

MEDIA RELEASE

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INDIGENOUS HEALTH: CHALLENGES & BREAKTHROUGHS

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is today releasing a Special Issue of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* focusing specifically on Indigenous Health. The Journal contains some of the latest research on challenges for 'closing the gap' in Indigenous health outcomes and also outlines some significant breakthroughs in both policy and practice.

"The Special Issue of the Journal covers the key areas of maternal and infant health; chronic illness; alcohol-related harm; risky behaviours; and opportunities for change in Indigenous health. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still experience the worst health outcomes of any cultural group in Australia, so it is particularly important to understand what causes problems and identify new ways to improve health at the population level," said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PHAA.

"As well as presenting the latest research findings, the Journal contains a piece by the Minister for Indigenous Health, the Hon Warren Snowdon MP, providing an update on the progress of Australian Government initiatives designed to address the current health inequalities facing Indigenous Australians. Current government policies aim for a whole-of-government approach to address the social determinants of health, such as education and housing, as well as access to quality health services.

"It is important to note that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are still twice as likely to die from cardiovascular disease, four times more likely to die from renal disease, nine times more likely to die from diabetes and 1.5 times more likely to die from cancer than a non-Indigenous person. That's why it is so vital that we continue to build the knowledge base so we can learn from public health success stories in Indigenous health and use these as a foundation for future health policy and programs," said Mr Moore.

The Special Issue of the Journal includes specific articles on: reducing alcohol related harm; comparing alcohol use by Indigenous people to the general population; safe sex, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS among youth in remote communities; smoking rates in Aboriginal communities; impact of socio-economic factors on rates of diabetes; and changes in the burden of disease and injury in the Northern Territory Indigenous population over time. Key experts in the field of Indigenous health from across the country have provided input to the Journal covering a broad range of public health issues.

The Special Issue of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* has been funded and supported by the Australian Government Department for Health and Ageing, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

For further details/comment:

Michael Moore, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia

0417 249 731

To obtain the Table of Contents for the Special Issue of the Journal and/or PDF copies of specific research papers, contact: Bridget Hooper on: (03) 9329 3535 or E-mail:

bridget.hooper@substitution.com.au