

Statement
February 2024

Vale Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG

1 August 1932 – 4 February 2024



The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Leaders of the National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF) wish to honour Yankunytjatjara women, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue and her work in advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue dedicated her entire lifetime of work to the rights, health, and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The NHLF thank and honour her for all that she has done – for the legacy through her efforts to fight for self-determination in our own affairs.

Dr O'Donoghue legacy inspires our work to seek an Australian health system where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to health services that are effective, high quality, appropriate and free of racism and inequality.

Dr O'Donoghue's achievements include being the founding Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and she was a key leader in drafting the Native Title legislation that arose from the High Court's historic Mabo decision. Named 1984 Australian of the Year, Dr O'Donoghue was the first Aboriginal person to address the United Nations General Assembly and the first Aboriginal woman to be appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

Dr O'Donoghue's advocacy for human rights is something we, as a collective (health professionals, mental health, social and emotional wellbeing, health and aged care policy and research) and within our own professional organisations, will continue, as we strive to achieve the recognition that health is human right, that underpins everyday life, and is a key factor in economic and environmental sustainability.

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Enquires: NHLF@iaha.com.au or 0447 477 202



NHLF Leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare **MEMBERS**
National Health Leadership Forum



Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
<https://aida.org.au/>



Australian Indigenous Psychologists' Association
<https://indigenoupsychology.com.au/>



Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
<https://catsinam.org.au/>



Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia
<https://www.gayaadhuwi.org.au/>



The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation
<https://healingfoundation.org.au/>



Indigenous Allied Health Australia
<https://iaha.com.au/>



Indigenous Dentists' Association of Australia



The Lowitja Institute
<https://www.lowitja.org.au/>



National Association Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners
<https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/>



Torres Strait Regional Authority
<https://www.tsra.gov.au/>



National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council

Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists