



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

# Board Communiqué

ISSUE 31, APRIL 2019

## BOARD MEETING WRAP

### Werte!

The following topics were discussed at the last Congress Board of Director's Meeting, held on 17 April 2019:

- Community Advisory Group
- Larapinta Clinic extension
- headspace is moving
- Central Australian Academic Health Science Network (CAAHSN) constitution and members deed
- Update to Rule Book
- Dorethea Randall named AGM Centrecorp representative
- Guiding principles for working with remote boards
- Reappointment of Independent Director–Primary Health Care
- Prison to Work pilot program proposal
- Research subcommittee update
  - » Research moratorium ended
  - » Research fees model
  - » Research applications approved
  - » Congress History Project
- Subcommittee new members announced
- CEO report to the Board
  - » Central Australian Academic Health Science Centre (CAAHSN) Meeting
  - » Senator Scullion visits
  - » AMSANT Board and General Meeting
  - » Close the Gap for Vision 20/20 National Conference
  - » Submission on the proposed amendments to the Youth Justice Act and the Care and Protection of Children Act



## Mrs Abbott Perrurle

*The Congress Board, Women's Health Subcommittee of the Congress Board, CEO and staff extend their heartfelt condolences to the Abbott, Young and extended families.*

Mrs Abbott had a long and proud history with Congress Alukura. A founding Alukura Grandmother, member of the Congress Women's Health Subcommittee and cultural law woman, Mrs Abbott embedded cultural women's law into Alukura.

With relentless cultural strength, she was a tireless advocate for culturally strong and responsive Aboriginal women's and child health.

*Congress Alukura will always be filled with Mrs Abbott's cultural law, strength and generosity of spirit.*

### Community Advisory Group

In the near future, Congress members will be invited to contribute to Congress' public policy and advocacy positions, community needs and research and service priorities as part of the Congress Advisory Group. Through this development, members will be provided with opportunities to provide input on specific and general areas pertaining to Congress, Aboriginal health and wellbeing and the social determinants of health. This group, aligned with the priorities set out by the Board in the Congress Strategic Plan 2019–2023, is an important step forward in reflecting the needs of the community and in maintaining community control which is at the core of how Congress operates.

### Larapinta Clinic extension

The Congress Board of Directors considered tenders from three contractors for the next stage of expansion of the Larapinta Clinic. This expansion will see the clinic extend into the adjoining space to accommodate clinic and SEWB rooms.

Following the tender process, the Finance Risk and Audit Subcommittee recommended that the tender be awarded to Blueprint Constructions which is an Aboriginal business.

The Board unanimously approved the award of the contract for Larapinta Stage 2 Expansions to Blueprint Constructions.



## headspace is moving

A preferred relocation site for headspace Alice Springs (operated by Congress) has been identified and is currently under negotiation. The former site of the Central Clinic in Colocag Plaza, Alice Springs was identified after the option to renew the lease was not available, due to expansion plans by the landlord of the current site.

## Central Australian Academic Health Science Network (CAAHSN) Constitution and Members Deed

The proposed Constitution and Member's Deed for the CAAHSN was presented to the Board for approval. After the CAAHSN becomes incorporated, Congress will continue as the managing partner (rather than lead agency administering the network as is currently the case). Future managing partners should be Aboriginal community controlled entities. Benefits of the network becoming incorporated include limitation of liability, protection of intellectual property rights and the ability of the new company to enter into contracts in its own right.

## Update to Rule Book

As advised in our previous Communique, the updated Rule Book was approved by ORIC and is available on our website. Along with this, guidelines were developed for amended Rule 5.2 of the Rule Book, arising from a 2018 AGM commitment to do so. Amended Rule 5.2 may be applied to find special circumstances to reduce the period that a Director nominee has not worked for Congress from two years to a period of six months or more.

## Dorethea Randall named AGM Centrecorp representative

The Board agreed to appoint Dorethea Randall to be Congress' shareholder representative and proxy for the 2019 Centrecorp Annual General Meeting.

Left to right: Utju Health Service Board Members, Daphne Puntjina and Upia Long with Kumantjai McCarthy, Congress' Governance Officer

## Guiding principles for working with remote boards

To formalise the current arrangements between Congress and Remote Community Health Aboriginal Corporations (RCHACs), guiding principles have been developed which set out the obligations of Congress and each of the RCHACs.

These principles were unanimously approved in principle by the Board, subject to acceptance by all RCHACs and representatives of the Joint Remote Boards. Since the board meeting, the principles were unanimously supported at a recent meeting of the Joint Remote Boards.

## Reappointment of Independent Director-Primary Health Care

Dr Peter O'Mara was approved by the Member Directors to continue as Independent Director-Primary Health Care for a further two years. Dr O'Mara's service was due to end 8 June 2019 but we welcome his acceptance of the reappointment until June 2021.

## Prison to Work pilot program proposal

Last year, Congress was invited to apply for a closed tender to conduct a Prison to Work pilot program. The successful application resulted in funding to employ two full time males at Ingkintja to assist Aboriginal men leaving prison to find housing, employment and also with other services including obtaining a driver's licence. The funding also includes the employment of a female on a part-time basis to meet the needs of Aboriginal women also leaving prison.

## Research subcommittee update

### Research moratorium ended

After a period of rapid expansion in research at Congress since 2016, a moratorium (the ceasing) of incoming research proposals was put in place while capacity and processes were built upon to ensure sustainability. Investment in this area, including funding and further development of research policies, procedures and templates has meant that

the moratorium is now able to cease, and Congress can again receive applications for research projects for consideration.

### Research fees model

After establishing the impact of external research requests including data linkages, it was recommended that fees be charged by Congress to external research parties. This is not an uncommon practice by research bodies, Congress will charge fees at four tiered levels. Letters will be sent to all research institutes to advise of the new Congress research fee policy.

### Research applications approved

The Board resolved to approve the following research applications:

- *Evaluation of the Central Australian Medical Retrieval and Consultation Centre.*
- *Identifying acceptable and effective primary health care strategies to maintaining or achieving a healthy weight among Aboriginal people in Central Australia.*
- *Innovations in Remote Antenatal Care.*

## Congress History Project

The Board-approved *Congress History Project* has received approval for funding through the Central Australian Academic Health Science Network. This project has two components. The first is a qualitative part that will provide an analysis of historic records of the Congress story and events at the time using interviews, archives, newspaper clips, and radio/TV interviews. The second component is an analysis of quantitative data including historic health data to consider any links between events/history story and health outcomes. Since the board meeting Congress has also been advised that funding has been approved by the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs on the recommendation of the Aboriginal Benefits Account Advisory Committee (ABAAC).

## Subcommittee new members announced

Director Dorethea Randall has been appointed a member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Subcommittee and the Women's Health Subcommittee, as Chair.

Director Joe Hayes joins the Research Subcommittee, and the Governance Subcommittee as a reserve. The Independent Director—Finance, Leanne Milligan has been appointed as a reserve member of the Research Subcommittee.

## CEO report to the Board

## Central Australian Academic Health Science Centre (CAAHSN) Meeting

The CAAHSN held a Council meeting on 11 April 2019 to assess research applications received. This assessment process has succeeded in only funding community-led initiatives. The *Congress History Project* was supported and will be funded for two years. Ngaanyatjarra Health Service were funded to complete a project looking into child health, AMSANT were funded for projects looking at developing and evaluating a workforce strategy, as well as assessing the impact of the Community Development Program (CDP) on a small remote community.

Tangentyere Council and NPY Women's Council are working on a project looking at the impact of cyber bullying on social media. This is the first time a group of community led projects such as this has ever been supported and funded in such a way which demonstrates the importance of the leading roles that AMSANT and Congress are playing in the CAAHSN.

## Senator Scullion visits

Congress was pleased to receive a visit from Senator Nigel Scullion; likely the last in his official capacity after his retirement announcement earlier in the year.

Senator Scullion shared his reflections on working with Congress, and his admiration of the organisation's capacity to be solution-focussed and to make things happen. He expressed his confidence in Congress and shared that despite occasional philosophical differences, he has greatly appreciated the practical things he has been able to achieve working with Congress. He also continues to advocate the view that Congress is one of the best health services in Australia—mainstream or community controlled. We thank Senator Scullion for the work he has done over the years to advance Aboriginal health in the Northern Territory and wish him the very best for retirement.

## AMSANT Board and General Meeting

The AMSANT board meeting was held on 11 March in Katherine. Important items for discussion included the draft strategic plan, which was approved; youth suicide prevention, one outcome of which was the decision to hold regional Aboriginal youth forums; and the AMSANT leadership program, which will be reviewed. The National Indigenous Critical Response Service and NT PHN Social and Emotional Wellbeing evaluations were both discussed. Key strategic policy matters included the NT Child and Families Tripartite Forum and Royal Commission reforms update; a presentation by Chief Executive Territory Families, Mr Ken Davies; a discussion on the Royal Commission into Aged Care and an APO NT update.





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Featured artwork: Gwen Gillen, *Land & River*,  
*My Home Place* acrylic on linen, 300 x 905 mm,  
2016 Courtesy Tangentyere Artists

The General meeting then took place over the following day and a half and was well attended by Congress and RCHAC Board Directors. This meeting discussed the above issues from the Board meeting as well as other issues including: concerns with the National Disability Insurance Agency and National Disability Insurance Scheme, data quality issues with key performance indicators, hearing health, health justice partnerships, AMSANT 25th anniversary, the Closing the Gap Refresh and a special presentation on Aboriginal Health Television. There was also a dinner session and presentation on the NACCHO constitution led by the NACCHO CEO Pat Turner.

### Close the Gap for Vision 20/20 National Conference

Jointly hosted by the University of Melbourne Eye Health Unit and AMSANT, this national eye health conference was held in Alice Springs on 15 March 2019.

CEO, Donna Ah Chee spoke on behalf of Congress, focusing on the social determinants of trachoma such as overcrowding, lack of housing maintenance and poverty; as well as the work Congress is doing in screening for trachoma and trichiasis and eye health more generally, especially diabetic eye disease. This was well received, inspiring a declaration from the delegates demanding action on overcrowding with the immediate resolution of the impasse between both levels of government to ensure that the current Aboriginal housing investment be made available to address the critical housing needs in the NT.

Congress had a wonderful display at the conference led by Eye Health Coordinator, Heather Wilson. This included a video that documented an excellent community education initiative on eye health at Amoonguna. Dr Andrew Rowan also spoke on the work he has been doing in eye health at Congress including the use of new retinal cameras.

*Right: section of Utju mural painted by  
Utju Community members in 2017*

### Submission on the proposed amendments to the Youth Justice Act and the Care and Protection of Children Act

Congress has provided brief submissions to the consultation on the new draft bills for the Youth Justice Act and the Care and Protection of Children Act. In these, we advocated for our Board-approved policy positions stated in the submission provided to the Royal Commission into the Care and Protection of Children in the NT. The key issues are to amend the age of criminal responsibility to 12 (currently 10) and to focus on therapeutic intervention to achieve rehabilitation rather than punishment. We have also advocated that no child should be able to be removed from a family without a properly constituted Family group conference occurring first.

### Proof of Aboriginality applications

**Please be reminded that requests for Proof of Aboriginality are only able to be assessed by the Congress Board of Directors at our scheduled Board meetings.**

### Update your details

It is important that we have the right details recorded in our membership register so that we can contact you the right way, and for accountability.

These are separate to your clinical records at Congress. Because your privacy is important to us, we never access your medical records for membership business.

You can help us make sure your details are up to date by emailing [membership@caac.org.au](mailto:membership@caac.org.au) or calling Congress' Membership and Client Engagement Officer on 8958 4871.

**Remind your friends and family too!**

**The next meeting of the  
Congress Board of Directors  
will be held on 27 June 2019**



A CONGRESS LINK UP  
**National Sorry Day**  
COMMUNITY EVENT

**Support our Stolen Generation  
members and families,  
reflecting on the sad and painful  
history, whilst celebrating their  
strength and resilience.**

**Sunday 26 May 2019  
11am – 2pm, at  
The Telegraph Station**

BBQ provided.  
Bring your chairs and blankets.  
For more information, call 8959 4750.

 Congress  
Link Up  
Service

Supporting our Stolen Generations through culturally sensitive  
family tracing, reunion and wellbeing services