

Media release

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Closing the Gap in action as SHPA reflects on global Indigenous recognition

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) celebrates [International Day of the World's Indigenous People](#) today, reflecting on the reframing of Closing the Gap initiatives and innovations of hospital pharmacists to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Announced last week, the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap \(CTG\)](#) includes new targets around comparable life expectancy among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and increases in healthy infant birthweight, enrolment and education attainment, youth and adult employment, land rights and languages spoken among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's – as well as decreases in detention, incarceration, violence and abuse and suicide – by 2031.

Aleena Williams, SHPA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Chair says it is important the National Agreement on Closing the Gap has been developed in genuine partnership between Australian Governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations.

'The shared decision-making that underpins the agreement is crucial to understanding the changes and investments needed to reach the 16 targets.'

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the organisation is committed to the spectrum of meaningful change, from reconciliation and recognition to sustained improvements in health outcomes.

'In a current example of the agreement's principles in action, several sites in Queensland have seen interventions to improve medicines access and ensure patient safety during COVID-19 restrictions.'

SHPA member pharmacist-led measures, at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane and health services in Cairns and Townsville, highlight the benefits that a focus on person-centred care can provide to the community.

'By reducing contact points required for patients to receive supply and counselling on post-discharge medicines, these pharmacists are working to avoid disruptions in care experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities amid the coronavirus pandemic,' says Ms Michaels.

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA

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members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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