



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

**NACCHO**



National Aboriginal Community  
Controlled Health Organisation

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

**Meeting 9 May 2022**

### **Communiqué**

#### **Summary**

The second meeting of the Rheumatic Fever Strategy (RFS) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was held virtually on 9 May 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 (DoH).

The meeting finalised outstanding foundational business including endorsing the Terms of Reference for the RFS JAC and initial communication strategies to support effective communication within the RFS governance structures and with other interested stakeholders. Members provided updates on recent developments in their jurisdictions. Discussion then focused on key strategic issues for the Advisory Committee to consider and pursue.

#### **Update highlights**

In March 2022, the Australian Government committed an additional \$6 million over 4 years (2021-22 to 2024-25) to be provided to NACCHO to support RFS activities in Queensland, bringing the total funding provided to NACCHO for RFS prevention and treatment activities to \$18 million (2021-22 to 2024-25). This funding will be provided from the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme and is in addition to the Australian Government's existing contribution to Queensland's RHD register and control program under the bilateral RFS Federation Funding Agreement with the Queensland Government.

Members discussed the process of submitting a recommendation to Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) to update the Series of National Guidelines (SoNG) on ARF and RHD. This process would importantly involve contribution from the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector.

#### **Priority issues**

Members discussed several strategic issues that should be addressed to achieve improved prevention and treatment of ARF and RHD. These issues include working towards national notifiability of ARF and RHD on the Australian National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS), the importance of environmental health, and issues concerning health workforce.

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

#### **Next steps**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in July 2022. For further information, please contact the RFS JAC Secretariat via: [RFS@health.gov.au](mailto:RFS@health.gov.au).