

NEWS RELEASE

Release Time 9:30am Australian Eastern Standard Time

Date Monday 24 October 2022

NACCHO and BHP partner to improve ARF and RHD outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and BHP are pleased to announce a partnership aimed at eliminating Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) and Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ARF and RHD are preventable diseases disproportionately affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in regional and remote areas. Between 2016 and 2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accounted for 92 per cent of all ARF diagnoses in Australia.

As part of the agreement, BHP will provide A\$9.7 million over three years, helping to fund critical health care initiatives delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community health services across Australia. The funding announced today complements the A\$18 million already committed by the Australian Government. An additional A\$13.5 million is also anticipated following the Labour Party's election commitment to combat RHD in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes A\$1.5 million that is prioritised for the investment in portable echo-cardiogram machines, training and support for primary health care workers, including Aboriginal Health Workers and Practitioners.

NACCHO Chief Executive Officer, Pat Turner, said: "NACCHO's partnership with BHP and the Australian Government is the first-ever national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sector-led initiative to combat Rheumatic Heart Disease in our communities. This partnership recognises that we are best placed to design and implement health services, including prevention, screening, early diagnosis, treatment and supportive care, for our own communities. This additional investment will expand the support provided by our community-controlled health services to deliver evidence-based ARF and RHD activities in their communities."

BHP's Chief Legal, Governance and External Affairs Officer Caroline Cox said: "BHP is proud to continue its support of NACCHO, building on partnerships established with the Aboriginal community-led health sector over many years. It is important that we back Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and put Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands, as NACCHO's vision sets out. We are determined to play our part in the collective

action required to address the underlying causes of these health issues, such as inequality, inadequate housing and long-standing health inequities.”

BHP’s investment announced today follows A\$5.9 million of donations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community health services throughout the pandemic for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led COVID responses across the country.

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About NACCHO

NACCHO is the national peak body representing 144 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across the country on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing issues. NACCHO is the third largest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, with over 3,500 out of the 6,000 staff working in ACCHOs being either of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

Many NACCHO members have almost 50 years of experience in the delivery of comprehensive primary health care. Services are delivered through fixed, outreach and mobile clinics operating in urban, rural and remote settings across Australia.

About BHP

BHP is a leading global resources company with approximately 80,000 employees and contractors, primarily in Australia and the Americas. BHP’s products are sold worldwide, and it is among the world’s top producers of major commodities, including iron ore, copper, nickel, and metallurgical coal.