



Giving our next generation a healthy start to life

More than 150 people including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and elders, health workers, clinicians and health system leaders have met in Brisbane to focus on giving our next generation a healthy start to life. Investing in the health of our little ones and their mum is proven to be one of the best ways to improve disadvantage throughout life and help to close the gap.

The forum, on Friday, 4 August 2017, gave clinicians and health system leaders the opportunity to listen to real stories and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and health workers. **Thank you** to everyone, in particular the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and leaders, for sharing their stories and for being part of this very important meeting.

We heard

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a **'holistic' view to health and wellbeing** that is inseparably linked to their connection culturally, spiritually, emotionally and physically to the land and seas.
- A **connection** between clinicians and consumers is critical to creating a supportive relationship and trust in the system: the importance of taking time to listen, hear and understand the priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and deliver 'person (not hospital) centred care'.
- A **culturally competent workforce and system** is critical to achieving better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Institutional racism** is still a common experience for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and consumers. It has a real and destructive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the health system.
- **Local partnerships** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and communities are vital to improving the quality of care and getting better outcomes. Giving people a voice is key to understanding the problems, designing goals and solutions and measuring outcomes.



Photo: Stephanie and Evie-Rose (9 months) from Mount Isa, Chantelle and Ruby (5 months) from Dalby, Ashleigh and Harper (9 weeks) from Hervey Bay, and Che and Dhaluwan (9 months) from Badu Island.

- Partnerships built on honesty, respect, transparency and **trust** will deliver a system that people will trust to meet and respond to their needs.
- Where something isn't delivering the results you want and need **redesign it with those who use the system.**

Partnering to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



Growing deadly families

a healthy start for young children

4 August 2017 • Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Key areas for action

Change will take time. There are many actions that can be taken at an individual, community and system level to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Recommendations informed by what we heard at the forum are likely to focus on the following areas:

- Improving the connection between hospital and community care to see how existing services can be re-designed and resources shared to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples journey into and out of mainstream services at the micro and macro level.
- Rethinking how we develop and embed cultural awareness, respect and understanding in the workforce and system.
- Nurturing, supporting and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, particularly leaders within the health workforce.
- Revisiting what 'safety' means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people touching the health system and their priorities for care and rethinking how we can support it.



Photo: Health Minister Cameron Dick with health consumers Wyomie, Stephanie and Chelsea.

Specific recommendations will developed in the coming weeks.



Photo: Panel members (L to R) Adrian Carson, UIIH, meeting facilitator Cindy Shannon, Elder Aunty Lillian Gray, health consumer Chelsea, Kristie Watego-Ivory, UIIH, and Dr Raymond Blackman, Palm Island Community Company.

Next steps

The forum organising committee, which includes representatives from the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council, the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Health Consumers Queensland, CheckUP, the Department of Health and the Queensland Clinical Senate will prepare and distribute a report and recommendations in the coming weeks to present and champion to health system leaders. In the interim, if you have any further ideas, thoughts or suggestions to share with the organising committee, please contact us via qldclinicalsenate@health.qld.gov.au

An update following the *Growing deadly families – a healthy start for mums and bubs* forum on 3 August 2017 will be provided to delegates shortly.

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