

# Media release

Thursday 30 May 2019

## Hospital pharmacists drive new commitment to Closing the Gap

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has harnessed the energy of members to strengthen its commitment to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians through a dedicated Specialty Practice stream.

The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health stream, announced today to coincide with Reconciliation Week, joins 24 other streams in SHPA's Specialty Practice program, which connects leading networks, advocacy and education across pharmacy disciplines.

Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the formation and rapid uptake of the SHPA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health stream reflects the priority placed in this important area by the organisation and its members.

'While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 3.3% of the Australian population, the group constitutes 5% of people in hospitals. A key focus of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health stream will be to progress Close the Gap goals and help reduce this overrepresentation, improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.'

'The stream will be a vibrant network of SHPA members who are seeking to develop their expertise in providing culturally responsive pharmacy services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Members of this stream will work closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and community organisations.'

'SHPA members have a long history of advocating for improving Indigenous health and increasing access to subsidised medicines and clinical pharmacy services, and the development of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health stream, as with our [Uluru Statement From the Heart](#), demonstrates SHPA's continued commitment to enhancing health outcomes for First Nations Australians.'

Ms Michaels says the stream will benefit from the integrated advocacy, education and networking framework of SHPA's Specialty Practice program.

'The stream will provide members with guidance regarding collaboration and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, education opportunities and pathways to input into policy decisions and advocate on issues that will improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.'

Ms Michaels says the time is right to bolster commitments to improving the health of first Australians.

'This week marks Reconciliation Week, a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and the creation of this stream illustrates the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health to SHPA as an organisation and to our membership.'

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### About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

[shpa.org.au](http://shpa.org.au) |   