



FIRST NATIONS HEALTH FUNDING TRANSITION ADVISORY GROUP

Communique

September 2023

The strengths of First Nations peoples have continued to evolve and thrive despite the ongoing impacts of colonisation, systemic discrimination and intergenerational trauma. First Nations peoples have long advocated for a decision-making role in policies, programs and services to achieve better outcomes.

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP, has instructed the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) undertake a Department-wide review of programs and sub-programs to identify programs delivering services to First Nations people, that, while not currently delivered by First Nations organisations, could be.

In 2023-24, the review will focus on existing programs that target First Nations health outcomes. The review will develop a forward work program identifying those programs and sub-programs that could be:

- a. transitioned in the short-term (i.e., within 12 months), requiring only minimal changes to program design/delivery arrangements and/or work is already underway to transition funding to First Nations led organisations;
- b. transitioned in the medium-term, with work to commence/accelerate immediately, with transition to occur within the next 24 months; and
- c. transitioned in the medium to long-term, over the next 48 months.

Subsequent stages of the review will develop a methodology and benchmarks to identify the proportion of population-based programs and sub-programs (i.e., those that do not explicitly aim to improve First Nations health outcomes but may be targeted on the basis of other factors such as age, health status or other factors) that should reasonably be expected to be targeting First Nations health outcomes.

The review will also build the Department's understanding of the First Nations health sector beyond the scope of existing funding recipients of the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP) and identify necessary supports to enable community-controlled health services to play a greater role in the health system.

The outcomes of the review will strengthen the community controlled health sector, consistent with Priority Reform 2 – Building the Community Controlled Sector and the Commonwealth Government's resourcing commitments in clause 113 in the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#). It builds on the commitments contained in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031* and the Department's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

Advisory Group

The First Nations Health Funding Transition Advisory Group (Advisory Group) has been established to guide the review.

The Advisory Group will:

- a) Assist the Department of Health and Aged Care to identify programs delivering services to First Nations people, that, while not currently delivered by First Nations organisations, could be;
- b) Inform the implementation plan for transitioning funding to First Nations led organisations, including by providing advice on any capacity building requirements to consolidate the sector's capability;
- c) Advise how broader population-based health and aged care programs could further improve access to health services for First Nations people;
- d) Guide action under the implementation plan, including by providing advice on issues of policy and strategy that impact on the delivery of the implementation plan.

The Advisory Group is co-chaired by the Department and the community-controlled health sector. Members have been appointed on an individual basis, based on their skills and experience they bring to the Advisory Group. Membership currently consists of:

- Dr Dawn Casey (Co-Chair)
- David Hicks (Co-Chair)
- Donna Ah Chee
- Tania Brown
- Fiona Cornforth
- Raylene Foster
- Donna Murray
- Vicki O'Donnell OAM
- Melinda Turner
- Dallas Widdicombe

The Advisory Group will meet on a monthly basis in 2023-24 and publish meeting agendas and a communique after each meeting on the Department's website at <insert URL>. Terms of reference for the Advisory Group, contact details for its members, and a high-level action plan for the review itself are also available at that site.

Engagement and Further Information

Organisations and individuals seeking to engage with the review should feel comfortable to reach out to the Advisory Group members listed above. Further information on the review is available by emailing: funding.transition@health.gov.au.