



Media release

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AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL HEALTH AGENCY JOINS RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN PROGRAM

This NAIDOC Week the Australian Digital Health Agency has proudly joined a network of more than 1,100 corporate, government and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program.

Agency CEO Amanda Cattermole PSM said the Agency's reconciliation commitments include an emphasis on understanding and progressing digital health priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living across Australia, in rural, remote and metropolitan communities.

"Technology can contribute to closing the gap by improving health care accessibility, quality and safety no matter where people live," she said.

"We can make health care more equitable and efficient using digital tools and technology like My Health Record, telehealth and electronic prescriptions."

Mr Steve Renouf, Consumer Advocate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Champion and Co-Chair of the Agency's Reconciliation Working Group said: "I commend my colleagues in the Reconciliation Working Group and the broader organisation on its cultural maturity, as well as its already well-established partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations, local communities and individual consumers, in its pursuit to deliver better health outcomes together.


"The theme of NAIDOC week is *Always Was, Always Will Be*. It is an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, our 65,000 year old culture and our ongoing connection to country. It is also a time to reflect on understanding our history so we can move towards reconciliation."

Ms Cattermole said the Agency strives to proactively build and maintain internal and external relationships to ensure it is an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"From celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, providing education and training, to building partnerships with key Indigenous agencies to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes via targeted digital health initiatives, we are revolutionising the way people can access health care," she said.

Already the Agency has a number of key programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Agency has been working with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health (ACCHS) sector to increase digital health understanding and use in services and for consumers. The Agency recognises both the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination in health and the enormous potential that digital health has for improving health outcomes, and so has partnered with the peak bodies for community control in each jurisdiction – the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Affiliates. Together they have undertaken projects across the country to improve health outcomes. This is consistent with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (July 2020) outcomes of shared decision-making and building the community-controlled sector.



East Arnhem will join Hedland and Emerald as communities with dedicated digital health initiatives to improve patients' records by having all providers using the My Health Record system.

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is about organisations, from every sector, rising to the challenge of reconciling Australia. A RAP provides a framework for organisations to develop practical plans of action built on relationships, respect and opportunities, to create social change and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Ms Cattermole said that as the leading Australian government agency for digital health, the Agency was nurturing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and providing employment opportunities within the Agency.

“The National Agreement on Closing the Gap calls out the importance of improving mainstream institutions and ensuring they are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” she said.

“This is critical to how we operate and the outcomes we achieve. The Agency has adopted the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy and has recently broadened our supply chain to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and social enterprises.

“Current planned programs include an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth digital health workshop open to people aged 10-17 years; an Elder-in-Residence Program to increase understanding and education through engagement with community Elders; and an Agency mentoring program to ensure two-way influence and exchange.

“There are also cultural immersion programs and an Agency Champion program to embed cultural competency.”

The Agency RAP can be found [here](#).

Media contact

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About the Australian Digital Health Agency

The Agency is tasked with improving health outcomes for all Australians through the delivery of digital healthcare systems, and implementing [Australia's National Digital Health Strategy – Safe, Seamless, and Secure: evolving health and care to meet the needs of modern Australia](#) in collaboration with partners across the community. The Agency is the System Operator of [My Health Record](#), and provides leadership, coordination, and delivery of a collaborative and innovative approach to utilising technology to support and enhance a clinically safe and connected national health system. These improvements will give individuals more control of their health and their health information, and support healthcare providers to deliver informed healthcare through access to current clinical and treatment information. Further information: www.digitalhealth.gov.au.