



Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Recommendation

268. Aboriginal priorities for health research

That the National Health and Medical Research Council actively stimulate research into health concerns identified as priorities by appropriate Aboriginal health advisory bodies (such as the proposed Council of Aboriginal Health), particularly research that involves Aboriginal people at both the development and implementation stages.¹

Background²	The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody identified a lack of resourcing for Aboriginal health research. The Commission highlighted that research should reflect the priorities of Aboriginal communities and involve Aboriginal people in its development and implementation. This aligned with recommendations from the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party, which called for research to be problem-oriented and driven by the needs of Aboriginal communities rather than the interests of individual researchers.
Intent	Stimulate research into priority Aboriginal health issues and include Aboriginal people in its development and implementation.
Responsibility	The Commonwealth Government.
Key contacts	Department of Health; Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.
Key action taken	
2005 Review³	The Department of Human Services advised that Recommendation 268 was not relevant to Victoria as the National Health and Medical Research Council was funded by the Commonwealth Government Review Team Given the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal people in Victoria and other Victorians the Review Team found it 'totally inconceivable that the Department would consider Aboriginal health research specific to Victoria as not relevant'.
2018 Review⁴	Deloitte concluded that Recommendation 268 was solely the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government who had fully implemented it through funding Aboriginal health research and other relevant initiatives implemented by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

¹ Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Final Report, 1991) vol 4, 263 ('RCIADIC').

² Ibid vol 4, 240-263 [31.3.49].

³ Aboriginal Justice Forum (Vic), Department of Justice (Vic), *Victorian Implementation Review of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (Review Report, October 2005) vol 1, 234, 243 ('2005 Review').

⁴ Deloitte Access Economics, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review of the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (Report, August 2018) 550-551 ('2018 Review').

268. Aboriginal priorities for health research

Since then	Department of Health⁵ In their 2025 response to this recommendation, the Victorian Department of Health deemed it not relevant to Victoria.
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Evidence of impact

Authorising documents	None identified.
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Outputs	None identified.
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Outcomes	None identified.
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Community views	None identified.
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Related recommendations

2005 Review⁶	Recommendation 20 That the Department of Human Services, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation accept the need for specific research into the health needs of Aboriginal people in Victoria.
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Assessment summary⁷

Recommendation 268 was the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

Bibliography

Meeting with Aboriginal Justice Caucus (Project Team, In Person, 17 May 2023)

Meeting with Aboriginal Justice Caucus Working Group (Project Team, Online, 22 August 2025)

Aboriginal Justice Forum (Vic), Department of Justice (Vic), *Victorian Implementation Review of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (Review Report, October 2005)

Deloitte Access Economics, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Review of the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (Report, August 2018)

Department of Health (Vic), 'Review of Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) ' (Response to AJC Request, July 2025)

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Final Report, 1991)

⁵ Department of Health (Vic), 'Review of Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) ' (Response to AJC Request).

⁶ 2005 Review, 243.

⁷ Meeting with Aboriginal Justice Caucus Working Group (Project Team, Online, 22 August 2025) ('Working Group Meeting (22 August 2025)'); Meeting with Aboriginal Justice Caucus (Project Team, In Person, 17 May 2023) ('AJC Meeting (17 May 2023)').