

**1 November 2018**

**Working in Partnership to address institutional barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity**

**Statement by Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Scott McDougall and Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council CEO Neil Willmetts.**

The Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ) and Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) are working collaboratively with Queensland Health on ways to reduce institutional barriers to health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council CEO, Neil Willmetts said:

‘I welcome the existing collaboration between the Anti-Discrimination Commission, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council with Queensland Health on developing means to reduce barriers and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.’

As part of this long running project, a group of recognised Queensland leaders and experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health will shortly meet to review a tool known as the Matrix, to assess whether it is a reliable means of measuring institutional barriers to health equity. Their assessment is due in mid-November 2018.

The Matrix, developed by Bukal Consultancy Services (Associate Professor (Adjunct) Adrian Marrie and Associate Professor Henrietta Marrie AM), uses key indicators to assess governance, policy implementation, service delivery, recruitment and employment, and financial accounting and reporting in health institutions. The criteria for assessment are derived from relevant national Closing the Gap partnership agreements, and federal and Queensland Closing the Gap health policies and implementation frameworks. The audit process uses only publicly available information provided, for example, in annual reports, health service agreements, strategic and operational plans, summaries of board meetings and information provided on websites.

Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Scott McDougall said:

‘The yet to be validated Matrix tool has been useful in stimulating discussion with Queensland Health and within various health services, and in targeting interventions in areas that could potentially be improved in governance, policy implementation, service delivery, recruitment and employment, and financial accounting and reporting in health institutions. The report detailing the preliminary use of this tool in Queensland will be published before the end of the year’.

‘ADCQ and QAIHC see this collaborative project with Queensland Health as being a valuable step in the ongoing process to remove institutional barriers to health equity.’

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