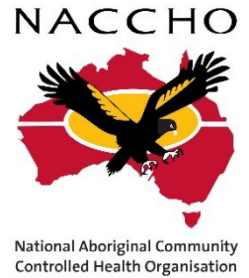




**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**



## **Rheumatic Fever Strategy (RFS) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)**

**Meeting 6 July 2022**

### **Communiqué**

#### **Summary**

The third meeting of the Rheumatic Fever Strategy (RFS) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was held virtually on 6 July 2022. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr Dawn Casey PSM FAGA, Deputy CEO, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), and Mr Ben Mudaliar, Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Health Division, Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC).

Members discussed the Terms of Reference and mechanisms to support internal and external communications by the JAC. Members provided updates on recent developments in their respective jurisdictions. Discussion then focused on key strategic issues for the JAC to pursue, and development of a workplan to guide the JAC in progressing the agreed key issues.

#### **Update highlights**

In an election commitment, the Australian Government pledged an additional \$13.5 million over 3 years (2022-23 to 2024-25) to combat acute rheumatic fever (ARF) and rheumatic heart disease (RHD). This will bring the total RFS investment up to \$45 million.

The election commitment includes \$12 million to increase access to prevention and treatment programs for people in communities with high incidence and prevalence of ARF and RHD; and \$1.5 million to fund portable echo-cardiogram machines and related screening efforts. This commitment brings the total funding through the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme for RFS prevention and treatment activities to \$33 million (2021-22 to 2024-25). This is in addition to the Australian Government's \$12 million contribution to the jurisdictional RHD control programs through the bilateral RFS Federation Funding Agreements with the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia.

#### **Priority issues**

Members discussed proposed steps to progress key priority issues including actions to enlist ARF and RHD as nationally notifiable conditions. The discussion also canvassed environmental health matters including current environmental health workforce education and accreditation requirements, and an overview of the Expert Reference Panel on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (ERPATSIEH). ERPATSIEH is the national body that provides advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health issues to the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, and to the health and non-health sectors on behalf of enHealth.

The JAC is continuing to work to identify avenues and opportunities for cross-sectoral engagement and collaboration that can be activated through the JAC and/or other RFS governance groups.

For further information, please contact the RFS JAC Secretariat via: [RFS@health.gov.au](mailto:RFS@health.gov.au)

