



NATSIHWA
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Worker Association



MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 26 July 2020

NATSIHWA urges caution in regards to planned Black Lives Matter Protest

This morning the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled health organisation have advised that 37 members of our community, living in that State, have tested positive to COVID-19.

For an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation committed to the health and wellbeing of our peoples, this is a concerning development and we urge you all to stay vigilant. With the situation in Victoria and chains of transmission emerging in several locations across NSW we are entering a different and dangerous phase of the pandemic.

COVID-19 is highly infectious and the consequences of COVID-19 spreading further across our communities cannot be under estimated. Our elders and people with chronic health conditions are most at risk. Please do what you can to minimise the risks to yourself and those around you.

We understand that racism and discrimination continues to impact adversely on the health and wellbeing of our people and urge you to think carefully about participating in the Black Lives Matter protests organised for this weekend. While we welcome these issues being brought to the fore and walk with you on this journey, restrictions on mass gatherings and health advice should be respected. The immediate risks posed to our Elders and Communities are cause for high concern.

Please be assured that at the National level Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and leaders are echoing your voices and working together to address racism and discrimination and to promote individual, institutional and systemic change across the justice and health systems.

While we agree with the Indigenous Doctors Association that a postponement of the protests should be considered. If you choose to attend please do so responsibly - wear a mask, practice social distancing, use hand sanitiser regularly, and if you haven't already done so download the COVIDsafe App from the Apple App Store or Google Play or, keep a record of all close interactions to help health experts track and trace your contacts if required.

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