

## **Cultural approaches and best evidence can optimise drug and alcohol treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

1 February 2023

A new review of [Alcohol and drug treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#) shows that care can be optimised by combining cultural approaches with best evidence western medicine. Such an approach is likely to improve treatment accessibility and outcomes.

This review highlights the importance of culturally secure treatment, and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and staffing. Treatment can include cultural approaches, mainstream approaches and adaptations that include the best of both. The value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in culturally secure and accessible health care has been widely recognised. Evidence also points to the value of cultural awareness training and cultural audits for non-Indigenous staff and mainstream services.

Marguerite Tracy, Bradley Freeburn, Kylie Lee, Julie Woods and Kate Conigrave were the authors of the review. Bradley Freeburn is Bundjalung man from North Eastern NSW and Julie Woods is a Menang woman from South Western WA.

Author Bradley Freeburn said “Collaboration and two-way learning between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled and mainstream services can offer gains in service access on one side and cultural appropriateness on the other to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Quality treatment needs to be supported by broader alcohol and other drug policy and secure funding”.

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet Director, Neil Drew says “this important review from leading experts in this area makes a valuable contribution to the evidence base and puts forward suggestions from the available literature to inform treatment service delivery, policy and research. In addition to the review there is a plain language [summary version](#), a short [video](#) and a [factsheet](#).”

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More information: The Knowledge Centre provides online access to a comprehensive collection of relevant, evidence-based, current and culturally appropriate alcohol and other drug knowledge-support and decision-support materials and information that can be used in the prevention, identification and management of alcohol and other drug use in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. A worker's portal and community portal are other key resources. The work of the Knowledge Centre is supported by a collaborative partnership with the three national alcohol and other drug research centres (the National Drug Research Institute, the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre).  
[www.aodknowledgecentre.net.au](http://www.aodknowledgecentre.net.au)