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## **MEDIA RELEASE: NATIONAL NAIDOC WEEK 2024**

The National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) is proud to celebrate NAIDOC Week. The event began in 1938 as a day of protest for citizenship and equality, known as the Day of Mourning. In the mid-1950s, the meaning of the event shifted to include a celebration of culture and leadership. Today the event has evolved into week-long celebration, with hundreds of gatherings around the nation.

This year's NAIDOC Week theme chosen by the NAIDOC Committee is, **Keep the Fire Burning! Black, Loud & Proud**. The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture and invites us all to stand in solidarity, amplifying the voices that have long been silences. The fire is symbol of connection to Country, to each other and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we honour this fire, we kindle the sparks of pride and unity, igniting a renewed commitment to acknowledging, preserving, and sharing the cultural heritage that enriches our nation.

In the spirit of acknowledge and honour this year's theme, NAATSIHWP would like to take this time to celebrate the achievements of our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners. We recognise the vital role of our workforce in improving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing and remain committed to keep the fire burning by ensuring the nation's health centres are staffed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners who have an acute understanding in providing cultural safe holistic health care.

We encourage all Australians to engage with local NAIDOC Week events. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the oldest continuous culture on earth, celebrate your local community, and develop life-long relationships.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, this is a week of gatherings at kitchen tables, on footy fields, in city areas and deep in Country. We will dance, eat, sing, and celebrate the over 60,000 years of our existence on this continent, the strength of our nations, the wisdoms of our Elders, and the hopes we have for our young people. Happy NAIDOC Week!