PHAA and its members are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

We are also committed to the process of Reconciliation to bring together all Australians in a shared understanding of our country, based on truth.

The broad cause of public health and wellbeing in Australia inevitably draws attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, for multiple reasons.

The health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is below national averages on almost every measure, as a result of continuing social and economic disadvantage having been imposed on the people during the process of white settlement of the continent. The social, ecological, environmental economic and cultural determinants of health continue to be of particular importance as ongoing causes of various forms of illness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PHAA’s goals of preventing ill health and addressing population-wide illness factors are especially relevant to our First Peoples.

This publication highlights priority actions which PHAA and its members are taking to realise these goals.

As we reflect during Reconciliation Week 2020, let’s always remember that we are all In This Together.
Welcome

David Templeman, PHAA President

"It begins, I think, with that act of recognition", said Paul Keating in his famous 1993 Redfern Speech.

Like millions of Australian people and organisations, our members and staff commit an important act of recognition almost every day at the commencement of conferences, speeches and meetings, when we acknowledge the country on which we meet and the elders of the Peoples who were, and remain, its traditional custodians.

Acknowledgement of country and elders are not a small matter, nor just a formality. It has become one of the most constant and immediate ways in which all Australians normalise recognition of First Australians’ past, present and future on this continent.

In these small, regular acts, we are also recognising the facts of past harm to the First Peoples, as Keating said.

Justice is an international concern. Coinciding with Reconciliation Week in Australia we have seen the disastrous impact of decades of injustice and divisive political policies, and harmful community attitudes, in the United States. But the problem of racial unfairness is a global one. Australia certainly has its own unreconciled history of injustice still to face.

Recognition of the unfair conditions of many First Australians, and the history which has brought it about, is a very important value held by PHAA and its members.

As public health experts, we see clearly the integral connection between reconciliation and wellbeing. We are active in promoting measures to improve the underlying conditions in which First Australians live - in terms of justice, housing, income, education and many other domains - because these are direct determinants of health and wellbeing.

In 2019 PHAA adopted a Reconciliation Action Plan, by working with Reconciliation Australia, our members and other organisational allies to clarify what we stood for. We worked out how our organisation, members and staff would do our own bit of the national task of reconciliation.

Honouring Reconciliation Week is a major part of that plan, so we are releasing this publication to highlight what we have been doing, and to acknowledge and encourage everyone who has been active.

I’d like to highlight two successes in particular. It’s clear that our annual conferences - a major part of our public health activity - are featuring more frequent presentations not only about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters, but by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters. It’s hugely significant that public health is a field which many young First Australians are choosing to enter.

And it’s striking and impressive how much professional, peer-reviewed writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters is finding its way into our well-respected and highly cited Australia and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

In Reconciliation Week 2020 we are hosting a webinar on Reconciliation and Public Health, featuring Professors Tom Calma AO and Fiona Stanley AC, two distinguished Australians who will share their thoughts on how reconciliation can improve health and wellbeing, and how the health of First Australians - slowly improving, but still with so many challenges - can contribute to national reconciliation.

In 2017 The Uluru Statement From The Heart (reprinted on the back page) gave us a rich and deep call to action on reconciliation. I urge you to read it often, and ponder its poetry and power. I’m immensely proud that PHAA has made First Australians’ health, and national reconciliation, central threads of our work and our advocacy. At the national elections in mid-2019 we listed the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians - especially young people - as one of our five core themes demanding government policy action. We won’t let up in this drive.

I hope this publication is of use to you, and I encourage every Australian to find their own personal path to follow in the ongoing process of reconciliation.

PHAA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Public Health Award

In 2019 the PHAA Board created a new annual prize, the Public Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award.

The award is made to an individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who has made a significant contribution to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people via a public health approach, solving public health problems, advancing community awareness of public health measures and advancing the ideals and practice of equity in the provision of Indigenous health care.

The Award is designed to be the Association’s pre-eminent prize in Indigenous health. The Award is open for nomination every year.

To be eligible the nominee must:

- be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- have a proven track record in the advancement of Indigenous public health in Australia;
- be an Australian citizen or resident; and
- have undertaken his/her activities in Australia.

Criteria for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Award are that nominees will have actively engaged in work or activities in Australia designed to:

- promote public health of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people within Australia;
- promote multi-disciplinary approaches to designing public health solutions and solving Indigenous public health problems;
- advance community awareness of public health measures and outcomes and the real cost of inadequate public health responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- advance the ideals and practice of equity in the provision of Indigenous health care (equity defined as equal care for equal need).

Nominees will ideally have a record of achievement in one or more of the above activities.

In 2019 the inaugural PHAA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Award was bestowed on Professor Bronwyn Fredericks, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement) at the University of Queensland, for her work in Indigenous health.

Professor Fredericks said she was honoured to be the inaugural recipient, and dedicated the award to the communities she had worked with who wanted better health.

“The greatest gains and outcomes in Indigenous public health come from approaches where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered and are partners and leaders in solutions and actions,” Professor Fredericks said.

“I call upon and encourage those engaged in public health to employ such approaches.”
Reconciliation within PHAA

Terry Slevin, PHAA Chief Executive Officer

PHAA is an association of nearly 2,000 individual members, with a national office staff of ten. All of us are involved in work towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing, and towards reconciliation.

Our active membership

PHAA has an internal system of 18 special interest groups (SIGs) which allow individual members to focus on the public health issues which most interest them. With over 260 members, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SIG is our third largest interest group.

Many state and territory branches and SIGs take their own local group actions to better appreciate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and health issues, and make their own contributions to awareness and action.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Reconciliation Australia-approved Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are formal organisational commitment documents promoted by, and approved by, Reconciliation Australia. They provide a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement.

Many hundreds of organisations, corporations and public bodies in Australia have adopted RAP plans, involving millions of people across Australia.

PHAA spent a couple of years, between 2017 and 2019, developing our own RAP plan. We adopted it formally, with RA’s endorsement, in mid 2019.

We were very pleased that Reconciliation Australia endorsed us to adopt a plan with ‘innovate’ status, the second of four levels of complexity of RAP planning (which are termed reflect, innovate, stretch and elevate). This recognised that PHAA has been modelling organisational commitments to Indigenous issues for many years.

Our RAP includes a range of goals relating to organisational governance, ensuring the prominence of Indigenous health in major conferences and events, reporting and review of progress, and the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in our policies and advocacy.

Our RAP is structured around four distinct themes, including:

- Relationships, where we set out values and activities that will build up our connections with Indigenous people, organisations, key stakeholders and businesses. This section also sets out things we will do in Reconciliation week.
- Respect, which deals with commitments to continuous cultural learning, recognition of important cultural protocols, celebrating key dates of the year, and follow other forms of respect for Indigenous culture.
- Opportunities, a section which deals with engagement outcomes across the public health sector, employment practices and goals, and other opportunities to change practical realities within our organisation.
- Governance, tracking and reporting, which deals with awareness of our RAP and governance that it is being successfully implemented.

Our Board is highly engaged with the progress and implementation of our RAP.

We will, working with Reconciliation Australia, keep our RAP under review and refreshed regularly. It will give us an ongoing working strategy to keep reconciliation, and Indigenous health and wellbeing generally, constantly at the top of our organisation’s attention.

Representation on our leadership

In 2010 the PHAA Board created a position of Vice President, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, ensuring that our senior leadership has a constant focus on the key issues. This position is currently held by Summer May Finlay.

Internal policies and practices

PHAA has adopted an internal guide to terminology to ensure that all language used in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters is sensitive and appropriate.

PHAA also has an employment policy which encourages applicants for vacancies at PHAA national office from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our staff development

Our staff, based in Canberra, are essential to the life of our organisation. As individuals and as a team, we have embraced reconciliation and our RAP plan.

Every single one of us engages with the organisation’s goals and activities relating to Indigenous health and reconciliation constantly.

It’s important that workplaces - where we spend so much of our lives - are places where reconciliation is part of our lives. Our staff working on conferences, policy, advocacy, communications and internal operations are in fact constantly dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. In late 2019 we undertook cultural awareness training with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultant.

Publications in our Journal

PHAA publishes the well-regarded and very widely read Australia and New Zealand Journal of Public Health (ANZJPH).

In recent years there has been a notable increase in the number of published articles dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters. This indicates the growing research focus among Australian and New Zealand public health professionals about this broad field of concern.

A feature editorial by ANZJPH Editor John Lowe appears on pages 10-13. The ANZJPH is now freely available on line ensuring the widest possible distribution of high quality research being available to health policy makers, academics students and the general community in Australia and internationally.

Challenging times

In recent times we have found ourselves facing three great challenges affecting public health: climate change and its impacts, the related advent of our worst bushfire season ever, and the COVID pandemic.

The last two have been particularly challenging for PHAA and the public health community, bringing many new demands on our staff and our members, and disrupting our workplace and our work. But we’ve kept going, and stayed true to our values and commitments.

PHAA is a great organisation to be involved in precisely because of its values and principles. Nowhere are they better highlighted than in our commitment to the work set out in this publication.
PHAA policy and advocacy

Policy position statements

PHAA members have debated and adopted nearly 100 policy position statements, which are widely used by the public health community, politicians, public agencies and the media.

We have six policy statements specifically focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Substance Use
- First Nations Wellbeing Statement (PHAA)
- First Nations Wellbeing Statement (World Congress on Public Health)
- Food Security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (including a longer Background Paper)
- Incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Many other policy position statements, for example those in the food and nutrition, mental health, chronic disease, addiction, immunisation and justice health fields, will have some additional element of attention on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters.

In 2019 PHAA produced a summary of our policy position statement collection, which included highlights of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy directions. We also produced a shorter policy-goal document for the 2019 federal election, which included a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's health as one of our 5 key election priorities.

Alliances

PHAA joins with many other public interest NGOs to promote the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and advance reconciliation. PHAA is a financial and committee member of the Close the Gap campaign.

We also regularly lend the support of PHAA to campaigns, advocacy letters and similar initiatives.

Submissions

PHAA makes around 100 submissions each year to parliamentary committees, government inquiries and other public deliberative processes. Examples of submissions in the past few years which were focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters include:

- Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card Trial Expansion) Bill – July 2018
- Closing the Gap and the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework – June 2018
- Closing the Gap Refresh – April 2018
- NHMRC draft Road Map 3: A Strategic Framework for Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Through Research – Dec 2017
- Optimal care pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer – October 2017
- Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017 – September 2017
- My Life, My Lead, social and cultural determinants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health – May 2017

Many other submissions that we make have some element of attention on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health matters.

From the PHAA Constitution:

“The objects of the Association are … to make a strong contribution to public health policy by … encouraging research and promoting knowledge relating to the problems, needs and development of public health, which may include study in the following areas.

- … the causes and likely remedies for a reduction of social and economic inequities in health status, especially the inequities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.”

PHAA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Special Interest Group

PHAA members are welcome to join any of its 18 special interest groups, one of which is specifically for interests in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues.

From 2018 to 2020 the conveners of the group have been two long-term PHAA members: Dr Michael Doyle, a Bardi man from the Kimberley region currently at Sydney University, and Dr Yvonne Luxford, who is also CEO of the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre.

Close the Gap Committee

During the past few years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SIG Co-Convenors Summer, Yvonne and Michael continued to participate in the Close the Gap Steering Committee. A significant focus of the Committee over the past year has been on the Closing the Gap Refresh for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). A notable success has been the formation of a partnership between COAG and the newly formed Coalition of Peaks representing Indigenous peak bodies from across Australia.

PHAA joined the official launch of the 2019 Close the Gap report, Our Choices, Our Voices.

Indigenous Working Group of the World Federation of Public Health Associations

PHAA’s Vice-President for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Summer Finlay is the Co-Vice Chair of the Indigenous Working Group of the World Federation of Public Health Associations. Summer attended the World Congress on behalf of PHAA in Geneva in May 2019.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The Special Interest Group contributed to the development of the PHAA Reconciliation Action Plan. This represents two years of engagement with the PHAA membership. The SIG will work with the PHAA Office and the Board toward implementation of the plan.

Conference committees

SIG members have continued to contribute to organising several PHAA and other conferences (see page 8-9), including:

- The Australian Public Health Conference in Cairns, September 2018
- The Justice Health Conference in Sydney, April 2019

The SIG also funded two scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students of public health to attend the national conference in Cairn

Submissions

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health SIG has helped contribute to the Review of the Patient Incentives Program (PIP) Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people, which provides incentives for good health service delivery in general practice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The SIG also contributed to PHAA’s Immediate Policy Priorities statement for the 2019 federal election.

PHAA Policies

The SIG has been engaged in the review of a number of policy reviews and developments including:

- Updated the PHAA policy position statement on Incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People’s Substance Use
- Drafted a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy position statement
- Contributed to revisions of policy position statements on Youth Mental Health, Alcohol and End of Life Choices.

Sponsorships, awards and recognition

PHAA branches and/or SIGs offer a number of scholarships or awards to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attend conferences.
Activities at PHAA events and conferences

PHAA manages 4-6 major national conferences in the public health field each year, including some international conferences.

Core theme for next five years

The PHAA Board resolved in 2020 to commit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health being a core theme of the annual Australian Public Health Conference for the next five years - 2020 to 2024.

Standing Board sub-committee on conferences

In 2018, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SIG recommended to the PHAA Board to form a standing Conference Sub-Committee, which is available to advise the conference advisory committees on all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. With the increase in the number of conferences it was important to find efficient and effective ways to deliver conferences in a culturally appropriate manner. Issues could be identified and addressed as part of the routine organisating of the conference and would ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and content are included in a genuine and sincere way.

Advisory committees

PHAA Conference Advisory Committees encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in the Committees. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health is a prominent theme in each conference, and encourage keynote and abstract presenters to be featured at every event.

Speakers

Almost all of our conferences feature one or more keynote speakers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or who focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues (see following page).

Welcome to and acknowledgement of country

At each PHAA Conference, the Conference Advisory Committee in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sub-Committee, identify appropriate people to conduct a Welcome to Country. In addition, each presenter is provided with recommendations on an appropriate Acknowledgment of Country.

In 2020, with a number of PHAA’s events having to convert to virtual due to COVID-19, PHAA worked closely with the Traditional Owners of the land in which the events were due to take place to include a virtual Welcome to Country in both the World Public Health Nutrition Congress and Preventive Health Conference.

Yarning circles

At PHAA’s Australian Public Health Conference, in Adelaide in September 2019 we introduced the innovation of a formal yarning circle facility, located prominently in the exhibition area of the conference venue. This allowed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conference participants and others to join in discussions of mutual concern in a particularly meaningful format. The opportunity was noted and welcomed by many conference delegates, attracted media attention, and will become an ongoing feature of our annual conference.

Recent conferences

Justice Health Conference - February 2019

Committee members:
- Dr Jill Guthrie
- Dr Megan Williams
- Dr Michael Doyle

Speakers/presenters:
- Donnella Mills
- Dr Jill Guthrie
- Jeffery Amatto
- Dylan Voiler
- Dr Megan Williams

Public Health Prevention Conference - July 2019:

Committee members:
- Natasha Lee

Speakers/presenters:
- Associate Professor Chelsea Bond

Australian Public Health Conference - September 2019:

Committee members:
- Summer May Finlay
- Dr Michael Doyle

Speakers/presenters:
- Professor Alex Brown
- Donnella Mills
- Dr Veronica Matthews

Communicable Diseases Control Conference - November 2019

Keynote Speakers:
- Aileen Joy Plant Orator: Ms Pat Turner AM (jointly with Jonathan Carapetis) - Oration: Ending RHD – harnessing partnerships and new opportunities to Close the Gap
- Associate Professor James Ward – Presentation title: Persistence patience and the power of partnerships to improve outcomes in Aboriginal Health

Plenary and Concurrent Sessions focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health:
- 1D - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- A couple of poster presentations focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- Also there are a couple of other presentations scattered through the program they are sitting under different session topics but still have a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

This conference also saw the launch of NCIRS reports By the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS):
- Vaccination For Our Mob
- Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Vaccination Coverage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Australia 2011-2015

(Virtual) Preventive Health Conference - May 2020

Committee members:
- Ronda Clarke

Keynote Speakers:
- Ms Pat Turner AM and Ms Vicki O’Donnell – Presentation title: Smart planning, Smart politics, Smart work to keep COVID19 at Bay

Plenary and Concurrent Sessions focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health:
- 1A– Opportunities for prevention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- 3B – Rapid Fire: Effective action for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander health
- Also there are a couple of other presentations scattered through the program they are sitting under different session topics but still have a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Healthway Scholarships:
- Scholarship Opportunity for rural/remote WA people and/or people working in Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander preventive health to attend the Preventive Health Conference 202; two of the scholarship recipients indicated they were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
More than words – ANZJPH declares an urgent call for manuscripts that address Indigenous health

ANZJPH Editors, (with special acknowledgement to Melissa Stoneham and Nikiki Percival)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (hereafter, respectfully referred to as Indigenous) are changing the way that research happens. This has been supported by initiatives such as the National Health and Medical Research Council for Indigenous health research and capacity building workshops, and the provision of clear guidance on ethical research involving Indigenous communities.

The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health (ANZJPH), the official journal of the Public Health Association of Australia, is well positioned to align with these ethical principles and disseminate and promote uptake of research and project findings that will inform policy decisions, further research and resource allocations in ways that are relevant to Indigenous people.

The ANZJPH is committed to publishing research that focuses on solutions rather than problems and disseminating research that is meaningful and responsive to the needs of Indigenous peoples, and that will strengthen the research workforce. Research end-users such as policy makers and practitioners need to know they can have confidence in published research and evidence to enable smarter actions to address health inequities and ‘the gap’ between Indigenous Australians and others.

Alongside Indigenous people, non-Indigenous practitioners and researchers play a key role as allies, advocates and partners in finding and enacting solutions to support the research and policy reform agendas. There are many public health professionals who have reaped great rewards from working alongside Indigenous people, acknowledging different world views and priorities, valuing relationships, building trust, welcoming the cultural strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as an asset and focusing on issues that matter to Aboriginal people and organisations.

The ANZJPH wants to embrace this collaboration and unity and enter a new phase of supporting and welcoming strengths-based manuscripts, where the skills, experiences and capacities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued and nurtured.

The ANZJPH publishes high-quality manuscripts. One of our goals is to improve the quality and quantity of published health research involving and authored by Indigenous peoples in our region – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand and others in the Pacific.

Between December 2017 and December 2019, the ANZJPH published 52 manuscripts that especially related to Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Māori) health topics. Of these, 45 were articles, three were commentaries and four were letters. While it is pleasing to see that the ANZJPH has regular contributions about Indigenous health, there is an opportunity to publish greater numbers of Indigenous research and policy manuscripts particularly focusing on social and cultural determinant of health and systems approaches.

As Bond (2020) acknowledged, epidemiological discourses that describe ‘the gap’ are limited in their ability to close the gap and a conceptual grasp of race and its trace in the contours that mark the social determinants and Indigenous health inequality should frame our thinking about how to close the gap.

Focusing on social and cultural determinants of health will enable the Journal to build upon existing efforts to enable more culturally capable and responsive services and systems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, involving better planning and coordination to meet the needs of all Indigenous peoples, and to respond to these unimpeded by organisational and service silos.

The current Editorial team has been working on increasing the number of Indigenous health-related articles and improving reporting of Indigenous public health research and practice. To be responsive, over the past three years, we have:

- invited the Public Health Association Indigenous Health Special Interest Group to review manuscripts;
- encouraged peer reviewers to understand the nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research;
- ensured correct use of Indigenous health terminology;
- published more Indigenous authors and engaged more Indigenous reviewers;
- actively sought Indigenous people to join the Editorial team; and
- mentored any authors, including Indigenous people, wanting to begin publishing and reviewing articles.

Indigenous Health articles published in ANZJPH 2015-2020:

The case for a Torres Strait Islander-driven, long-term research agenda for environment, health and wellbeing (20 April 2020)

Understanding an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child’s journey through paediatric care in Western Australia (26 February 2020)

Closing the gap between rhetoric and practice in strengths-based approaches to Indigenous public health: a qualitative study (08 January 2020)

Holistic primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners: exploring the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (30 October 2019)

What isn’t measured isn’t done – eight years with no progress in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult influenza and pneumococcal vaccination (16 October 2019)

Case study of a decolonising Aboriginal community controlled comprehensive primary health care response to alcohol-related harm (02 October 2019)

Barriers to vaccination service delivery within general practice: opportunity to make a sustainable difference in Aboriginal child health (18 September 2019)

Participant profile and impacts of an Aboriginal healthy lifestyle and weight loss challenge over four years 2012–2015 (03 July 2019)

Feasibility and acceptability of opportunistic screening to detect atrial fibrillation in Aboriginal adults (29 May 2019)

Evaluation of an intervention to train health professionals working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide smoking cessation advice (20 February 2019)

High burden of infectious disease and antibiotic use in early life in Australian Aboriginal communities (06 February 2019)
The current Editorial Board understands that being an author on research articles has historically translated directly into career and funding opportunities, and that writing for academic journals requires highly developed skills and is extremely competitive. But measures of academic success and the opportunities to learn from Indigenous knowledges are changing. The ANZJPH Editorial Board continually aims to improve standards and be leaders in demonstrating the way forward. We are currently developing additional guidelines that will require authors to consider the following when submitting manuscripts about Indigenous health:

- evidence of ethics approval
- a statement demonstrating that the National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines or Guidelines on Health Research involving Māori for ethical conduct in Indigenous health research have been addressed and followed
- consideration of co-authorship by Indigenous people.

In developing these criteria, the Editorial team has consulted the CONSolidated critERtia for strengthening the reporting of health research involving Indigenous peoples (CONSider) statement. The CONSIDER statement is a collaborative synthesis and prioritisation of existing national and international statements and guidelines. The CONSIDER statement contains eight research domains and 17 criteria for the reporting of research involving Indigenous peoples. These research domains are:

i) governance
ii) relationships
iii) prioritisation
iv) methodologies
v) participation
vi) capacity
vii) analysis and findings
viii) dissemination

The scope of the CONSIDER statement is relevant to all forms of original health research, regardless of methodologies: that includes a substantial component of research conducted on Indigenous lands; in which Indigenous identity is a criterion for participation; that seeks Indigenous knowledge; in which identity or membership of an Indigenous community is used as a variable for data analysis; in which interpretation of data refers directly to Indigenous peoples; or where research is likely to affect the health of Indigenous peoples. CONSIDER is designed to enhance research practices with and involving Indigenous peoples.

There has been common criticism over the past decade that public health has not effectively contributed to reducing health inequities, and that some public health strategies do not work well enough. In light of ongoing inequities that Indigenous people experience, including in life expectancy, the ANZJPH is declaring an urgent call for manuscripts that focus on actions that address Indigenous social and cultural determinants of health and focus on reorienting health services and systems.

We also seek to honour the advances and excellence in Indigenous health research over the past decade and recognise that much more remains to be achieved.

Making public health core business for all health services requires a focus on reorienting the system itself – not just the delivery of services – by public health leaders engaging more actively in systems development. Publishing work from Indigenous people about their critically important community-led, systems-oriented and strengths-based efforts is needed. The ANZJPH is committed to facilitating this and ensuring that cultural knowledge and context is more fully understood.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Associate Professor Megan Williams from the University of Sydney, for her support and guidance in drafting this Editorial. (This editorial was first published at ANZJPH on 5 May 2020)
The Uluru Statement From The Heart

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.