

Canberra, 7 May 2024

## **Heart Health Yarning Tool: Empowering Shared Decision-Making for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities**

Today marks the unveiling of a groundbreaking resource aimed at fostering informed discussions on cardiovascular health within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Heart Health Yarning Tool, developed through a collaborative effort between community members and researchers from the University of Sydney Health Literacy Lab, promises to revolutionize the way health professionals engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on matters of heart health.

Crafted through a series of yarning sessions led by Ms. Judith Parnham, Deputy Chairperson and Queensland Representative of the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATISHWP), this online tool is tailored to facilitate culturally safe and meaningful conversations surrounding cardiovascular risk assessment, aligned with the latest Australian guidelines.

Associate Professor Carissa Bonner, spearheading the project from the University of Sydney, together with Dr. Rosemary Wyber from the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing Research at Australian National University, championed the tool's development, timed to coincide with National Heart Week.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners are adept at delivering culturally sensitive care," remarked Associate Professor Bonner. "Our aim is to empower other healthcare professionals to emulate this approach, fostering shared decision-making processes concerning heart health."

"We are really excited about applying best practice to shared decision making for mob to talk about heart health. We know that holistic, culturally safe care is critical to reducing cardiovascular risk. This tool supports clinicians to do that really well," said Mr David Follent, Senior Atlantic Fellow, Chairperson of NAATISHWP and Senior Project Officer who co-led a team at the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation that established the new shared decision-making approaches with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the COVID-19 response.

Dr. Shannon McKinn, qualitative researcher involved in the tool's development, underscored its role in facilitating patient-centered care. "By providing a structured framework for discussing options and choices, health professionals can collaborate with their patients, rather than dictating decisions to them," Dr. McKinn noted.

The Heart Health Yarning Tool, a testament to community-driven innovation, is freely accessible online, thanks to funding support from the Commonwealth Department of Health

and Aged Care. Health professionals and consumers alike can access the tool at: <https://heartyarningtool.com/>.

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### **About Heart Health Yarning Tool**

The Heart Health Yarning Tool is an online resource developed to facilitate shared decision-making discussions between health professionals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding cardiovascular health. Co-designed by community members and researchers, the tool aims to promote culturally safe interactions and informed choices aligned with Australian guidelines.