

Recently released - the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: Framework for Action by Governments

The *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: Framework for Action by Governments* was endorsed by the Australian and State/Territory governments through their respective Cabinet processes and signed by all Health Ministers in July 2003.

This document is complementary to the 1989 (reprinted in 1996) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy* (NAHS) ([view download details](#)) which was built on extensive community consultation. The *National Health Strategy: an evaluation 1994* ([view download details](#)) explained that the NAHS was never fully implemented. It remains, however, a key document in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and is used by health services and policy makers.

Development of the framework

Continuing the consultation process and in view of changes in Indigenous health policy, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy: draft for discussion, February 2001* was produced by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council. This process contributed to shaping the *National Strategic Framework*.

The *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: context* ([view report](#) - PDF - 563KB) details the development of the framework, which reflects significant policy changes and the creation of partnerships (consistent with the NAHS recommendations). Included in the context report is a description of factors affecting the health of Indigenous people. Building on the NAHS and its evaluation, the framework takes into account other key policy documents for example the:

- *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*
- *Bringing Them Home report*
- Submissions made to the *House of Representatives Inquiry into Indigenous Health* and its final report *Health is Life*

The framework

The *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: Framework for Action by Governments* ([view report](#) - PDF - 351KB) describes the aim of guiding government action through a coordinated, collaborative and multi-sectoral approach supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health stakeholder organisations. The report also includes examples of successful programs and promising approaches.

The framework is based on nine principles:

- cultural respect
- a holistic approach
- health sector responsibility
- community control of primary health services
- working together
- localised decision making
- promoting good health
- building the capacity of health services and communities
- accountability

Drawing together nationally agreed strategies and identifying key priorities, the framework sets an agenda for addressing health disadvantages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The above reports are available on the OATSIH [website](#)

Reference

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council (2003) *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: framework for action by governments*. Canberra: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council