



Central Australian  
**Aboriginal Congress**  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION | ICN 7823

# 2019

STRATEGIC PLAN

# 2023

*"Of the people, by the people, for the people"*



**A**s Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation (Congress), I am pleased to introduce to you the Congress Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

Congress began in 1973 when over 100 Aboriginal people from town and remote communities established the organisation as a voice for the Aboriginal people of Central Australia and to safeguard and promote their interests.

Forty-five years later much has changed. We have grown into a leading Aboriginal community-controlled health service with over 400 staff and 14 clinics, providing comprehensive primary health care services in Alice Springs and six remote Central Australian communities.

But while much has changed, we have remained an Aboriginal organisation "of the people, by the people, for the people".

Our Aboriginal voice must be heard and not be captured, must be listened to and not be suppressed. We must change our mindsets, the way we think and how we participate in our own health solutions and in our own health service. We must ensure we only invest our focus in programs that are aligned with our values and are designed to improve the lives of

our people, not the balance sheets of funding bodies. We must champion Aboriginal solutions for Aboriginal problems. We can use our combined creative energies by involving communities in sustainable solutions, building capacity, empowering people and creating partnerships. I believe that we can achieve this.

This strategic plan aims to help keep us on the track set back in 1973 and will take us forward to achieve our vision and meet challenges ahead. It is our pathway to the future in the increasingly complex world we face. The plan was developed over a period of six months of extensive consultation and thinking by our members, Board, management and staff, as well as our remote board members and partner organisations.

From this period of thinking and reflection, the Board has adopted a new vision statement that reminds us of what we are all trying to achieve: "All Central Australian Aboriginal people are empowered through their cultural, economic, social and family life to enjoy the best of health and wellbeing".

The strategic plan contains a clear statement of our purpose, what it is that Congress does and for who. It includes the five priorities we will be focussing on for the period 2019 to 2023: ensuring that Aboriginal health is in Aboriginal hands; continuing to deliver quality health services; supporting

remote communities; supporting our staff; and working together inside Congress and in partnership with other organisations.

Underlying this plan is the need for balance. We must balance being long-sighted while dealing with the here and now. We must balance the delivery of high-quality evidence-informed services with the needs and wishes of the diverse Central Australian Aboriginal community we serve. We must balance an internal focus on doing our job well with the need to develop engagement and relationships beyond Congress.

This plan is designed to be brought to life through action. I don't want it to be just another document sitting on a shelf or on the website. I want it to truly inform what each and every one of us—director, manager or staff—do over the next five years.

To make sure that happens, the Congress Executive Management team will prepare a five year action plan consistent with this plan as approved by the Board. It will set out how we are going to put the strategic plan into practice and will contain indicators so we can see how we are progressing between now and 2023. Additionally, both plans will inform the annual business planning of each division and section of Congress.

Through this we can make sure that the Board's vision and priorities guide the whole organisation and are translated into action throughout Congress. The Board will regularly review the progress and achievements against the strategic plan and action plan to ensure that Congress stays on track with its agreed strategic vision.

I would like to thank all Congress members and staff, both in town and the remote communities we serve, who contributed to developing this strategic plan. I trust you will see some of your ideas in it and look forward to us working together to make it a reality.

**William Tilmouth, CHAIRPERSON**

**Community control** is the local community having control of issues that directly affect their community. Implicit in this definition is the clear statement that Aboriginal people must determine and control the pace, shape and manner of change and decision-making at local, regional, state and national levels.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH STRATEGY, 1989

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**Health to Aboriginal peoples** is a matter of determining all aspects of their life, including control over their physical environment, of dignity, of community self-esteem, and of justice. It is not merely a matter of the provision of doctors, hospitals, medicines or the absence of disease and incapacity.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTH STRATEGY, 1989







# OUR PRIORITIES

(what we will do for 2019 to 2023 to achieve our vision)

## 1 Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands

As an Aboriginal community controlled health service committed to the principles of self-determination, we seek to engage and empower the Aboriginal peoples of Central Australia in everything we do. Responding to the needs and wishes of the community, we will speak out on their behalf on issues that affect their health, and ensure that we respect their diverse cultures and ways of being across the organisation.

### 1.1 Community control

We will ensure that effective structures and processes of Aboriginal community control continue to be the foundation for all our work.

### 1.2 A voice for our people

We will continue to be a strong advocate for the rights and needs of Aboriginal peoples, based on our strong local, regional and national reputation.

### 1.3 Community engagement

We will actively engage the Aboriginal community in their own health care and in the work of Congress.

### 1.4 Cultural responsiveness

We will ensure a welcoming, culturally responsive environment for our clients and staff, and deliver our services with integrity and respect for Aboriginal culture and experience.

## 2 Delivering quality health services

We will deliver evidence-informed comprehensive primary health care services, seeking to get the right balance between preventing ill-health and providing effective treatment for those who are sick. We will make our services highly accessible to Aboriginal people and families, and ensure that all our services work together to address their needs across the life course.

### 2.1 Treatment for those who are sick

We will provide high quality, acute and continuing care for our clients who suffer illness or injury, including management of chronic disease.

### 2.2 Illness prevention and health promotion

Using both individual and population level approaches, including community development, we will work with an empowered Aboriginal community to prevent ill health and promote good health.

### 2.3 Action on the causes of ill health

We will seek to address the social, cultural, economic and political determinants of health, including environmental health and housing, through the delivery of services, the development of healthy public policy, by working in partnership with other organisations, and by speaking out on the needs of the communities we serve.

## 3 Supporting remote communities

At the request of remote Aboriginal communities across Central Australia, and in consultation with them, we will deliver health services beyond the boundaries of Alice Springs. In doing so, we will ensure high standards of service quality, cultural responsiveness, and governance, paying particular attention to the resources required to deliver quality services.

### 3.1 Delivering health services to remote communities

We will deliver primary health care services to remote communities while desired by those places, taking into account wherever possible their particular needs and priorities.

### 3.2 Giving remote communities a strong local voice

We will ensure that the remote communities we serve, have a strong voice in service delivery and health advocacy, and will respect their local cultural authority.

## 4 Supporting our staff

We will recruit, retain, support and develop our staff to ensure high quality, culturally responsive services for our clients and a safe and respectful workplace. As an Aboriginal community controlled service we will pay particular attention to recruiting and supporting Aboriginal staff.

### 4.1 Aboriginal staff

We will continue our focus on employing and supporting Aboriginal people, seeking to increase the number and proportion of Aboriginal staff at all levels and in all roles.

### 4.2 A skilled, professional workforce

We will support the recruitment, retention and development of a skilled, culturally responsive and professional workforce, ensuring that they have the skills and confidence to deliver and shape effective services through the provision of orientation, induction and ongoing education and training.

### 4.3 Empowered staff in a respectful workplace

We will encourage our staff to share their skills and experience, support them with high quality human resources services, and ensure the provision of safe and respectful work environments.

## 5 Working together

Our strength is our capacity to work together for the health of our people. We will ensure that Congress continues to be well-managed with internal systems, frameworks and infrastructure that ensure the effectiveness and stability of our services. We will encourage good communication within and outside the organisation, critical reflection and responsible innovation.

### 5.1 Governance and leadership

Under the leadership of our Board, we will ensure that Congress has exemplary governance and management policies and processes within an effective organisational structure.

### 5.2 A learning organisation

Responding to the needs of the communities we serve, we will conduct and use research and evidence to inform the development of all our services, programs, health policy positions and submissions, and support a quality improvement culture for all our activities.

### 5.3 Finances

We will seek stable and diversified funding and other income to ensure our services are sustainable, and provide high levels of accountability and transparency to the community and our funders.

### 5.4 Infrastructure

We will support our clients and staff by providing safe and appropriate infrastructure and technology, with a particular focus on enabling our teams to work together.

### 5.5 Partnerships

We recognise that we cannot achieve our vision by ourselves, and commit to working with Aboriginal organisations, governments, research institutes, universities and other organisations with similar values to build healthier lives for the communities we serve.



## OUR VALUES (how we act)

- Cultural integrity
- Equity and Social Justice
- Respect and empathy
- Recognition
- Resourcefulness
- Responsibility
- Relationships



## OUR CLIENTS

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*Our clients are the most important visitors on our premises.*

*They are not dependent on us.*

*We are dependent on them.*

*They are not an interruption to our work.*

*They are the purpose of it.*

*They are not an outsider to our service.*

*They are part of it.*

*We are not doing them a favour by serving them.*

*They are doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to do it.*

ATTRIBUTED TO  
MAHATMA GHANDI



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