



MJA COMMITS TO STRONGER VISIBILITY FOR FIRST NATIONS HEALTH VOICES

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01am Monday 4 July 2022

THE *Medical Journal of Australia* will strive to “[increase] the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” in its pages, progressing its commitment to inclusivity and health equity.

In an editorial published today, *MJA* Editor-in-Chief Laureate Professor Nick Talley AC and colleagues wrote that they were prepared to “critically reflect on and change our editorial policies and practices so we can help shift the deficit narrative, often prominent in health research focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to a strengths-based narrative”.

“Creating better and meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to be heard in the Journal is one critical component.

“Truth telling demands the Journal recognises we too have failed to sufficiently address the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, and good intentions are not enough,” wrote Talley and colleagues.

“Today we announce that the *MJA* will work with Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander peoples to appoint a First Nations Editorial Advisory Subgroup of the Expert Advisory Group.

“This subgroup will work with the editorial team to identify actions to improve editorial policies and practices in order to advance inclusiveness and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research in the Journal and promote health equity.

“Such actions might involve updating our instructions to authors, rethinking our approaches to evaluating research and analysis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, training of staff to build knowledge and skills for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, forming partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies in health and medicine, commissioning of content, and campaigning for change among our readership and in wider society, among others.

“Collaboration and relationship building are fundamental elements to this process, and we anticipate that the action plan produced through working with the subgroup will challenge our established publishing models, but we believe in a journal that recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in a profoundly meaningful manner,” they wrote.

“It is incumbent on us to demonstrate reflexivity and introspection about the ways our positions as editors and the *MJA* governance systems, power structures, policies and processes might be contributing to the very inequities we seek to redress.



MJA

The Medical Journal of Australia

Media Release

“We must be accountable for creating meaningful change and we commit to reporting on progress towards our goals regularly to our readers.

“For without a strong voice, how will it possible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to finally achieve health equity and justice? We look forward to feedback from readers, reviewers and authors throughout this journey.”

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