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Priority Recommendations – March 2008

- 1 Progress the NATSINSAP, in line with current government policy (and ‘Close the Gap’) led by the federal government, in partnership with State governments and Community Controlled Organisations, recognising needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander urban, rural and remote communities.**

Establish a national nutrition function with responsibility for the evaluation and revision of NATSINSAP, development of new goals and targets, securing funding for the next phase and leading implementation with accountability to the relevant government departments and AHMAC.

- 2 Pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, babies and children have access to enough available and affordable nutritious food.**
 - Implement the provision of nutritious food to supplement at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, babies and children according to local need through existing programs (e.g. Maternal and Child Health and new nurse led home visiting programs)
 - National breakfast/lunch initiatives are funded based on local need and community involvement and participation. e.g. women’s centres, childcare, preschools, schools.
 - Creation and ongoing support of dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions prioritising early life, linked with pre-existing and new programs such as nurse home-visiting programs.
- 3 Strengthen the nutrition workforce working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.**
 - Increased funding for dedicated permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition positions across the workforce spectrum (Health workers specialising in nutrition, Community Nutritionists, Public Health Nutritionists and Clinical Dietitians) to achieve a **target: 100 nutrition positions per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population by 10 years in urban, rural and remote settings.**

- Establish career pathways, and increase retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the nutrition workforce; providing support through ‘two way’ mentoring programs and formal accredited training. Advocate for implementation of the cultural respect framework to ensure Indigenous health workers are valued for local nutrition knowledge around cultural processes and valuing traditional knowledge.
- Increased and sustained financial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women to undertake undergraduate and tertiary nutrition training through access to current funding schemes, advocacy for new schemes (VET sector and secondary school based training) and provision of work place-based nutrition-specific government cadetship programs. Also, offer nutrition-specific tertiary level scholarships through new initiatives and existing scholarship schemes, e.g. NHMRC Postgraduate scholarships.
- Nutrition units be included as core units in the community care stream of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker training package

4 Address the underlying food security issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban, rural and remote Australia.

- Research, including an economic analysis is conducted to identify effective strategies of applying subsidies to achieve equity in the costs and availability of basic foods including fresh fruit and vegetables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Subsidies for infrastructure and transport (particularly for communities with small populations) and food household infrastructure (including appropriate food storage, preparation and cooking facilities)
- Food security issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban, rural and remote locations are researched, reported and food security indicators developed for routine monitoring and reporting nationally
- Recognise and promote the value of traditional food systems and the role they play in food security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Ensure that Nutrition and health expertise and community consultation is sought in key aspects of store licensing for remote communities.

5 National monitoring and surveillance for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander health, ensuring that all information is fed back to the community.

- Establish sustainable coordinated ongoing national monitoring and surveillance indicators, systems and targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, including healthy birth weight, healthy child growth, breastfeeding initiation and

duration, nutritional status and oral health indicators linked to existing national targets and state KPI's

- Urban, rural and remote areas are included in a national food pricing enquiry with a plan for ongoing food price monitoring e.g. National market basket surveys

6 Communicating and disseminating good nutrition practice

- Funding to ensure that programs at all levels (local, statewide, national) are well evaluated, findings communicated and shared, and ongoing funding is secured for such programs
- Collaboration across all sectors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and child development to address holistic approaches that recognise good nutrition as a necessary component of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health improvement
- Secure funding for the communication and dissemination of good nutrition practice through current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communication systems as well as other networking systems – i.e. journals, newsletters, indigenous HealthInfonet etc.
- Explore and secure funding options to ensure continuation of a biennial National Nutrition Networks Conference that enables networking and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others working in food and nutrition programs and related areas, and to ensure the conference is accessible to all.