

**Speech by Deputy Chief of Air Force
Air Vice-Marshal Gavin ‘Leo’ Davies, AO, CSC**

**Announcement of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled
Health Organisation (NACCHO) – Royal Australian Air Force
‘Kummundoo’ Memorandum of Understanding Signing
at Close the Gap Day Breakfast
17 March 2015**

Ladies and gentlemen firstly, on behalf of the Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Geoff Brown, I'd like to thank Aunty Matilda House for her welcome this morning and happy birthday. And I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this part of our wonderful nation. And I pay my respects to all elders—both past and present.

As part of our NAIDOC Week celebrations last year, the Chief launched an Air Force Indigenous Handbook. The idea was to provide basic information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our about Air Force Indigenous programs. It was in that handbook that we first announced Kummundoo as part of our vision for the Air Force Indigenous Strategy: *Our Place – Our Skies*.

To my mind, Kummundoo is a perfect choice of name for at least a couple of reasons.

- First, to choose an Aboriginal word honours an ancient language (in this case the language of the Queensland Kalkadoon people).
- Second, the word Kummundoo translates as “eagle” – and as I'm sure most of you are aware, the eagle is a very important part of our Air Force heritage.

We, in Air Force, have greatly admired the work done by the ADF over recent years, particularly the Army's Aboriginal Community Assistance Program. I am pleased that through the Kummundoo initiative, we too will have the opportunity to partner with communities across Australia.

In essence, we will create a program for small teams of Air Force people to be deployed to assist communities on agreed local issues. And the scope is very broad. That's because we have such a wide cross section of workforce skills in Air Force – in particular our trades and professions.

While we certainly hope that our Kummundoo initiatives will be beneficial to our Indigenous Australians, there are some very real benefits to Air Force as well. Through Kummundoo, we will gain the following.

- We will have a growing number of in-Service, culturally aware people who have participated in the program. And that awareness makes us stronger.
- We will provide a powerful opportunity to showcase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander role models.
- We will promote a greater awareness about our Air Force Indigenous Youth programs, our career options, and the ADF specialised pathways to employment options.
- Kummundoo will contribute to our workforce retention strategies.

- Finally, Kummundoo will provide a forum for Air Force people to exercise their skills and showcase their professionalism in quite unique environments.

In essence, Kummundoo is very much a win-win proposition.

The Chief has asked me to pass on his appreciation for the way in which the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation has embraced this program and worked so positively with Air Force to create this Memorandum of Understanding signed by him on Friday last.

To you, Chief Executive Officer Lisa Briggs, and to you, Board Chairperson Matthew Cooke, I congratulate you and your team. Your sense of what is possible, and your willingness to make this idea a reality, is commendable.

The Chief and I look forward to hearing positive things about Kummundoo in the very near future. We are very pleased to be part of the efforts to close the gap.

Thank you all and well done.