

13 March 2022

## Media Release: Inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Plan, NAATSIHWP Funding Commitment

Today the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031](#) (National Workforce Plan) was launched the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, and the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt.

NAATSIHWP welcomes the release of the inaugural National Workforce Plan which was co-designed with the National Health Leadership Forum which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Professional Organisations (NAATSIHWP, CATSINaM, IAHA and AIDA) and all Australian Governments. The National Workforce Plan sets an ambitious yet achievable target of reaching a 3.43% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working within the health sector by 2031.

NAATSIHWP Chairperson, David Follent, said: *‘The acknowledgement of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners within the plan as an essential and valuable component of Australia’s Health care system. Our communities must have access to culturally safe and responsive care no matter where they are, and a strong, valued and highly skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner workforce is key to this end’.*

The commitment shown by all governments to increase and expand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce with pathways for entering into training, education and the health workforce. This ensures the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people isn’t compromised when accessing primary, secondary and tertiary health care settings.

NAATSIHWP CEO, Karl Briscoe, said: *‘We welcome the funding commitment of \$9.3 million over the next four years for NAATSIHWP to continue our work in attracting, recruiting and retaining our unique health profession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners. We know better health outcomes are achieved when our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce are involved in our people’s health care as we possess a cultural intellect that isn’t able to be replicated by mainstream health professions’.*

NAATSIHWP is committed to supporting and expanding our workforce with health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is our priority. We look forward to progressing the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies outlined in the [National Workforce Plan](#) in partnership with governments.