



Media Release

World Federation of Public Health Associations
Public Health Association of Australia
Public Health Association of New Zealand

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New global Indigenous health working group launches

Today as the World Health Assembly meeting takes place in Geneva, Switzerland an historic moment for global Indigenous health will occur when the [Indigenous Working Group](#) of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) is launched.

The Indigenous Working Group aims to be a catalyst for reducing the significant health disparities and inequities experienced by Indigenous people globally. The Indigenous Working Group was formed during the World Congress on Public Health in Melbourne, Australia in 2017.

The Indigenous Working Group will be Co-Chaired by Carmen Parter of Australia and Adrian Te Patu of New Zealand, with Summer May Finlay of Australia and Emma Rawson of New Zealand serving as Co-Vice Chairs.

Carmen Parter, Co-Chair of the Working Group and Vice President at the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) said, “The launch of the Indigenous Working Group is a significant event for the 370 million Indigenous people worldwide. Indigenous people are often a minority in their own country, they experience poorer health, have lower life expectancy, and are among the most disadvantaged groups.”

“A key feature of the Indigenous Working Group is that it will be underpinned by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration strongly emphasises the need for Indigenous People’s self-determination and that’s why the Working Group will be led by Indigenous people. We are the people who need to be driving change in health policy, because it is us, our families, and our communities who are suffering from this health inequity,” Ms Parter said.

Adrian Te Patu, Co-Chair of the Indigenous Working Group and WFPHA Governing Council Member welcomed the launch saying, “Public health experts and Indigenous health leaders around the world have been calling on their governments for recognition of Indigenous health as a top priority. Thanks to the particularly strong efforts by Australia and New Zealand this past year, the Indigenous Working Group is now ready to start forging a new path for improved Indigenous health everywhere.”

Michael Moore, Immediate Past President of the World Federation of Public Health Associations and former PHAA CEO has been working closely with the Indigenous Working Group during the past year, saying “The Indigenous Working Group will address the problem of Indigenous health inequality, highlighting it as a global priority. The health of individual nations cannot fully progress when the health of

their First Peoples is suffering. The Indigenous Working Group is therefore a major milestone for the WFPHA, and for Indigenous health advocates and communities everywhere.”

The event will be hosted by the World Federation of Public Health Associations, the Public Health Association of Australia and the Public Health Association of New Zealand at the University of Geneva. The launch will be officially conducted by the Australian Minister for Indigenous Health, the Honourable Ken Wyatt.

The launch will involve a range of Indigenous speakers from around the globe highlighting Indigenous public health gains and outlining the health disparities and inequities experienced by Indigenous people in their country. Participants will engage in story-telling through yarning, with the goal of starting an Indigenous global agenda for change which includes universal health coverage and equity.

Once in operation, the Indigenous Working Group will bring together Indigenous peoples from around the world to exchange knowledge, engage in collective advocacy, form active partnerships, source funding and resources, and seek out research opportunities to develop the evidence base that informs global and national Indigenous public health policies.

This aligns with and will continue to support the WFPHA’s [Global Charter for the Public’s Health](#) and its Strategic Plan. In addition, it continues to contribute towards the goals and priority areas of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals.

For further information/comment:

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