

## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH EQUALITY COUNCIL

### Meeting 3

10 and 11 March 2009

### COMMUNIQUÉ

The National Indigenous Health Equality Council (NIHEC) held its third meeting in Adelaide on 10 – 11 March 2009.

The agenda for this meeting was structured to allow NIHEC to receive detailed briefings on the new Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Indigenous Health National Partnership Agreement (NPA) and the impact of workforce issues on efforts to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing. Other items for consideration included the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) interim report and updates from NIHEC working groups.

Outcomes from the meeting included:

#### **a) Endorsement of the NIHEC work plan**

The work plan will be a living document, updated and managed by NIHEC as its work unfolds. At the March meeting additional items were integrated into the work plan in response to the recent COAG agreements to enable NIHEC to provide strategic policy advice to the Minister on key areas. The work plan has four sections:

1. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Targets;
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce;
3. Data; and
4. Policy.

#### **b) Target Setting**

An agreed process and framework for the development of a national instrument to support evidence-based target and goal setting in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

#### **c) Workforce**

There was agreement to progress two discussion papers that will facilitate the development of the NIHEC workforce policy agenda.

#### **d) COAG – Indigenous Health National Partnership Agreement (NPA)**

NIHEC has agreed to take an active role providing Government with strategic policy advice on implementation of the Commonwealth package, in particular the Chronic Disease elements.

#### **e) National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission**

NIHEC welcomed the NHHRC interim report and discussions concluded that the many issues raised in the report would require further detailed consideration. NIHEC agreed to relay the content of its diverse discussions to the Minister as an example of the value of robust debate about the future of the nation's health system and how it might contribute more effectively to



improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

NIHEC is also working towards defining its Vision Statement (the Statement). The Statement will describe NIHEC's role and how it will contribute in assisting the Minister for Health and Ageing by providing targeted strategic policy advice to assist in Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

NIHEC members undertook a site visit which was generously hosted by the local Aboriginal Medical Service Nunkuwarrin Yunti.

The next meeting of NIHEC is scheduled for 9 – 10 June 2009, in Brisbane, Queensland.