

Policy Concordance: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health, Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



The Centre of Best Practice in
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Suicide Prevention



Policy Concordance: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health, Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention, government policies are critically important because they influence what services are available and how they are delivered – with enormous consequences for people’s lives.

This Concordance is a collection of guides to policy and decision-making at national and State/Territory levels. It includes:

- profiles of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government departments and agencies and other organisations with an important role in policy processes
- formal policies that describe governments’ commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how they intend to deliver on them
- other essential documents – for example community submissions to policy processes and the most influential research reports.

The Concordance is for anyone seeking information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention policy in any part of Australia, including government and ministerial policy staff, researchers, service providers and community organisations. The focus is on current

policy documents. However some older publications are included where they have been particularly influential, and policies and strategies are included after their intended finish date if they have not yet been replaced and are still guiding practice.

Social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention are complex and multi-faceted and do not fall neatly into a single policy domain. This Concordance focuses on the organisations, processes and policies most directly related to these issues, acknowledging that important policy work also takes place in other domains – including education, justice and family services. The Concordance is a living resource and the CBPATSISP welcomes suggestions for additional inclusions.

This section of the Concordance focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention policy in the Australian Capital Territory. Chapters on the other States and Territories, and national policy, can be found at cbpatsisp.org.au.

Key organisations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Organisation	Purpose
Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (WNAHCS)	Winnunga is an Aboriginal community controlled primary health care service operated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the ACT. It is the ACT's affiliate in NACCHO.
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB)	<p>The Elected Body represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Canberra, focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding and representing community needs and priorities• supporting the development of local government policy and services that meet community needs• advocating for accountability, transparency and effectiveness in achieving social and economic outcomes for our community.• The Elected Body is the only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice to government in Australia. It is the ACT's member of the Coalition of Peaks.

Government

Organisation	Purpose
ACT Health: mental health	This online listing provides details of all ACT Health mental health services, including hospital and community services.
The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing	<p>The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing within ACT Health was established to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focus on coordinating services along the entire continuum of mental health and will work to ensure that people experiencing poor mental health can access the most appropriate services and supports at the right place and at the right time;• provide strategic oversight of the delivery of mental health services across the ACT, including how they intersect with other government directorates; and• improve access to mental health services by managing the coordination, integration and targeting of services and facilities through a mental health and wellbeing framework.
Capital Health Network	Capital Health Network plans and commissions primary health services across the ACT, including mental health, suicide prevention and social and emotional wellbeing services.

Policy documents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Date	Title	Organisation	About
2019-2028	ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019 – 2028	ACT Government	<p>The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019 – 2028 represents the commitment of the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to deliver real outcomes that improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Canberra.</p> <p>The Agreement outlines how the ACT Government, non-government organisations and the Elected Body will work together to meet the social, cultural and economic needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Self-determination is the founding principle of the Agreement. The focus areas of the Agreement were chosen by Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, facilitated by the Elected Body. The focus areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people • Cultural integrity • Inclusive community • Community leadership • Connecting the community • Life long learning • Economic participation • Health and wellbeing • Housing • Justice <p>One of four Action Plans under the Agreement, Focus Area Action Plan: Health and Wellbeing. July 2022 to December 2024. includes actions to improve the cultural responsiveness and safety of the health system and mental health related targets including eliminating waits of more than 24 hours for Indigenous people needing in-patient admission, and increasing the number of people who report positive connections to culture, Country and community as these are protective factors for wellbeing.</p>

Whole of community

Date	Title	Organisation	About
2020	ACT Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan	Capital Health Network	<p>The ACT Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (ACT Plan) was created to address the mental health needs of the community in the ACT in alignment with the 5th National Mental Health Plan. It was developed in collaboration with the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Mental Health Carers Voice, Mental Health Community Coalition, The Canberra Health Services, Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing and The Mental Health Policy Unit of ACT Health.</p> <p>The Plan offers an overarching framework for mental health services in the ACT. It is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, which are embedded throughout the Plan (there is no separate section for Indigenous issues).</p>
2023-2024	Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing Work Plan 2023–2024	Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing	<p>The Plan outlines a range of commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in suicide prevention.</p>
2022-2026	Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	ACT Government, Commonwealth Government	<p>The Bilateral Schedule is the ACT agreement under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, which sets out the shared intention of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to work in partnership to improve the mental health of all Australians, reduce the rate of suicide toward zero, and ensure the sustainability and enhance the services of the Australian mental health and suicide prevention system.</p> <p>The Bilateral Schedule include ACT-specific commitments including funding allocations and sites for service expansion.</p>