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

**12 November 2018**

On 12 November 2018, the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ), the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) and Queensland Health co-hosted a workshop of experts to review and refine a tool used to measure institutional barriers to health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Alongside representatives from the hosting organisations, the panel of experts included Queensland Hospital and Health Service (HHS) Board members and executive, Aboriginal community controlled health sector clinicians and executive, executives of health peak bodies, and the developer of the audit tool, known as *the Matrix.*

All workshop participants acknowledged the importance of delivering culturally safe and responsive healthcare services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and recognised that, along with social and cultural determinants of health, the health system itself is a powerful determinant of health.

Workshop participants congratulated Associate Professor (Adjunct) Adrian Marrie and Associate Professor Henrietta Marrie AM of Bukal Consulting Services on their work on *the Matrix* tool and recognised the value of being able to measure institutional barriers to health equity within the health system.

The tool uses key indicators to assess governance, policy implementation, service delivery, recruitment and employment, and financial accounting and reporting in health institutions.

The panel of experts reviewed and refined the Matrix tool to strengthen its validity, with an aim to having a tool which can be used repeatedly to set benchmarks and measure improvements in the health system over time.

Workshop participants recognised the limitations of the tool to measure institutional barriers across all parts of the health system and that further work could be done to measure the role of government more broadly to address institutional barriers to health equity.

The workshop agreed that *the Matrix* is an important tool to measure institutional barriers to health equity and that ongoing review of the tool, will continue to strengthen its validity.

The tool has been useful in stimulating discussion with Queensland Health and Hospital and 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.

Workshop participants saw this as a valuable step in the ongoing process to remove institutional barriers to health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.