

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MEDIA RELEASE



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PHAA pledges support for Federal Government indigenous health initiative

The Public Health Association (PHAA) wishes to be amongst the first to pledge its support towards the new Federal Government initiative and 'statement of intent' aimed at reducing health inequalities amongst Australians. CEO Michael Moore today welcomed the announcement from the Federal Health Minister.

The PHAA applauds that the opportunity to bring Aboriginal health and life expectancy into line with non-Indigenous Australians is now forefront of the Federal Government's health agenda. These are actions the Association believes are long overdue.

Mr Moore stated, "It is a great conclusion to the Indigenous Health Equality Summit and a huge step forward. We particularly welcome the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders."

"Of particular significance to the PHA is the proposal aimed at tackling smoking amongst the indigenous population". Twenty percent of the Aboriginal population die prematurely from tobacco related illness. Around 50% to 80% smoke tobacco, a high figure in comparison to the rest of the Australian population, which has seen the smoking proportion of the population drop to around 15%.

"Cessation of smoking will be a major factor in reducing illness and increasing life expectancy," he added.

The PHAA praises the establishment of specific time frames in order to achieve equality of health and life expectancy between all Australians by 2030, as a realistic, concrete and measurable goal. Appropriate infrastructure is vital to achieve this health initiative and the importance placed on having this ready within the decade further amplifies the Government's chance of success in bridging the gap between the indigenous and non-indigenous population.

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The Public Health Association of Australia is a non-party-political organisation with a membership drawn from more than 40 health-related professions. The Association makes a major contribution to health policy in Australia and has branches in every State and Territory. www.phaa.net.au

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