



Australian Government

**Office of the National Rural
Health Commissioner**



Bush Medicine Leaves by Selina Numina

Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner Statement of Reconciliation

Forward

As the National Rural Health Commissioner, I extend my gratitude to critical friends of my office and my sector colleagues who uphold a commitment to reconciliation with the First Nations people of Australia. I look forward to a future in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live healthy lives celebrating their culture and identity. Australia must reduce the disparity in health outcomes and address the inequality of opportunity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples.

Since becoming National Rural Health Commissioner I have appointed Australia's first Indigenous Pharmacist Associate Professor Dr. Faye McMillan AM as one of my Deputy Commissioners. I have overseen a grant opportunity that awarded a Primary Care Rural Innovative Multidisciplinary Models (PRIMM) to a consortium with strong and genuine partnership arrangements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations, and I have worked collegially with departmental colleagues and leading sector experts to assist the advancement of better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or people who live in rural and remote areas.

I am committed to promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' expertise opinions and perspectives through their voices, shared stories, effective feedback mechanisms, and collaborative design processes. I am confident that through my office, we can make an important contribution to reconciliation and I look forward to continuing this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ruth Stewart'.

Adj. Prof. Dr. Ruth Stewart

National Rural Health Commissioner



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Statement of Reconciliation

We recognize the traditional custodians of the land and waters and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I recognize the work to be done to ensure healthier futures for all.

We are committed to the Council of Australian Governments' targets to Close the Gap in life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2033, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent by 2031 and to work to a significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

We are attentive to the generationally harmful impacts of colonisation/invasion and past government policies, and the continuing inequalities that contribute to entrenched disadvantage and poor health outcomes experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we celebrate the distinctiveness of the world's oldest living cultures and languages. We respectfully acknowledge the diversity of cultural practices, spiritual beliefs and languages spoken.

We value and uphold the importance of multi-disciplinary care, and holistic care that encompasses spirituality, language and culture and social wellbeing, and endorse that good health is underpinned by social determinants of health being realised.

We are dedicated to promoting and advocating for workforce recruitment and retention strategies which increase participation and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the health sector.

We are dedicated to promoting and advocating for practices that embrace genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations, co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, and consistent cultural safety practices for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (workforce and consumers) in the health sector.

We strive to improve client and patient confidence in health services across rural and remote Australia through promoting culturally responsive and culturally safe models of care across allied health, medical, and nursing and midwifery.

We reject racially or culturally prejudiced attitudes, actions and beliefs that inhibit inclusive relationships.

We recognise that all Australians have responsibilities towards closing the gap of disadvantage and working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities for a healthier future, and we will make our contribution.

Handwritten signature of Ruth Stewart in black ink.

Adj. Prof. Dr. Ruth Stewart
National Rural Health Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Faye McMillan in black ink.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Faye McMillan AM
Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Shelley Nowlan in black ink.

Adj. Prof. Shelley Nowlan
Deputy National Rural
Health Commissioner

22 July 2021