Under the Stronger Rural Health Strategy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional organisations (ATSIHPOs) will be provided with continued and additional funding. These organisations play a key role in increasing the number of people in the Indigenous health workforce and supporting them in their careers. This means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access culturally appropriate care, no matter where in the system they access health services. This leads to increased access to health care and optimal health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Investment**

Over four years, from 1 July 2018, $33.4 million will be provided to continue the important role of four ATSIHPOs to support and develop an appropriately trained health workforce and improve service provision to Indigenous Australians.

Increased investment and funding certainty will ensure the ATSIHPOs can respond proactively to the steady increase in the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people studying and working in health across all disciplines.

**Priority areas**

Priority areas for investment through this initiative include:

- improving cultural safety
- professional development and mentoring
- developing leadership
- student engagement and support.

**Organisations**

The funding will expand the functions of these ATSIHPOs:

- Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association.

These four ATSIHPOs develop and implement strategies that improve recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals in clinical and non-clinical roles across all health disciplines. They also improve skills and the capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and promote culturally safe and responsive environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and health professionals.
ATSIHPOs assist with increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying to attain qualifications in health. The organisations improve completion/graduation and employment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health students, and contribute to building an evidence base to improve the quality of health workforce planning and future policy platforms.

**Further information**

Updates on progress of the reform and further information: