Impact Report: October 2023

More than one-third of the 48 articles we published during October were about the significance of the referendum for health. According to a list compiled by Croakey Health Media, and available from our special portal on the Voice, at least 229 health and medical organisations publicly expressed support for a constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament. This was especially noteworthy, given the intense politicisation and toxic public debate surrounding the referendum.

It spoke to the significance of the referendum for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and Country, and for policy and service delivery, as well as for the nation as a whole. Sadly, it also spoke to the significance of what was lost with the resounding No vote.

We thank everyone who contributed to our coverage of the Voice, including the National Health Leadership Forum for related sponsored content articles. We also acknowledge everyone who contributed to the #CroakeyLIVE webinars on the Voice.

How would the Voice make a difference for health? Let us count the ways...

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Editor: Melissa Sweet  Author: Marie McInerney

During October, we also heard from global health leaders urging ceasefire in Gaza and return of the Israeli hostages. We investigated health issues at stake in the Aotearoa/New Zealand election, and put a strong focus on the commercial determinants of health, including the importance of effective regulation of artificial intelligence. Croakey Health Media director Adjunct Professor Alison Verhoeven paid tribute to a “humble reformer” – Labor luminary Bill Hayden, whose death at age 90 put the history of Medicare into the headlines.

Croakey Conference News Service covered the Health Promotion Symposium 2023, and also live-tweeted the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists annual scientific meeting, at #RANZCOG2023.
This article, published by the Public Interest Journalism Initiative, marked Croakey Health Media’s recent fifth birthday as a NFP public interest journalism organisation. It included a birthday wish-list that is about much more than just our sustainability – it is about ensuring a diverse, sustainable public interest journalism sector that is better equipped to meet communities’ needs in the challenging decades that lie ahead.

We invite our readers to join with us in advocating for:

1. Pathways for not for profit journalism
2. Philanthropic support for not for profit journalism
3. Support innovation driven by and with communities
4. Whole-of-government responses
5. The right to a safe, reliable and relevant news and information environment.


Social Media Impressions

We record our social media analytics using Buffer. The figures below are for total impressions across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. See our latest readership figures here.

This month: 519,891 impressions   |   This year: 5,268,273 impressions
The Voice for Health

**Week ending 5 October:** As the Voice referendum approaches, organisations and workplaces are urged to be mindful and ensure care and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and friends.

This week’s bulletin has a strong focus on the Voice, as individuals and organisations right across the health sector share their reasons for supporting the proposal to constitutionally enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

Please join us for the second #CroakeyLIVE webinar on the #VoiceForHealth on Monday 9 October. You can register [here](https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/).

And warm thanks to the National Health Leadership Forum for sponsoring this article, [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders highlight many benefits from a Voice to Parliament](https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/).

Francis Nona shares a poetic call to support self-determination and sovereignty in all health and climate work – it is a must-read.

Many of our stories sound the alarm about the rise of the far right. Liberal MP Julian Leeser warns that the referendum campaigning “feels like the first ripples of an American style of politics imported to our country”.

“Why does that matter? Because that political culture – across the left and the right – has turned the great bastion of freedom and liberty in the history of the world, the United States, into a nation engaging in a cold civil war, splitting communities and even families.”

Alison Barrett reports on a landmark conference on indoor air quality, and also examines the Disability Royal Commission’s final report, which urges all Australian governments to recognise and protect the rights of people with disability.

Mental health advocate and researcher Max Loomes wants social justice placed front and centre in mental health therapy, while Federal Minister Dr Andrew Leigh outlines plans for the new Australian Centre for Evaluation.

The ICYMI column reports on how the climate crisis is affecting health and healthcare around the world, looking to lessons for Australian responses.

And don’t miss the good news stories in our bulletin this week about medical research, from vaccines to global health.
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We published the latest in a series of sponsored content from the National Health Leadership Forum.

“Tell us how powerful it is going to be in terms of healing”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders highlight many benefits from a Voice to Parliament

Sponsored content

croakey.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders highlight many benefits from a Voice to Parliament

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders highlight many benefits from a Voice to Parliament
"The work that we all do – especially in health, in large majority – is for our next generation. We have this opportunity, let's not let it pass us by."

Karl Briscoe, on the Voice referendum
Historic moment

Week ending 12 October: At least 218 health and medical organisations have publicly expressed their support for a Yes vote at this week’s referendum, according to a list compiled by Croakey.

For a sector that is so often in furious disagreement, this is quite something, especially given the intense politicisation and toxic public debate surrounding the referendum.

It speaks to the significance of the outcome for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and Country, and for policy and service delivery, as well as for the nation as a whole.

Since February this year, Croakey has published 73 articles on the Voice and health, and collated a stack of reading and resources at our Voice portal.

We’ve hosted two #CroakeyLIVE webinars and a #VoiceForHealth X/Twitter festival. We thank everyone who has contributed, acknowledging the immense load carried by First Nations people and organisations during this period and also in the times ahead.

We also thank the National Health Leadership Forum for this final article in a series of sponsored content, The Voice, an opportunity to transform colonial narratives and support cultural determinants of health.

This week we mark World Mental Health Day by examining the intersections between climate, human rights and health in all policies. Contributors also call for policymakers to improve policies and services to support people with long COVID.

Amid “clear evidence” that war crimes may have been committed in the latest explosion of violence in Israel and Gaza, the World Health Organization (WHO) is calling for an end to the hostilities that are causing “untold suffering”.

And Alison Barrett reports on the health issues at stake in the Aotearoa/New Zealand election, which is also taking place on 14 October.
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Croakey's portal on the Voice curated articles, resources and news

The referendum to constitutionally enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament is critically important for health and wellbeing.

This page compiles links to articles and resources that we hope will be useful for readers.

Support services

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Resources
Support resources compiled by Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association

The Department of Health and Aged Care has provided a suite of mental health and wellbeing services and supports for First Nations people.

Six ways to look after yourself and others in times of overwhelming pressure.

Resources

The Uluru Statement
The Uluru Dialogue

Help support non-profit public interest journalism

Public interest journalism is an important determinant of health, due to its roles in accountability and holding power to account, empowering communities, and contributing to health literacy. A strong public interest journalism sector contributes to population health and health equity, as well as healthier people, communities, societies, and systems of governance.

Join one of our annual Funding Consortia

Croakey Health Media Funding Consortium

Croakey has a trusted revenue stream that includes support from members of our funding consortium. These are four tiers of funding consortia:
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Croakey’s rotated X/Twitter account, @WePublicHealth also covered the Voice and health matters, with a week-long Twitter festival.

Pat Dudgeon • 1st
Research Fellow, Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, School of Indige...
20th - Edited -

Thanks Melissa Sweet 😍 Pleaseed we were a part of this 😍

Melissa Sweet (She/Her) - You
Public health journalist, Editor in Chief, Croakey Health Media

The importance of self-determination for the health, wellbeing and future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was highlighted recently during a week-long X/Twitter festival, with the theme #VoiceForHealth.

A series of guest tweeters for Croakey’s rotated X/Twitter account @WePublicHealth also highlighted the importance of social and emotional wellbeing, respectful dialogue, and the need to challenge misinformation. See a selection of their tweets below, and warm thanks to all who contributed.

At this historic moment, a collective focus on the importance of self-determination and hope for the future

https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/
Voice advocacy

Croakey Health Media Co-Chair Professor Bronwyn Fredericks campaigned tirelessly for a Yes vote at the referendum.

Journalism matters

Croakey has contributed significantly to public health discussions, nationally and globally, about the importance of the news and information ecosystem for health. Below is an extract from an X/Twitter discussion with the World Health Organization’s director of communications, Gabby Stern.

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Global health journalist Meera Senthilingam, a member of Croakey Health Media, has been recognised for her investigation into the skin whitening industry for CNN.
Traumatic times

Week ending 19 October: Writing to you last week, we suggested that the 14 October referendum was an “historic moment” for the “health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and Country, and for policy and service delivery, as well as for the nation as a whole”.

History was made, but for all the wrong reasons.

Amid grief, disappointment, hurt and anger, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations are observing a week of silence in the wake of the devastating referendum result.

Others are speaking out to urge ongoing momentum for justice for First Nations peoples’ rights, and to call for action against racism, misinformation and disinformation, and to safeguard wellbeing, in particular of children and young people.

This week is not business as usual for Croakey. Acknowledging the result, we have limited our publishing to articles on the referendum, the crisis in Gaza, and our usual ICYMI column.

Our bulletin shares responses to the referendum from the health sector, including a powerful statement from the Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University.

“We will not compromise our efforts towards Indigenous resurgence and our commitment to self-determining futures. We will always uphold our right to live in a world where we are thriving,” the Department of Indigenous Studies said.

As global agencies warn of an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and call for an immediate ceasefire and an end to attacks on civilians and health facilities, we report that all leaders have been urged to speak out against hate speech.

The role of traditional and social media in amplifying misinformation and disinformation throughout the referendum campaign and the Gaza-Israel conflict highlights the importance of effective policy responses to our toxic news and communications environment.

The ICYMI column reports that some critical gaps in climate health policy in Australia are identified in new publications. It also brings news on gaps in COVID communications research, as well as recommendations for tackling weight stigma and new publications on advancing accessible kidney transplantation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
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Under siege

Week ending 26 October: “Life on planet Earth is under siege. We are now in an uncharted territory.” These are the opening words to a must-read new publication on the climate crisis featured in this week’s ICYMI column. The authors call for transformation of the global economy to prioritise human wellbeing and to provide for a more equitable distribution of resources.

Meanwhile, health leaders have been urged to speak out and push for a ceasefire and an end to the siege of Gaza, as latest reports indicate at least 2,360 children have been killed there since 7 October as a result of Israeli bombing that has also devastated health and support services.

In the wake of the traumatic referendum result, this week we publish a range of insightful reflections from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Nicole Hewlett, a proud Palawa woman and public health researcher, says the referendum has birthed a powerful movement for collective action for justice, truth-telling and healing. “We were 3.8 percent of the population and now we are 39.5 percent. We are 39.5 percent who are grounded in solidarity and filled with the ancestral fire to address injustice and reimagine an Australia that we can all be proud of,” she writes.

Speaking at the NACCHO Members’ Conference, Health Minister Mark Butler signalled his commitment to supporting and growing the role of the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector. (For those in need of some light relief, don’t miss the karaoke clip of the Minister’s Elvis impersonation).

The Health Wrap delves into why malaria is making the news, sounds a caution about new, heavily promoted weight loss drugs, and investigates declining public trust in science in America.

Mental health reform, oral health, breastfeeding, artificial intelligence and the digital determinants of health are also in focus this week, while Alison Verhoeven shares a personal tribute to Bill Hayden, “a giant of health policy reform”. Make sure to follow #hpsymposium2023 for news from the Health Promotion Symposium 2023, and stay tuned for more coverage from Marie McInerney for the Croakey Conference News Service.
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https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/
Croakey Conference News Service

This week, we kicked off our coverage of the Health Promotion Symposium 2023 with a preview article.
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War and Peace

Week ending 2 November: After his first visit to the Gaza Strip since the war began almost four weeks ago, Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN’s agency for Palestinian refugees, described his meeting with people sheltering in horrific conditions.

“Everyone was just asking for water and food. Instead of being at school, learning, children were asking for a sip of water and a piece of bread. It was heart wrenching. Above all, people were asking for a ceasefire. They want this tragedy to end. It was one of the saddest days in my humanitarian work.”

As our bulletin this week examines the global crisis in Gaza and Israel, we also bring a powerful example of peace-making.

A remarkable story of a decades-long collaboration working for peace and reconciliation in the wake of a 1927 massacre on the Solomon Islands was shared at the recent Health Promotion Symposium 2023, where presenters also explored wide-ranging political, social, cultural, ecological and commercial determinants of health.

Many of our stories this week also examine the role of digital platforms in fanning hate online, contributing to violence and human rights abuses, as well as other public health concerns.

The importance of tackling the commercial determinants of health – most especially the fossil fuels industry – is underscored across the bulletin, including through more effective, transparent regulation of lobbying and lobbyists.

Meanwhile, efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of medicines, and to tackle waste, overdiagnosis, overtreatment and low value care will be discussed at the upcoming National Medicines Symposium, reports Alison Barrett in a preview for the Croakey Conference News Service.

For more news, make sure to follow this X/Twitter list and #NMS23.
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This week, we reported on the National Medicines Symposium, and the Health Promotion Symposium 2023. Alison Barrett also live-tweeted from #RANZCOG23 in Perth.