CROAKEY HEALTH MEDIA

Informed, engaged communities for health

September 2023

Informed, engaged communities for health
Impact Report: September 2023

During September, we continued to put a strong focus on the importance for health of a constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Voice to Parliament. Roughly one-quarter of the 45 stories that we published during the month were about the Voice. Our special portal on the Voice, compiling articles, resources and recommended reading, was regularly updated.

We also convened the first of two webinars discussing related health issues. Moderated by Jade Bradford, a proud descendent of the Ballardong Noongar people, journalist and a Croakey contributor based in Western Australia, the panel included:

- Kerry O’Brien, journalist and author
- Fiona Cornforth, Head of National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing Research, ANU
- Scott Willis, National President, Australian Physiotherapy Association
- Scott Wilson, Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (South Australia)
- Annie Butler, Federal Secretary, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.

The Croakey Conference News Service was busy, covering the Greening the Healthcare Sector Forum, and the Planetary Health Equity Hothouse inaugural annual policy symposium ‘Extinction thwarted? The nexus between climate change, social equity and health’. Meanwhile, Dr Alana Gall, a Pakana woman who was recently elected Vice-President, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, of the Public Health Association of Australia, reported on the first World Health Organization Traditional Medicine Global Summit held in India.
September brought a focus on MyMedicare, COVID’s toll on children and young people, and the escalating climate crisis – don’t miss Francis Nona’s poetic call to support sovereignty in all climate health work. We also paid tribute to consumer health leader Kate Moore.

During September our articles and resources were shared by the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre, the Australian Healthcare & Hospitals Association and many other organisations and publications.

Croakey Health Media also made a submission to a Senate committee inquiry into the Murdoch Media Inquiry Bill 2023 – summarised here.

We were pleased to see that more than 200 MPs (or their staffers) from federal, state and territory parliaments opened the Croakey News bulletin during September – including a number of health ministers.


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: 596,063 impressions  |  This year: 4,748,382 impressions
Respect matters

**Week ending 7 September:** The health sector’s strong support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament stands in contrast to much of the negativity of mainstream media coverage.

Perhaps ABC TV’s Q&A program could convene a panel of First Nations health experts for an informed discussion?

As we report this week, advocates for the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are urging politicians to be more respectful and less divisive during the referendum debate, warning of the harms being caused.

The spread of misinformation and disinformation is undermining community cohesion, governance, public policy and civic life in wide-ranging ways. Indeed, concerns are already being raised about the impact of disinformation on local government elections next year in Victoria and New South Wales.

Don’t miss Jennifer Doggett’s deep dive into varying perspectives on MyMedicare, a voluntary patient enrolment scheme for general practices that is due to launch very soon.

Maternity services reform, long COVID and the health impacts of oil and gas developments are also covered this week.

Dr Alana Gall reports on the first World Health Organization Traditional Medicine Global Summit held recently in India, and urges stronger protections for Indigenous Knowledges in Australia.

The ICYMI column covers a call for Australia’s lung cancer screening program to be co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, organisations and people with lived experience of lung cancer.

The Croakey Conference News Service will be in full swing next week; make sure to follow the news from #GreenHealthForum23, and #HotHouseSymposium.
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.
Action makes hope

**Week ending 14 September:** The scale of the flooding devastation in Libya is beyond imagination. From around the world, the grim climate news is unrelenting, and it will only get worse.

It can help to remember that many are working extremely hard for change, at local, national and global levels. This weekend, millions of people are expected to take to the streets in many countries to push for an end to fossil fuels.

Over the next few days, follow the news from the #GreenHealthForum23 to hear from people and organisations who are striving for more sustainable and climate resilient healthcare.

Also check the big-picture discussions that took place this week at #HothouseSymposium, a landmark policy symposium with a focus on planetary health equity.

This week Jennifer Doggett investigates COVID concerns in children and schools, asking why more isn’t being done to minimise risks. As many Australians feel the effects of smoke from hazard reduction and bushfires, we also examine the toll caused by air pollution.

Don’t miss The Health Wrap, which brings a detailed COVID update, as well as a deep dive into health workforce matters, while Jason Staines reports on plans for primary health research.

The ICYMI column links to new research findings on the global toll of lead exposure, as well as yet more concerns about the impact of Big Tech on public health.

From Western Australia, public health advocates report on a webinar discussing the implications of the Voice for the health and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Meanwhile, Marie McInerney’s interview with Pat Farmer, and his call for former Liberal colleagues to end the “wedge politics”, has clocked more than 91,000 views in five days – something of a record for us.

As Michael Long’s walk concludes in Canberra this morning, many thousands of Australians are expected to join walks around the country this weekend in support of the Voice.
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.

Thank you @JenniferDoggett @CroakeyNews for this excellent piece on COVID’s toll on children. Here’s what I had to say in the piece. Link here: croakey.org/covid-19s-toll...

Summary of the acute & chronic effects of COVID in kids. I think the messages in this excellent piece, most especially the scale of the problem, will be a surprise to many. Please read.

Important article by @JenniferDoggett @CroakeyNews about the harm that’s being done to kids by allowing them to be infected with covid at school.

Schools need to take covid seriously. Parents should advocate for clean air to minimise risk of infection.

We’re well into the afternoon of the inaugural #HothouseSymposium. If you haven’t tuned in so far, you can catch up by following the tweets from @CroakeyNews. Many thanks to the live tweets from @AlisonSBarr, who is capturing the day for us.

The #HothouseSymposium has begun with a Welcome to Country by Paul Girrawah House, a senior Ngambri-Ngunnawal custodian of the Canberra region with Wiradjuri, Walgalu and Ngunnawal ancestry.

Working a landmark policy symposium, with a collective focus on plan... Introduction by Croakey: More than 600 people are registered to attend the Planetary Health Equity Hothouse inaugural annual policy...

Amazing service. Thank you!
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.

https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/
Learn from the past, for a better future

**Week ending 21 September:** Today, we expect to learn the terms of reference for a long-awaited inquiry into Australia’s COVID response.

Many Croakey readers will watch closely to see who is charged with running this important process, what types of expertise are valued, and whether health equity considerations will be central. The inquiry is too important to be left to medical or even public health experts; careful efforts must be made to engage with communities and wider sectors.

The inquiry should also have its focus firmly on informing current and future efforts. As Professor Don Nutbeam reminds us, “the virus is still with us and continues to mutate”, and perceptions of the pandemic ending are premature.

“The long-term impacts are still being observed, and the challenge remains to protect the most vulnerable in our society,” he says.

The same might be said as we prepare for what is shaping up as a grim summer; Alison Barrett reports on the critical need for stronger climate action. Meanwhile, submissions to a Senate inquiry highlight the importance of media reform for climate action.

This week, high level meetings at the United Nations are addressing urgent converging crises from ongoing climate emergencies to tuberculosis and pandemic preparedness. The latest edition of The Health Wrap is a must-read, with a focus on tuberculosis, mental health reform and tobacco control.

TheICYMI column reports on some fascinating research into the links between Big Tobacco and Big Food, as well as a landmark new report on hypertension.

We bring several reports on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament. Don’t miss the vibrant compilation of photos from walks and rallies around Australia attended by many tens of thousands of people last weekend.

Please join us for two #CroakeyLIVE webinars providing a platform for respectful discussions about the health implications of a Voice to Parliament. More details about the excellent line-up are here.

The first webinar is on Monday from 5-6pm AEST, so register soon.

And follow @WePublicHealth this week for a Twitter festival on the #VoiceForHealth.
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.

Hopeful all this spirit can deliver #VoteYes

croakey.org

"Choose hope, not fear"—tens of thousands walk in support for the Voice. An invitation by Croakey: Doctors for the Environment Australia urges its members, other health professionals and supporters to vote yes in Monday 25 September 5–6pm AEST

croakeyLIVE

#VoiceForHealth

croakey.org

On the Voice, an invitation to Croakey events, plus the latest health news via @CroakeyNews

@NACCHOAustralia @yes23au

THW is out early:
- TB, forgotten scourge, in remote WA & SA Indigenous communities
- Promised MH reforms re Better Access slow coming
- Albanian Govt moves to strengthen tobacco control, address vaping
- Australia not immune to threat from fentanyl

croakey.org

The Health Wrap: mental health reform, spotlight on TB, latest on tob...

The global tuberculosis epidemic will be the focus of high level discussions at the United Nations on Friday, and come

Jennifer Doggett @JenniferDoggett - Sep 17

A personal and thoughtful piece from an ex-teacher who is concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on an already stressed and fragile school system.

croakey.org

An ex-teacher and disability advocate reflects on the failings of our C...
A Tweetbinder analysis of our X/Twitter coverage of the #GreenHealthForum23 estimated the 818 tweets created an economic value of almost $30,000.

Croakey Chair Professor Megan Williams, together with Managing Editor Alison Barrett and Editor-in-Chief Dr Melissa Sweet, contributed a workshop to the forum on decolonising climate and health communications.

"Through the NSW Government’s Connecting with Country Framework, our new hospital will be developed with a Country-centred approach guided by local Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country, Country will care for us."

Albury Wodonga Health

Source
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.
Other activities

Croakey contributing editor Dr Summer May Finlay was interviewed by the Illawarra Mercury about the implications of the Voice for health – and also guest tweeted for @WePublicHealth during a week about #VoiceForHealth.

Croakey contributing editor Dr Tim Senior has been awarded a Churchill Fellowship.
Acting politically

Week ending 28 September: This week, we saw the health sector rally to support a Voice to Parliament, and were reminded about the importance of getting involved and political.

Marie McInerney reports from the first #CroakeyLIVE webinar on the health implications of a constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, as well as an event where 53 Victorian health organisations endorsed support for a Voice.

Please join us for the second webinar on Monday 9 October. You can register here.

Reflecting on a long career in health policy, Professor Kent Buse urges health policy wonks to go beyond ‘thinking politically’ to ‘acting politically’.

Political solutions are also needed to tackle the growing tide of anti-science aggression, according to Professor Peter Hotez, author of The Deadly Rise of Anti-science.

He is not a fan of the term ‘misinformation’, which “makes it sound like it’s random junk that appears out of nowhere on the Internet”, rather than an organised, well-financed, politically motivated campaign against science.

These are also important issues for our national COVID inquiry, which Alison Barrett previews in a recommended #LongRead.

Ahead of the imminent release of the Disability Royal Commission’s final report, we examine governments’ responsibility to protect the human rights of people with disability.

Our contributors also report on successful efforts to raise awareness about the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, while the ICYMI column links to new publications to help protect children from the harms of vaping, and spotlights broken climate policies.

Don’t miss the local, national and global news from #GreenHealthForum23, highlighting the importance of climate governance for health organisations, the cultural determinants of health, and Indigenous knowledges.

"Too many well-intentioned people working to improve health seem reluctant to challenge the status quo, too much research remains apolitical and too little action is undertaken with wider coalitions for social justice."

Professor Kent Buse

Source
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.

Australia's #COVID Inquiry should consider a "coordinated global approach, grounded in political leadership and commitment, where Australia could also put its efforts," Burnet Chief Health Officer @majumdar_suman tells @AlisonSBarrett @CroakeyNews.

croakey.org
The COVID inquiry – overdue, important, critiqued and facing a big task ahead
Introduction by Croakey: The importance of the national COVID-19 Inquiry announced last week has been underscored by Australian Bureau of

Stephen Duckett
@stephenjduckett

The COVID inquiry – overdue, important, critiqued and facing a big task ahead via @CroakeyNews

croakey.org
The COVID inquiry – overdue, important, critiqued and facing a big task ahead
Introduction by Croakey: The importance of the national COVID-19 Inquiry announced last week has been underscored by Australian Bureau of

Rebecca Zosel
@rzosel

Don't waste a day or a conversation in the lead-up to the 14 October referendum, and don't underestimate what you can do personally or within your organisation #yes23

Croakey News @CroakeyNews - Sep 28
Unleash the power of the health workforce in advocating for the Voice — "every conversation matters" croakey.org/unleash-the-power... #publichealth

Trish Schlotfeldt @TrishSchlotfel2 - Sep 27
Why voting Yes to the Voice matters

croakey.org
After more than 30 years in clinical practice, this health leader shares ... Introduction by Croakey: Scott Willis is a proud Palawa man from Burnie, who has lived and worked in northern lutruwita/Tasmania

APA President @president_apa - Sep 25
Great to be on a panel of great visionaries on how the #Voice will be positive for health outcomes. #VoiceForHealth @apaphysio

Croakey News @CroakeyNews - Sep 25
Replying to @CroakeyNews @Fl_cornforth and 5 others
Now asking #VoiceforHealth panelists about the work they are undertaking in support of #Voice

Indiana Alliance @Inalliance_pse - 9h
If you've seen a sea of red shoes 🍒 on social media over the month of September – you've seen Red Shoes Rock – a global movement that raises FASD awareness.
Article: 18trr/3pdC

Get involved with Indiana Alliance and help us raise awareness: 18trr/HH4dF

https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.

The article above was also included in the Life in Mind eNews for September.