

INDIGENOUS LAW BULLETIN

30 September 2013

Media Release

Implementing the UNDRIP: Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Lead the Way

Expert member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Professor Megan Davis has praised the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation ('NACCHO') and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services ('ACCHS') for leading the way in translating what the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ('UNDRIP') means in practice through community control in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin* ('ILB').

In her article 'Community Control and the Work of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation: Putting Meat on the Bones of the UNDRIP', Davis tackles the issues surrounding the implementation of the overarching principle of the UNDRIP—self-determination—in Australia. Davis states "it is necessary in conversations about the UNDRIP to turn our minds to what we can do, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to implement the UNDRIP; then work in partnership with the state (the state as a 'junior partner') to meet those aspirations."

"It is important that we take the lead—not the state—in putting the meat on the bones of the UNDRIP in a way that gives texture and nuance and meaning to the rights contained therein. As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we cannot remain passive in the role of rights beneficiaries and maintain an unproductive and historically adversarial relationship with the state" says Davis.

Davis calls attention to the importance of local communities and community control in implementing self-determination. "In Australia, where Aboriginal groups are highly localised in terms of geography and culture, self-determination can only be elucidated in a context-specific way." Davis further adds "Self-determination must become more specific and personalised in order to be capable of reflecting what self-determination means for Aboriginal people in their daily lives."

Noting "[t]here is much work to be done in realising the UNDRIP", Davis argues out of all the sectors, it is the health sector that comes closest to giving substance to self-determination in Australia. Reflecting on the next phase of self-determination implementation, Davis concludes "The Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are well placed to lead the way."

Professor Megan Davis is an expert member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.

To access a copy of Megan Davis' article click [here](#).

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