



NAATSIHWP
National Association of Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners

Media Release

National Reconciliation Week 2022

National Reconciliation Week provides an opportunity for all Australians to reflect on the truth about Australia's past and to consider how to work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve equity and justice. Closing the gap remains a shared commitment and everyone has a role to play.

Consistent with this year's theme '*Be Brave Make Change*' NAATSIHWP considers it is time for health system leaders to innovate to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have timely access to culturally safe and high-quality health services. Making change by embedding an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker or Health Practitioner position within your clinic or service is a great place to start.

For over a century this workforce has cemented itself as critical to front line efforts to protect our communities. Most practicing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners are eligible for Medicare Provider numbers. And, it is critical to understand that, if models of care enabling these health professionals to practice to their fullest potential are implemented, investment can be achieved without adding costs to service provider budgets.

Evidence now consistently demonstrates how strong and effective health services can be when they work collaboratively and employ our people.

The anniversaries of the 1967 Referendum and the handing down of the Mabo High Court decision, that bookend Reconciliation Week, are also humbling reminders that positive change can occur when the ongoing impacts of the past are recognised and commitments to working in ways that restore agency, dignity and power are honoured.

Our families, communities and future generations need change now. Yet, the imperative for reform does not just lie with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We consistently role model the change we want to see and demonstrate our resilience and strength in driving change.

In moving forward, it is time to renew our collective efforts to shift the entrenched paradigms that continue to adversely impact on the lives of our people and on the health and wealth of our nation. Information about what you can do to make a positive difference can be found on Reconciliation Australia's website [here](#).