



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Working with communities to deliver better health is our primary aim

The nation's Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are being encouraged to work closely with communities to tackle health challenges and improve the wellbeing of all Australians.

Aged Care Minister and Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt said he hoped opening the 2nd annual myPHN Conference in Cairns today would help guide a new era in effective and efficient care.

“This year's conference theme of ‘Transforming Healthcare Together’ challenges current beliefs on the best ways to improve patient outcomes,” said Minister Wyatt.

“PHNs are leading the charge in this space. After undertaking detailed analysis of their regions' specific health needs, they are now commissioning services to fill these gaps.

“These range from building the capacity of General Practitioners (GPs) and tackling mental health, chronic conditions and obesity, to engaging with consumers in disease prevention.

The Minister said the first stage of the national trial of Health Care Homes was another example of the fresh approach to the care of people with complex conditions.

“Participating GPs and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services will work closely with patients and specialists, pharmacists and allied health care to empower patients to take an active role in health improvements,” he said.

Minister Wyatt said primary health providers had a vital role in helping improve indigenous health and that of older Australians.

“Despite the progress we’ve made to date, indigenous people still have a shorter life expectancy and are more likely to develop chronic conditions such as diabetes kidney and cardiovascular diseases than non-indigenous Australians,” Minister Wyatt said.

“We have to do better, and primary health professionals are well placed to develop innovative new programs that can make a real difference.”

A good example is the Northern Queensland PHN workforce investment, including funding more than 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become qualified indigenous health workers.

The conference also focuses on how social and cultural influences can effect health outcomes, promising new hope for closing the life expectancy gap for Indigenous Peoples.

Innovation and new thinking will help deliver a stronger health and aged care system,” said Minister Wyatt.

“Learning from the experiences of other communities and nations will also keep older Australians healthier for longer, and give them more flexibility on when and how they access care as they age.

“Better health is a partnership between governments, the health sector, and the consumer. Greater collaboration and new models of care promise positive outcomes.”

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