Ochre Day Conference -
*Minister Wyatt urges Aboriginal men to be warriors for health*

Today delegates at the Ochre Day Conference - *Men’s Health, Our Way. Let’s Own It* heard an address from The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health.

The Minister highlighted that “This Day shines a light on the issues that affect the social and emotional health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. He asks them to become “home-based heroes — modern-day warriors for health and wellbeing — who are crucial in Closing the Gap in the health outcomes experienced by our First Peoples.

Wyatt believes and NACCHO Chairperson John Singer agrees “that we need every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander man to take responsibility and be proud of themselves and their heritage — proud of the oldest continuous culture on Earth, and the traditions that kept us healthy, from the very beginning.”

Recently John Singer attended the Council of Australian Governments Health Council meeting in Alice Springs, when it made two critical decisions to advance First Nations health. Firstly, it has made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health a national priority, including by inviting the Indigenous Health Minister to all future meetings.

The Council also resolved to create a national Indigenous Health and Medical Workforce Plan, to focus on significantly increasing the number of First Nations doctors, nurses and health professionals.

John Singer was also grateful that the former Turnbull Government has just committed $3.4 million over the next three years, to develop the Aboriginal Health TV network. It is an anticipated that this will deliver health and wellbeing messages through television screens in 144 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, reaching up to 1.2 million people each month.

Local community TV production will be fostered and encouraged, to ensure that the broadcasts are relevant and engaging for their audiences. Health messages will be delivered on issues such as smoking, eye and ear checks, skin conditions, diet, immunisation, sexual health, diabetes and drug and alcohol treatment services.

Ochre Day is an important Aboriginal male health initiative to help raise awareness as well as provide an opportunity to draw national public awareness to Aboriginal male health and social and emotional wellbeing.

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