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NAIDOC Week 2026: Investing in First Nations Nurses and Midwives is Investing in Australia's Health

As Australia celebrates NAIDOC Week 2026, the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia and New Zealand) "CDNM" acknowledges the enduring contributions of First Nations nurses and midwives and their vital role in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities across Australia.

First Nations nurses and midwives deliver culturally safe care, strengthen trust in the health system and provide important leadership in advancing health equity and closing gaps in health outcomes. Their knowledge, clinical expertise and commitment to community are essential to supporting healthier futures for all Australians.

While there has been encouraging progress in growing the First Nations nursing and midwifery workforce, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be underrepresented in the professions.

To build a strong and sustainable workforce, support is needed across the education and health sectors to create pathways into nursing and midwifery and support ongoing career development.

Professor Ann Bonner, CDNM's Deputy Chair, said postgraduate education is becoming increasingly important as nurses and midwives take on advanced and expanded roles across the health system.

"We are pleased to see that Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) for First Nations students are outside of Australia's new managed growth constraints in higher education. However, postgraduate CSPs for First Nations students are likely to fall within this framework," Professor Bonner said.

"The need for nurses and midwives to have postgraduate qualifications is growing. These qualifications support professionals to work in advanced and expanded roles, such as nurse practitioners and midwives supporting birthing-on-country, and align with the Government's ambition to make full use of this workforce."

To support this aim, CDNM calls for postgraduate CSPs for First Nations students studying in nursing and midwifery to be exempt from managed growth limits.

Culturally safe education and healthcare, together with a stronger First Nations nursing and midwifery workforce, benefit individuals, families, communities and the Australian health system as a whole.

CDNM is committed to progressing these goals, including through its partnership with the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) and its newly formed Indigenous Advisory Committee, to support growth, success and leadership of First Nations and Indigenous nurses and midwives across Australia and New Zealand.

About CDNM

The Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) "CDNM" is the peak organisation representing universities and other higher education institutions that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs in nursing and midwifery throughout Australia and New Zealand.

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