

MEDIA RELEASE

National Day of Recognition for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners

The National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) are proud to invite the health sector and all Australians to join us on **7 August 2022** to celebrate the **National Day of Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners**.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners are the world's only Indigenous health professions underpinned by national training and regulation. For close to a century, this workforce has played a vital role in the safe and effective delivery of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.

With a combination of clinical, cultural, social and linguistic skills, they deliver an engagement capability and community reach that sets them apart from other health professionals. Providing a high standard of culturally responsive care and acting as cultural brokers and health system navigators for our communities. Although, as the peak body for the workforce, NAATSIHWP recognises that our members often do not receive the recognition and support they deserve for their crucial work.


NAATSIHWP Chairperson, David Follent, said: *'Our communities must have access to culturally safe and responsive care no matter where they are, and a strong, valued and highly skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner workforce is key to this end'*.

Building on the success of the inaugural National Day of Recognition last year, we will continue to celebrate the achievements of the workforce annually. This year we welcomed the new [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031](#) which commits to increasing and expanding the workforce and in July, we celebrated 10 years since the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board was formed and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners became nationally registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

NAATSIHWP CEO, Karl Briscoe, said: *'We know better health outcomes are achieved when our workforce are involved in our people's health care as we possess a cultural intellect that isn't able to be replicated by mainstream health professions'*.

As it is a world first, our workforce should be a source of National pride. We welcome and encourage the health sector and all Australians to join us on the **7th of August**, to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners in their own local communities around the country. You can join the celebrations by:

1. Sharing your own stories about the workforce, or alternatively share those posted on NAATSIHWP social media using the hashtag **#NAATSIHWPHeroes22**
2. If you don't know about our workforce, find out about their critical role and what they do: [What We Do](#)
3. To support our workforce, please donate here: [NAATSIHWP Donations](#) (all donations are tax deductible)



Join the National Association of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Health Workers and Practitioners
(NAATSIHWP) in celebrating the
**National Day of Recognition for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Health Workers and Practitioners!**



7 August 2022
#NAATSIHWPHeroes



**NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS AND
PRACTITIONERS**

7 August 2022

Share your own stories about the
workforce, or alternatively share
those posted on NAATSIHWP
social media using the hashtag
#NAATSIHWPHeroes2022



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TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS AND
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If you don't know about our
workforce, find out about their
critical role and what they do:
[https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/wh
at-atsi-health-workers-and-
health-practitioners-do](https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/wh-at-atsi-health-workers-and-health-practitioners-do)

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7 August 2022



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07 August 2022



“ We know better health
outcomes are achieved when
our workforce are involved in
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health professions ”

KARL BRISCOE
NAATSIHWP CEO

**NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS**



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07 August 2022



“ Thank you for your efforts in keeping our communities safe, especially through COVID-19. We hope you enjoy the National Day of Recognition. It's a day to be celebrated, because our workforce is a source of national pride ”

KARL BRISCOE
NAATSIHWP CEO

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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07 August 2022



“ Our communities must have access to culturally safe and responsive care no matter where they are, and a strong, valued and highly skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner workforce is key to this end ”

DAVID FOLLENT
NAATSIHWP CHAIRPERSON

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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“ Our mob out there are trained to administer clinical care and connect community to health services. Often the interface between communities and health systems can't happen without our workforce ”

DAVID FOLLENT
NAATSIHWP CHAIRPERSON

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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“ I spent many years proudly working as an Aboriginal Health Worker, and my mum was one of the first Aboriginal Health Workers in the NSW Health system. It's a space I grew up in, and a space I am very proud of ”

DAVID FOLLENT
NAATSIHWP CHAIRPERSON

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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“ This is a day for our workforce to be recognised as an essential profession, and for the wider medical workforce to understand the importance of the work we do ”

ANTOINETTE LIDELL
NAATSIHWP BOARD MEMBER
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
REPRESENTATIVE

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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“ For me, being a Health Practitioner is about helping my family, helping my mob and helping my community in all different ways. It could be clinical or mental health, it could be sitting and having a yarn to make someone feel better... I love it ”

SHELLEY JORDAN
ABORIGINAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER
INCOMING NAATSIHWP BOARD MEMBER
- VICTORIA

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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“ In particular, we recognise and thank our senior Health Workers and Health Practitioners who have worked hard and paved the way for us ”

NATALIE PANGQUEE
NAATSIHWP BOARD MEMBER
NORTHERN TERRITORY
REPRESENTATIVE

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HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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“ It has taken over 30 years for our workforce to be formally recognised for the work we do. Having our own day signifies the importance of the work we do in our communities ”

CHRISTINE INGRAM
NAATSIHWP BOARD MEMBER &
TREASURER
VICTORIA REPRESENTATIVE

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"I worked in a small Aboriginal community in Bairnsdale, Victoria where my parents were a part of getting our local Aboriginal Medical service up and running.

I have been in a AHW for the past 30 years. Moved to Sydney 14yrs ago and worked at Redfern AMS for 9 years at AHW mums and bubs program, did some personal care in the wider community which I am still doing. Also worked with Mount Druitt with mums and bubs program for 3 ½ years and now been appointed to ALO at Auburn Hospital as there has never been a ALO here so setting up and ensuring that the Aboriginal community has the direct contact with ALO, making the community feel welcome and make sure that services are culturally appropriate. I have seen a lot of change within health and I am passionate about my people's health and wellbeing."

MICHELLE PEARCE
ABORIGINAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"My journey commenced in 2009 at the A&TSI Community Health Service, where I worked as a Trainee Child Health Worker. I was enrolled by the service to start my Cert III in Primary Health Care and once completed, I enrolled to complete my Cert IV in Primary Health Care (Clinical).

In 2012, I became registered with AHPRA as A&TSI Health Practitioner. I devoted 8 years of my career to the Community at ATSICHS Mackay where I worked with Child Health Nurses on immunisation schedules, healthy hearing clinics, baby developmental checks/milestones & completing 715 Health Assessments. I worked with Doctors in procedures on the use of clinical equipment such as (HBA1C machine, ECG's & spirometry, and various other clinical equipment.

My career working for AMS ended Feb 2017, when I moved to Queensland Health at Carlyle Community Health Centre in Child, Youth & Family Unit as Advanced Health Worker.

In 2022 I enrolled into Diploma A&TSI PHC and I'm now studying again. My only satisfaction in my role is having positive feedback on how I have helped Families and if there anything I can do to assist, if they are happy, then I am."

IRENE NICHOLLS
SOUTHERN KAANTJU/WUTHATHI
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH PRACTITIONER/ ADVANCED HEALTH WORKER

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



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"I have a passion for helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially in the Health sector.

I started off as an Admin Trainee then progressed to various roles within Aboriginal Medical Services to Administration support Officer, Indigenous Health Worker, Health and Wellbeing Team Leader, Coordinator – Health Services.

It has been such a rewarding journey being able to know that our mob is getting the help they need so they can have a better life.

I know that this is the least I can do but if I can help at least one person, then I have successfully achieved my personal goal."

LYNESE HARI
GUNGGANDJI – YARRABAH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY
COORDINATOR HEALTH SERVICES

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"I commenced my career journey as the inaugural Enhance Primary Care (EPC) Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) whilst working at the Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Service (IAMS) located in Wollongong NSW – south of Sydney. I further progressed to Male AHW, general AHW becoming the Clinic Coordinator come Clinic Manager and onto becoming the inaugural Health Services Team Manager whilst attaining my nationally accredited and recognised registration in 2015 becoming an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner. Following my stint at the IAMS took-up employment with GP Synergy who is the sole provider for GP training in NSW and ACT and the registered training organisation (RTO) for providing greatest volume of GP training in Australia for the Australian General Practice Training Program – AGPT under the Department of Health, Australian Government.

I am further a registered Cultural Mentor with Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) and affiliated with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA), Indigenous General Practitioner Registrars Network (IGPRN), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), the National Cultural Educator and Cultural Mentor Network with the RTON in GP training, and TAFE Digital and TAFE Western Sydney – TAFE NSW just to name a few of my activities deriving from my professional portfolio and extensive experience."

CHRISTOPHER O'BRIEN
YORTA YORTA – CUMMEROOGUNJA SOUTHERN NSW AND NORTHERN VIC
DEPUTY MANAGER AND SENIOR CULTURAL EDUCATOR, GP SYNERGY

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"My career started with a traineeship for QLD Health as Aboriginal Health Worker at Winton 16 years ago, working in communities such as Boulia, Birdsville and Bedourie. I relocated to Charters Towers/Townsville as Health Worker and recently finished up working as Senior Care Coordinator Closing the Gap Program for NGO 9 years. I returned to QLD Health Charters Towers Hospital Health Worker and studied at University of Sydney completing Graduate Diploma Primary Health Care – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Focus.

I am a qualified health worker with an ability to relate to clients and their families and provide culturally safe health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to explain their cultural needs to other health professionals and educating or advising other health professionals on the delivery of culturally safe health care."

WENDY ALLAN
MALIANGAAPA AND BARKINDJI PEOPLE
A&TSI HEALTH WORKER

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My health journey began in 2008 at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service as a Hearing Health Trainee. I enrolled in Certificate III in A&TSI Primary Health Care and once completed, I enrolled in Certificate IV in A&TSI Health Care (Clinical). In 2015 I registered with AHPRA as A&TSI Health Practitioner. I then successfully gained a position with Queensland Health as an Advanced Health Worker. Working with Indigenous youth from 12 – 17 years old at five different schools within Mackay Hospital Health Service Mackay district. Supporting Indigenous students and families with health-related issues.

I work alongside Indigenous Community Educational Councilors, School based Health Nurses and other supports e.g. Guidance officers, School chaplains and Youth support workers. Transporting students to medical appointments e.g. Doctors' appointments, Child youth mental health and Sexual health. Engaging students and families with culturally appropriate community organisations. In July 2022 I enrolled in Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care. My passion is helping our mob improve and understand their health concerns and start being proactive in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and living long healthy lives. I love being a health worker at ground level working with our Mob.

LORNA PAI
WIDI AND MERIAM PEOPLE
HEALTH PRACTITIONER/ADVANCED HEALTH WORKER

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"I started as a medical administrator/Receptionist and has worked my way through many different areas of working with my Indigenous people. This led me to study CERT II A&TSI primary health care and am now going into my Nursing Diploma, which will also take me through to Health Management.

I've also been in the Health Work since 2005 where I started as a volunteer on CDEP Aboriginal Corporation in Derby WA. My work within the Health Department has opened and broaden my aspects in my Indigenous Community where patients deal with all sorts of long term illnesses.

This is my passion to make a difference in stages to deal with our Indigenous people's underlying health issues and get together as a Community to work on prevention"

SHONA HUDSON
CERT II A&TSI PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"I have a passion for Aboriginal Health and took a step forward in 2013 completing Cert III in A&TSI Health Worker and also completed Cert IV in A&TSI Health Practitioner Practice and Cert III in Pathology Collection.

I was employed as an aged care worker at the time and had been working in aged care for 6 years when I had a change of heart and a calling to fulfill my passion.

In my current position, I have learnt so much during my time as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner and would not want to work anywhere else, moving forward I would like to see myself doing managerial work someday."

LORETTA LONGBOTTOM
REGISTERED A&TSI HEALTH PRACTITIONER

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"I currently work at Robinson River, having started out as AHP Trainee in 2015 and up until 2017.

My qualifications include A&TSI Health Practitioner Diploma, Certificates on Vaccinations, Maternal Emergency Course, Emergency Response, Basic Life Support, Advanced Remote Health Practice Workshop and Framing Indigenous Health"

LEANNE RILEY
BULARNU WOMAN - NGWARDY SKIN
A&TSI HEALTH PRACTITIONER

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
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"I started working for our local Aboriginal Medical Centre back in 2018 as an Aboriginal Health Worker then upskilled to become an Aboriginal Health Practitioner.

in my role I was able to move around different areas, I started in the chronic condition team then primary health and now back in chronic conditions and my job is looking after chronic condition clients, dental and allied health.

I love that I'm able to help my local Aboriginal community by making their health a little easier for them, building relationships and help make a difference in my community by helping our client put their health first and make a change."

OCEANIA HARRIS
WARDANDI NOONGAR SALTWATER PEOPLE OF THE SOUTHWEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
ABORIGINAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER

NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

The **NAATSIHWP** team celebrated the **National Day of Recognition for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners** with an afternoon tea with one of our ambassadors, **Dan Bouchier**.

We yarned about the challenges our **#NAATSIHWPHeroes2022** face and how we can elevate their voices in mainstream health systems and media.

The team also thanked Dan for his time interviewing our members, check out our website and social media pages to watch the interviews.



*Afternoon Tea and Yarn
with
Dan Bouchier*

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NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS AND PRACTITIONERS



*Take Heart Deadly Heart screening at
Minjungbal Museum and Cultural Centre*

#NAATSIHWPHeroes2022
7 August 2022



NATIONAL DAY OF RECOGNITION VIDEO CLIPS

[Meet our NAATSIHWP Hero | Ep 1: Rachal Allan](#)

[Meet our NAATSIHWP Hero | Ep 2: Shaun Tatipata](#)

[Meet our NAATSIHWP Hero | Ep 3: Kim Moffitt](#)

[Meet our NAATSIHWP Hero | Ep 4: Patrick Ahkit](#)

[Meet our NAATSIHWP Hero | Ep 5: Kristika Kumar](#)

[Messages from the NAATSIHWP CEO and Board of Directors](#)