

INDIGENOUS HEALTH

health and community driven solutions.

This would also require the pooling of Commonwealth and State/Territory funds for more efficiently directed health monies and benefit the general populations of regional and remote Australia.

Educational initiatives

The Democrats acknowledge the work of the many educational institutions that are facilitating more Indigenous people into the health professions through culturally appropriate courses, mentoring and studies assistance and this work must continue well into the future.

Indigenous health must be included as an essential part of the mainstream tertiary health curricula

We support long term health workforce planning that is properly funded, including HECS relief, recruitment and training of doctors and Indigenous health workers in rural areas.

Mental health

There is an urgent need for long term, culturally appropriate programs-especially family violence and substance abuse programs-to deal with the intergenerational trauma, stress and grief of many Indigenous people and communities. These programs must be developed with indigenous theoretical and philosophical worldviews, led by indigenous workers and community members and with the support of policy and legislative apparatus.

Sexual health

The rates of HIV-AIDS infection among Indigenous people is relatively low and similar to the non-Indigenous population. However, the median age of diagnosis is younger and the proportion of women with the virus is much higher than in the non-Indigenous population, as is the rate of heterosexual transmission. The Democrats call for the continued funding of culturally appropriate and gender specific programs to educate about sexually transmitted infections and HIV-AIDS. The AIDS crisis in PNG make the Torres Strait Islands and Northern Cape York communities especially vulnerable in this area.

Women's Health

Indigenous women fulfil a complexity of caring roles, have children at an earlier age and Indigenous families tend to be larger than Australian families overall. Specific neo-natal programs to ensure the stronger health of both mothers and children must be supported.

The Democrats call for the funding of culturally appropriate sexual assault services and refuges, controlled by Indigenous women. We support the long overdue funding for family violence prevention and legal assistance.

Indigenous women represent half of all women in custody and this has detrimental effects on individual women's mental and physical health and on families and children. The Democrats call for national leadership on health services for Indigenous female prisoners, in line with Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations.

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