



# Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health: 2016 Priorities in Health Care Reform for 2016**

The Australian Health Care Reform Alliance's (AHCRA) Health Reform Summit is being held in Canberra on 9 February 2016. In this election year, it will focus on two high need but complex areas of the Australian health system - mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

“These are both areas where improvement in health status will require systematic change, not simply more programs,” said Tony McBride, Chair of AHCRA. “Whilst recent government announcements are welcomed, a whole of government and cross-government response will be required in the long-term to address the fragmented nature of the mental health system, or the multiple causes of poor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. We are hoping this Summit and our six keynote speakers will point the way towards the next feasible steps in this process”.

Carmen Parter, the Public Health Association of Australia's Vice President, will give an overview of current Indigenous health issues and the most valuable pathways forward. She will be joined by Adele Cox, a Member of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health, who will focus on young Indigenous people and how their mental health can be improved.

The session on mental health will include presentations from Ian Hickie, National Mental Health Commissioner, on what the current Commonwealth mental health reforms will mean for service providers, health professionals, consumers, carers and the community.

Julie Porritt, from Capital Health, will discuss the critical role of Primary Health Networks in leading and delivering on better regional mental health care and effective integration with primary health care. Stephanie Ewart, Consumer Researcher with SYNERGY, will provide a consumer perspective about the challenges of finding care that manages both mind and body.

The last session of the day will involve delegates in sharing their priorities for change and help influence AHCRA's policy and advocacy focus in 2016.

AHCRA Chair, Tony McBride, encourages organisations with an ongoing interest in health reform to attend.

Online registration is available at [www.healthreform.org.au/summit](http://www.healthreform.org.au/summit)

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