

Improving Indigenous health: promote the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

strategy 7

Actively promote the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across government and in the general community

Key achievements

- Conducted the first Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Directions Health Summit at Princess Alexandra Hospital to showcase initiatives which improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The Summit provided a comprehensive overview of the strategic directions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in Queensland Health
- Appointed two Indigenous mental health principal project officers to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health policy statement. A plan has been developed to progress a range of policy strategies including: culturally appropriate service provision; workforce issues such as roles and responsibilities, and education and training; and community education
- Addressed the specific needs of

older Indigenous peoples through the Queensland Health Aged Care Strategy. Consultation included workshops across the State with Indigenous community members and health workers. Of particular importance is the need to consider the unique cultural needs of older Indigenous peoples when conducting assessments to determine appropriate services

- Published the biannual *Meeting the Challenge 2002*, a report on good practice models of health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This publication has been cited as a useful resource not only by Queensland Health but also by other agencies, universities and research organisations
- Continued to implement the *Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001-2006*. This included establishing the cross-government Indigenous Environmental

Health State Agency Group which will target community participation, coordination and collaboration between agencies, healthy housing and infrastructure, information networks and optimal environmental health programs in Indigenous communities

- Maintained our commitment to *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices* (MCMC), the State Government's response to Justice Fitzgerald's Cape York Justice Study. Queensland Health is both a lead and partner agency in a number of strategies identified in the MCMC *Implementation plan*, including child health growth assessment and action, hearing health, counselling responses, appropriate models of service delivery, community action planning, engagement and participation, and environment health
- Contributed to various cross-Queensland Government initiatives, such as:
 - Suicide Prevention Strategy
 - Family Violence Agreement
 - Homelessness Strategy
 - Reconciliation
 - *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices*
- Continued to contribute to establishing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Forums in the Rockhampton and South Burnett Health Service Districts, and in Brisbane north districts
- Continued to contribute to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Alliance
- Provided a range of outreach services, including:
 - a men's health service from South Burnett Health Service District
 - a home visit program in Cairns, Townsville and the Sunshine Coast to follow-up unvaccinated children
 - services in obstetrics, gynaecology, paediatrics, renal and diabetes to Gulf and Cape





York communities (through the Commonwealth Government funded Medical Specialists Outreach Assistance Program

- Implemented the 'Growing Strong' project to enhance the nutritional status of Indigenous mothers and children
- Launched the 'SmokeCheck' culturally appropriate tobacco brief intervention for Indigenous peoples. The project has improved access to education resources and other aids such as nicotine replacement therapy, and for health workers who themselves smoke, a reassessment of their own smoking status
- Sponsored more than 30 Indigenous sporting and cultural events in North Queensland to increase awareness of the impacts of smoking
- Continued our longstanding partnership in the 100% In Control Croc Festival, which involves Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in a drug-free environment that promotes health, education, employment and reconciliation
- Established the Toowoomba District Mental Health Service Walaag Committee to facilitate access to and equity of mental health services for the Indigenous community
- Negotiated a working agreement with the Apunipima Cape York Health Council for the coordinated delivery of a comprehensive community and government approach to health care service delivery in remote Cape communities
- Conducted the Isolated Practice Authorisation course for Indigenous health workers. This training has increased the numbers of Indigenous people employed as health professionals in some health service districts, strengthened the link between the Indigenous health worker and the medical officer in the primary and secondary prevention of chronic diseases, and provided clearly stated

protocols and guidelines for clinical decision making

- Established a self-referral process for Indigenous people through the Indigenous Ear Health Program

Outlook

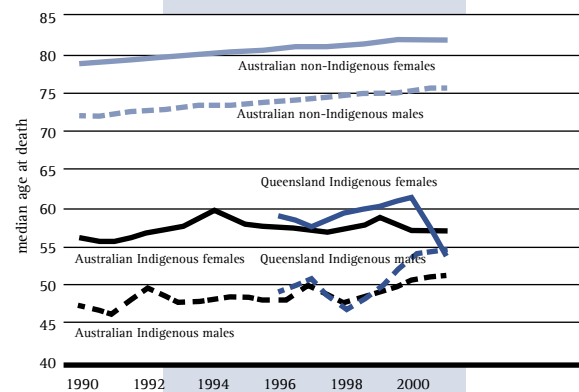
- Develop the Queensland Government's Implementation Plan for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH). The NSFATSIH provides a Framework for Action by governments over the next ten years. Queensland Health is the lead agency for this process
- Continue negotiations with the Department of Health and Ageing to implement the Primary Health Care Access Program (PHCAP) in the identified regions of Queensland. PHCAP will provide an avenue to improve access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the level of resources available for the delivery of primary health care services
- Continue to contribute to remodelling the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnerships in Queensland
- Continue to consolidate health service responses between its Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs and Mental Health service areas in collaboration with the Apunipima Cape York Health Council through the River of Life Strategy. Queensland Health and Apunipima have developed a Working Agreement to formalise the coordination of health and health-related services in Cape York
- Actively seek renegotiation and renewal of the *Torres Strait Health Framework Agreement*, which is due to finish at the end of June 2004
- Continue the Indigenous Ear Health Program throughout 2003-04

Median age at death and perinatal mortality continue to illustrate significant differences in the health of Indigenous Queenslanders.

Queensland Health is committed to addressing these differences.

Median age at death for selected population groups

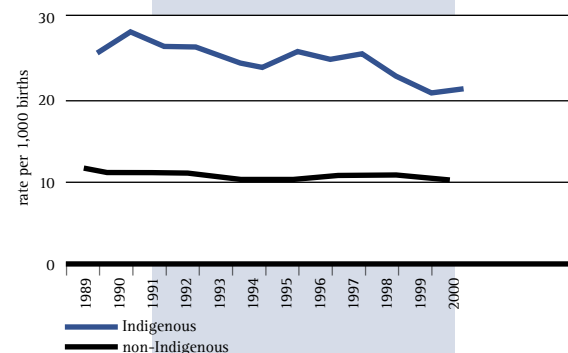
Australia and Queensland 1990 to 2001



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, and Registrar-General of Births Deaths and Marriages Queensland

Perinatal mortality rate trends, by Indigenous status

Queensland 1989 to 2000



Source: Perinatal Data Collection, Queensland Health