **data collection and information systems** that support an evidence-based approach to planning, delivery and evaluation of Aboriginal health improvement planning approaches.
- Provide a **forum where community issues to be raised**, enabling enhanced strategic planning and policy making by executives within the health sector.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH AND WELLBEING 2015-2020

A significant outcome from the Partnership Forum has been the development of a *Framework Agreement on Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing 2015-2020* ('Agreement'). The Agreement is between the Australian Government, the Western Australian Government and AHCWA.

The aim of the Agreement is for all Partners to work effectively and collaboratively in a transparent and collective manner, in partnership with local communities, to improve health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia by addressing agreed jurisdictional priorities.

It has been founded upon the principles of collaboration, respect, need, commitment and recognition.

For further information relating to the Agreement, please find it attached as *Appendix 1*.

STRENGTHENING AND LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS OUR HEALTH SYSTEM IS ESSENTIAL IN IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES

Within the context of the Review, the Partnership Forum reaffirms the need for partnerships to be continually strengthened across the health sector, to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The Partnership Forum continues to facilitate relationships and collaboration between the State and Commonwealth government, AHCWA/ACCHSs, WAPHA, community and non-government organisations. The work of the Partnership Forum enables health planning and strategy development to support a better health system for Aboriginal people, through increasing integration and reducing duplication.

Leading into the future, the Partnership Forum remains committed to enhancing joint-planning, investment and collaboration in the design, commissioning, and evaluation of services across the sector.

The Partnership Forum encourages that partnerships continue to be built across the health system in WA, to ensure that Aboriginal health is everybody's business.

Foreword

The significant disparity in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal people remains. Coordination and collaboration between the health sectors and effective community engagement is a fundamental imperative to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This Agreement is designed to support key health sector players through a shared vision concerning how to improve the health disparity experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia.

The Partners to this Agreement have committed to reduce the life expectancy gap and acknowledge that this can only be achieved through shared responsibility and genuine ongoing partnerships between all health service providers, government agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Partners also acknowledge that some past government policies and practices have negatively impacted the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A focus on the health system alone will not close this gap. This Agreement provides the impetus and platform for action to be undertaken with key stakeholders, to address the social determinants that impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This approach is in keeping with the Aboriginal definition of 'health in a holistic context':

"'Aboriginal health' means not just the physical wellbeing of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole Community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being, thereby bringing about the total wellbeing of their Community. It is a whole-of-life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life." – National Aboriginal Health Strategy, 1989.

The Australian Government and the Western Australian Government acknowledge the importance and unique level of expertise and success of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Sector, in the provision of primary health care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Senator the Honourable Fiona Nash
Minister for Rural Health

Date

The Honourable Dr Kim Hames MLA
Western Australian Deputy Premier
Minister for Health and Minister for Tourism

Date

Ms Michelle Nelson-Cox
Chairperson
The Aboriginal Health Council of Western
Australia

Date

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership Framework Agreement 2015 – 2020 (the Agreement) is made between the Australian Government (represented by the Department of Health), the Government of Western Australia (represented by the Western Australian Department of Health) and the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA).
- 1.2 This Agreement is an agreed framework that supports closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage targets identified in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA). The following plans underpin the Agreement and identify the priorities for Western Australia:
 - *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023;*
 - *WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015 – 2030;*
 - *AHCWA Strategic Plan;* and
 - other relevant national and jurisdictional policy documents, including but not limited to those listed herein (Section 8.2).
- 1.3 This Agreement continues the intent of previous Agreements - to advance the health and wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Agreement is to have an effective mechanism for all sectors to share information and consult on policies and programs that aim to address the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of the Agreement is for all Partners to work effectively and collaboratively in a transparent and collective manner, in partnership with local communities, to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia by addressing agreed jurisdictional priorities.

3. Principles

- 3.1 Collaboration – the Partners will work together and with other key stakeholders, including those external to the health sector, in the interest of improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- 3.2 Respect – for the work and commitment of each Partner, using the Agreement to its full potential to progress and achieve constructive outcomes;
- 3.3 Need – the Partners will work to identify shared priorities within the jurisdiction as they relate to planning and service delivery and seek to ensure that effort is focused on areas of agreed need.
- 3.4 Commitment – to engage and work productively with Partners through effective and timely communication and information sharing; and

- 3.5 Recognition - that Western Australian and Australian Governments are accountable to the Australian and State/Territory Parliament and the Australian public for all health decisions and outcomes, and associated Affiliates are also accountable to their respective boards and members.

4. Commitments

- 4.1 Partners agree to work collaboratively through joint planning and targeted, evidence-based action to continue efforts, including activities under the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement*, to achieve the objective of improved health outcomes.
- 4.2 All Partners make a commitment to focusing on the shared priorities established under this agreement, by reference to such key documents as the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013 – 2023*, the *WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015 – 2030* and the *AHCWA Strategic Plan*.
- 4.3 Partners commit to working collaboratively to develop and sustain:
- a health system that provides clinically appropriate care that is accessible, culturally safe, culturally competent and free of racism for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
 - a health system that improves the capacity of Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Services, while ensuring responsiveness to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by mainstream services, and builds and maintains linkages with the community controlled health sector;
 - coordinated, culturally appropriate services across the health system (including primary health care, specialist and hospital care) to improve the patient journey and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
 - streamlined reporting processes where possible, to reduce repetition and unnecessary burden on service providers, whilst also supporting service delivery, improved patient outcomes and informed forward planning;
 - opportunities to create awareness of existing accurate, consistent and usable data and information to support improvement of Aboriginal health outcomes;
 - workforce strategies developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve continuity of care and coordination with health services;
 - where possible, more sustainable program funding to better support Aboriginal workforce stability; and
 - effective linkages with other relevant sectors (including but not limited to social and emotional and wellbeing, aged care, mental health, and alcohol and other

drugs) to improve the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 Responsibility to realise commitments herein will be shared, as appropriate, between all Partners, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration.
- 5.2 This Agreement recognises and respects the existing roles and responsibilities of each Partner herein.
- 5.3 Under the terms of this Agreement, the Australian Government, the Government of Western Australia and AHCWA maintain autonomy with respect to their individual legislative and other requirements and responsibilities, whilst fulfilling their agreed commitment to the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum.
- 5.4 Collaboratively, the Partners commit to maintaining an effective Western Australian Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum by:
 - meeting quarterly to progress the business of the Partnership;
 - inviting other key stakeholders (such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Primary Health Networks and the Mental Health Commission) to participate in meetings as permanent ex officio members;
 - supporting collaborative activity in key areas agreed by the Forum Partners;
 - taking responsibility for being transparent and accountable in information sharing and planning efforts to support improved service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
 - ensuring issues of concern raised by Partners are carried forward to relevant key stakeholders for information, action and/or response.
 - coordinating and/or supporting the implementation of new programs, taking into consideration systems effectiveness;
 - analysing and providing input into key policy issues and development; and
 - exchanging information on issues relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

6. Implementation, Reporting and Monitoring Arrangements

- 6.1 The Partners agree to work together to identify and develop key jurisdictional priorities, which will then be revised annually.

6.2 The Partners to this Agreement agree to report annually to the WA Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum on their individual contributions to achieving those jurisdictional priorities.

6.3 The Partners also agree to report annually to funders via established jurisdictional reporting mechanisms.

Data Collection and Evaluation

6.4 The Partners acknowledge the importance of sensitive, reliable and timely data to effective planning and service delivery for Aboriginal health services, and they will facilitate access to available data where there is agreed jurisdictional need.

6.5 The Partners agree to:

- support the development, and improve the quality and availability, of data for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework; and
- improve the quality of relevant data available on the provision of mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific services.

7. Duration of this Agreement

7.1 This Agreement is for the period 2015-2020 and will come into effect from the date of signing by all Partners and shall remain in place until 30 June 2020; until terminated; or until a new Agreement is executed, superseding this Agreement.

7.2 Any variation to this Agreement, prior to 30 June 2020, requires written notification and consensus by all Partners.

7.3 In the event that the signing of a new Agreement is delayed, this Agreement may be extended by all Partners via written consensus.

8. Appendices

8.1 Definitions

8.2 Other Key Documents

8.1 Definitions

In this Agreement, unless a contrary intention is indicated:

“Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services” means those health and substance use services operated by organisations that are incorporated and controlled by Aboriginal people.

“AHCWA” means the Aboriginal Health Council of WA and refers to the peak body representing Aboriginal community controlled health services in the Western Australia.

“Health” is defined in the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party Report (1989) as including not just the physical well-being of the individual but the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being. It is a whole-of-life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life.

“Health and wellbeing related services” are those services covered by the holistic definition of health and include such services as substance use, health promotion and disease prevention services, children, adolescent, women’s and men’s health, aged care, services for people with a disability, mental health services as well as clinical and hospital services.

“Jurisdictional Forum” refers to a meeting of the Australian Government Department of Health, the Western Australian Department of Health and the AHCWA.

“Partners” refers to the three key stakeholders, the Australian Government Department of Health, the Western Australian Department of Health and Aboriginal Health Council of WA, which agree to work collaboratively as stated in this Agreement.

“Signatories” refers to the Australian Government Minister for Health, the Western Australian Minister for Health, and the Chairperson of the Aboriginal Health Council of WA, who have signed the Framework Agreement on behalf of the Partners.

“WA Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum” refers to a meeting of the Australian Government Department of Health, the Western Australian Department of Health and AHCWA.

8.2 Other Key Documents

In addition to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013–2023, WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030, and the AHCWA Strategic Plan, the Framework Agreement is underpinned by the policy and programme documents listed below.

Partners acknowledge this list may evolve over the life of the Framework Agreement to reflect current national and jurisdictional strategic, programme and policy documents.

National:

- The National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party Report (1989)
- The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991)
- The Stolen Generations Bringing Them Home report (1995)

- National Framework for Health Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families
- National Continuous Quality Improvement Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care
- National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drug Strategy
- National Anti-Racism Strategy
- National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework
- Fourth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Virus and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2014–17
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan Implementation Plan 2013–2023
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2011–2015
- Indigenous Australian Health Programme Guidelines
- Indigenous Advancement Strategy
- NACCHO 10 Point Plan 2013–2030.

State:

- WA Health Strategic Intent 2015-2020;
- WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015 – 2030;
- Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia Strategic Plan;
- WA Footprints to Better Health Strategy 2014-2018;
- WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024; and
- The Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025.