

THE 2nd WORLD INDIGENOUS CANCER CONFERENCE CALGARY, ALBERTA (CANADA)

16th - 19th September 2019

Indigenous communities, consumers and health experts from around the world have come together at the opening of the second World Indigenous Cancer Conference (WICC) at the Calgary Telus Convention Centre in Canada. The conference, which has drawn a large contingent of Australian delegates, follows on from the success of the inaugural WICC held in Brisbane, Australia in 2016.

The WICC 2019 theme is 'Respect, Reconciliation and Reciprocity,' with over 400 delegates from across the globe discussing cancer and its impact on Indigenous peoples. World-wide, Indigenous peoples bear a disproportionately higher cancer burden than non-Indigenous peoples, which makes WICC 2019 so very important.

Hosted by the Canadian Indigenous Research Network Against Cancer (CIRNAC) in partnership with the host sponsor Alberta Health Services, this premier event is supported by the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) which is the specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization.

Professor Gail Garvey, who convened the first WICC and is co-chair of WICC 2019, noted that "cancer has been largely overlooked amongst Indigenous populations world-wide and remains the second leading cause of death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

WICC 2019 has drawn expertise of leading cancer researchers, public health practitioners, clinicians, advocacy groups, Indigenous community leaders and consumers. They are coming together to share knowledge about critical issues across the cancer continuum from prevention and treatment to survivorship and end of life.

Professor Tom Calma AO, National Coordinator, Tackling Indigenous Smoking, and member of the Cancer Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Leadership Group, pointed out that "Smoking is the single biggest contributor to early deaths, including cancer deaths, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – which is why it is so important that we encourage people not to take up smoking and assist smokers to stop."

Several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates with a lived experience of cancer are making an important contribution to the conference.

Des McGrady, an Aboriginal cancer survivor, said "An international meeting is important for the information sharing that we can pass on to community and people

working in this space. This will allow us to work in partnership to drive positive change.”

The burden of cancer among Indigenous populations is of major public health importance and forums for collaboration such as this conference will strengthen research and service delivery and help accelerate progress in improving cancer outcomes.

Indigenous leadership, culturally sound service delivery and encouragement of mainstream services to prioritise Indigenous cancer are critical to these efforts and central to WICC 2019.

For more details about the conference, please visit the website: <http://wicc2019.com>

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