



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**4 June 2024**

**A new era for aged care and First Nations health: NACCHO hosts inaugural Elder Care Support Yarning Circle at the Gold Coast, 5–6 June 2024**

NACCHO's Elder Care Support program is set to host the National Yarning Circle event on the Gold Coast on 5–6 June 2024. The event will gather community leaders, healthcare professionals, and key stakeholders to enhance support for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while also focusing on building a robust First Nations health workforce.

The event will feature a powerful keynote address by Andrea Kelly, the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, who will speak on the importance of culturally safe aged care services. Her insights will highlight the critical role of culturally competent care in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, highlighting the significance of creating tailored, community-led pathways and support for the elderly.

The Commissioner stated, "The Elder Care Support program is a groundbreaking initiative that not only enhances the care for our Elders but also builds a strong First Nations health workforce. By focusing on culturally safe practices, we are paving the way for better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

Participants will engage in interactive workshops designed to provide practical knowledge and skills. These sessions will cover the My Aged Care Portal, the new Aged Care Act, and strategies for improving access to services. These workshops are essential for equipping attendees with the tools they need to navigate and implement aged care services effectively within their communities.

Donnella Mills, NACCHO Chairperson welcomes the event, stating, "The National Yarning Circle is an important platform for sharing knowledge and strategies to improve care of our elderly. By investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers to participate in this space, we are empowering our communities and ensuring our Elders receive the best possible care."

The event will feature panel discussions with Janine Mohamed, Deputy CEO First Nations, National Disability Insurance Agency; representatives from NDIA, ACQSC, OPAN, and the Healing Foundation, exploring collaborative elder care approaches. Former NRL star Preston Campbell will lead a session on staying well and safe.

The Elder Care Support - Yarning Circle is a critical step in addressing the unique needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. By fostering a collaborative and inspiring event, the initiative aims to create and foster positive networks across the country, build sustainable improvements in the aged care sector and support the ongoing development of the First Nations health workforce.

**END.**

**For more information about the Elder Care Support program and the National Yarning Circle event, please contact: [aged.care@naccho.org.au](mailto:aged.care@naccho.org.au)**

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## **PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

### **Building the First Nations Health Workforce**

A core objective of the Elder Care Support program is to strengthen the First Nations health workforce, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have access to culturally appropriate and accessible care. This initiative will deliver a workforce of 250 full-time employees across Australia, focused on providing comprehensive support to older community members.

Through extensive face-to-face and online training, the program equips staff with the skills needed to succeed in their roles. Key positions such as Aged Care Support Coordinators and Connectors work directly with community members and local service providers to navigate and access aged care services effectively.

### **First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program**

Complementing the Elder Care Support initiative, the First Nations Health Worker Traineeship (FNHWT) program is making significant strides in expanding the First Nations healthcare workforce, with a goal of training 500 First Nations individuals by 2027, this program is a testament to the government's commitment to Closing the Gap.

Training is delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Registered Training Organisations (ACCHROs), providing trainees with on-the-job experience on Country. This approach not only addresses critical workforce shortages but also ensures that care is culturally safe and responsive to community needs.

## **NACCHO BACKGROUND**

[NACCHO](#) is the national peak body representing 145 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 of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.



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