

# Position Statement



the  
**Lowitja**  
INSTITUTE

Australia's National Institute  
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Health Research

*Incorporating the Cooperative Research Centre  
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*

23 April 2013

## **Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research: The McKeon Review**

The Lowitja Institute welcomes the release of the Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research—the McKeon Review.

The recommendations of the Review are aligned with the principles and practices the Institute has led and been building on for over 15 years.

The Institute provided a submission to the review in March 2012 and participated in consultations with the panel. Many of the key points raised have been taken on board and are reflected in the review recommendations.

We are encouraged by the McKeon Review's recommendations to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and in particular, the Lowitja Institute supports the call for:

- a nationally agreed mechanism for determining research priorities rather than the currently dominant investigator-driven approach
- strong consumer and community input into performing Indigenous health research
- an approach that takes a holistic view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs
- building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers
- a virtual Integrated Health Research Centre.

As proposed in our submission to the review, the Institute is also encouraged by the recommendation for the establishment of an institute with a specific focus on Indigenous health, such as the Canadian Institutes for Health Research's Aboriginal Peoples' Health Institute. Were such a model to be adopted, it would allow the direction of funds towards strategic priorities, development of a body of Indigenous researchers, strengthen translation of research knowledge into practice and assist mainstream organisations to engage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

We look forward to the Australian Government embracing the findings of the report and participating in new era in health and medical research for Australia's First Peoples.

The Lowitja Institute, incorporating the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, is Australia's only national health research organisation with a sole focus on the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples. Funding for the CRC will cease in June 2014, however we have made representations to Government for continued funding and are hopeful of an announcement in the near future.