Rural conference community in Darwin recognises National Reconciliation Week

Delegates at the 13th National Rural Health Conference in the Darwin Convention Centre paused this morning to recognise the importance of National Reconciliation Week.

Over 1000 people from all over Australia are meeting this week to discuss improvements in health and wellbeing for people living in remote and rural towns, cities and smaller communities.

Reconciliation involves building positive, respectful relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - for the benefit of our national wellbeing.

The conference in Darwin has provided opportunities for people to learn about the shared histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The National Rural Health Conference is fostering a shared understanding and appreciation of the importance of improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing in remote and rural Australia.

Every year National Reconciliation Week is held between two significant milestones in Australia’s history, May 27 and June 3. The anniversary of the 1967 referendum on 27 May marks when Australians voted to remove clauses in our Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

June 3 marks the historic 1992 Mabo decision in which the High Court of Australia recognised native title – the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ rights over their lands did survive British colonisation.

The National Rural Health Alliance also recognised the significance of National Sorry Day on May 26, first held in Sydney in 1998 to commemorate nationally to remember and honour the Stolen Generations.

Reconciliation Week’s theme this year is: It’s time to change it up!

Reconciliation Australia reports that the Australian economy would be $24 billion better off in 2031 if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experienced the same health, education and employment outcomes as other Australians.

Delegates at the National Rural Health Conference in Darwin support Reconciliation week and commit themselves to Change it Up, now and into the future, thereby contributing to improving health outcomes.

Further information may be obtained from the Conference MC, Charlie King, who can be contacted through nrha@ruralhealth.org.au