

2019 CONFERENCE STATEMENT



THE LOWITJA INSTITUTE
INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS
HEALTH AND WELLBEING
CONFERENCE 2019

18–20 JUNE, DARWIN, AUSTRALIA

THINKING
SPEAKING
BEING

FIRST NATIONS SOLUTIONS
FOR GLOBAL CHANGE

CONFERENCE STATEMENT 2019

The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019 met in Darwin, Australia, from 18 to 20 June 2019.

Based on deliberations under the theme Thinking. Speaking. Being: First Nations Solutions for Global Change, 760 national and international conference delegates make the following statement:

THINKING

1. Nation state governments must reform the way health resources are shared. Community health initiatives and programs that are built on place-based knowledge must be supported and recognised for the leadership and expertise they contain.
2. Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are norms and should not be marginalised. They are not alternatives; they are not perspectives: they are our lived truth.
3. Our health is connected to our land and our seas. As Indigenous peoples of the world we are the protectors of these sacred lands and waters. It is our responsibility to connect our knowledges for positive change.
4. We have the right to our own institutions where we mentor our emerging thinkers, where we speak our truths, where we celebrate our ways of being.

SPEAKING

5. Colonialism and racism are determinants of ill health. We call for comprehensive truth telling processes, and the acceptance of these truths, to dismantle colonial narratives and systemic racism in health research, policy and service delivery.
6. First Nations knowledges and languages are our assets. We must protect, repatriate and rejuvenate cultural practices relating to health and wellbeing — including medicinal; therapeutic; and nutritional and healing-related knowledges and practices.

7. Data is part of our narrative. First Nations must be empowered with the knowledge and infrastructure to collect, monitor and interpret our own health and wellbeing data.
8. First Nations people living with a disability want their voices heard, and require a space to sit, hear, share, and reflect on issues that affect our wellbeing. We require resources and goodwill to develop structures and networks that will connect the First Nations living with disability community with researchers, services and policy-makers within values and cultures that promote their inclusion.
9. First Nations and dominant languages and literacy are fundamental rights and a foundation of empowerment. Lifting levels of literacy in our first and dominant languages is key to our self-determination and the development of our children.

BEING

10. Our future generations are central to our being. The mass removal of our children through incarceration and institutionalisation is a source of ongoing trauma and must stop.
11. Our collective rights, as described in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, provide a framework for our health and wellbeing. These include the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to good health, and the right to self-determination.
12. First Nations health research funding should go to First Nations organisations and researchers.

20 June 2019