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Congress Joins with Health Groups to Lead on Aboriginal Health

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples (Congress) has teamed with eleven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health groups to form the National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF).

Congress is the backbone of this historic group which combines the expertise of existing organisations, and will drive the active involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in health policy at a national level.

Congress Co-Chair, Jody Broun, who leads the Forum together with Justin Mohamed, Chair of NACCHO (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation), said the Forum is about partnership not just consultation.

"Congress's leadership on this issue will enable links between all levels of government, peak health organisations and our people," Ms Broun said, "and we look forward to working in partnership with Minister Snowdon on developing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Plan."

"All of the Forum member organisations are also members of Congress. In this way, the NHLF shows the value that Congress adds in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in Australia and the combined strength and experience of our members' views, experience and expertise.

"Congress members have said that one of their top priorities is health – especially mental health and chronic disease. This is not surprising given both the health statistics confronting our people and the numbers of our people involved in health services.

"For example, chronic disease contributes to two thirds of the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and the death rate from diabetes for our people is 7 times higher than that of other Australians.

"Clearly we will work in collaboration with and recognise the expertise of other bodies like the Indigenous Mental Health Advisory Group and NATSIHEC and draw on input from other Congress members – individuals and organisations," Ms Broun concluded.

National Health Leadership Forum Members are:

- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- Australian Indigenous Psychologists' Association
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia Inc.
- Indigenous Dentists' Association of Australia
- The Lowitja Institute
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers' Association
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists
- Torres Strait Regional Authority.

The NHLF is a part of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and is monitored and measured through existing frameworks: Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework.