



ANZCA
FPM

President and CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

24 March 2021

Ms Tammie Staltari
Assistant Director
Health Plan, Early Years and Engagement Branch
Indigenous Health Division
Department of Health
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601

Via email: health.implementation.plan@health.gov.au

Dear Ms Staltari

Draft National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), including the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM), is one of the largest medical colleges in Australia. The college is responsible for the training, examination and specialist accreditation of anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians and for setting the best standards of clinical practice that contribute to a high quality health system.

ANZCA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031 and commends the Department of Health on the development of the plan.

The college strongly supports any initiatives that aim to address the significant inequities in health outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. We recognise the important role the college plays in Australia's healthcare system and understand our responsibility to advocate for the health and wellbeing of all people.

The draft health plan is a comprehensive document that covers all determinants of First Nations peoples' health and wellbeing. While broadly supportive of all twelve priority areas detailed in the plan, as a specialist medical college there are naturally some areas where we can have a greater impact, in particular:

- Priority 1 – Genuine shared decision making and partnerships.
- Priority 3 – Workforce.
- Priority 8 – Identifying and eliminating racism.
- Priority 11 – Culturally informed and evidence-based research and practice.

The college recognises the importance of improving the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all roles and at all levels and for our part, we are committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians. ANZCA is working closely with the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association and their *Growing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical specialists* project.

While the college launched an Indigenous Health Strategy and associated action plan in 2018, we have recently commenced the next step of our reconciliation journey, the development of our first Reconciliation Action Plan. Our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group will consider how the college can contribute to many of the priorities of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan including:

- How to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a genuine voice in college decision-making, governance and committees.
- Working with jurisdictional health services and trainee selection bodies to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees (note that the college does not select trainees).
- Ways in which the college can address racism in the health system and ensuring that ANZCA-accredited hospitals are culturally safe learning and working environments.

Acknowledging that the document provided for comment is in draft, it will be important that the measures of success of the numerous strategies outlined to effect change in the plan are achievable over the 2021-2031 timeframe and that the stakeholders responsible for each are detailed so as to achieve the collective impact required to bring about the much needed changes.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan. We look forward to continuing to work with the Department and other stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long, healthy lives with access to culturally safe and responsive services that are equitable and free of racism.

Yours sincerely



Dr Vanessa Beavis
President



Nigel Fidgeon
Chief Executive Officer