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## **New tools to help strengthen Indigenous health promotion across Australia**

Researchers from the Menzies School of Health Research have launched the first quality improvement tools designed specifically for health promotion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Health promotion is vital to help give people the knowledge and resources to take care of their own health and lower the risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes. Recent examples include the healthy community days organised as part of the Commonwealth Government's Close the Gap campaign, and tobacco action initiatives to help people give up smoking. Health promotion goes hand in hand with clinical services for comprehensive health care.

Developed during a three year research project, the new tools enable health services and clinicians to systematically assess the quality and delivery of their health promotion strategies.

Data is collected from health service records and analysed against 'best practice' guidelines. Services are then provided with web based reports on their relative strengths and weaknesses.

"This is a ground-breaking resource for those services looking to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing through health promotion," says Menzies' Professor Ross Bailie.

The project will be delivered by the National Centre for Quality Improvement in Indigenous Primary Health Care, *One21seventy*.

*One21seventy* Project Officer Alison Laycock said the tools will allow health centre teams – no matter how big or small – to better assess the work they're doing.

The suite of tools and supporting resources were developed in collaboration with four Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory: Katherine, Kunbarllanjnja, Barunga and Marthakal Homelands on Elcho Island. Their release follows a three-year study into the quality of health promotion in the region led by Nikki Percival. Co-researcher Lynette O'Donoghue says the tools and reports have been thoroughly tested by health services and are easy to use.

The tools were unveiled at the Lowitja Institute National Conference on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care in Alice Springs on 14 May.

### **Background**

*One21seventy* is a not-for-profit organisation set up through the Menzies School of Health Research and the Lowitja Institute to provide ongoing support and training for primary health care services to implement evidence based continuous quality improvement processes.

*One21seventy* is the National Centre for Quality Improvement in Indigenous Primary Health Care. Its aspiration is to increase the life expectancy for Indigenous people – beyond one in infancy, beyond 21 in children and young adults and beyond seventy in the overall lifespan.

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