



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Media Release

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Federal Government losing the way on Closing the Gap

The Federal Government is losing the way on closing the gap on Aboriginal disadvantage says Dr Mick Adams, chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), the peak body for Aboriginal medical services.

“After almost two years in office, the government is still only applying bandaid remedies and not genuinely engaging Aboriginal peoples in developing long term solutions to close the gap” Dr Adams said.

“Just this week we have again seen highlighted two examples of the appalling conditions affecting Aboriginal Peoples.

“SBS TV’s Insight program on the continuing housing crisis in Alice Springs and surrounding communities revealed Minister Macklin’s limited vision and little ability to comprehend what Aboriginal people want.

“A hearing assessment team from Flinders University reported that in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of northern South Australia more than 70% of school-age children failed a hearing screening test and more than 30% have eardrum perforations.

“These examples reflect common deep seated problems across the country and across a range of health, housing, environmental and social issues holding Aboriginal Peoples back from reaching our full potential.

“This is symptomatic of a lack of power in our communities and a lack of engagement with us by governments.

“Despite the Federal Government’s commitment to community engagement in the Close the Gap Statement of Intent the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition signed, and enquiries such as the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission, little seems to have changed.

“Even the significant injection of funds into Aboriginal health from the \$1.6 billion COAG package seems to be being sidetracked into mainstream GP services at the expense of Aboriginal community controlled health services.

“It is beyond the blame game, Aboriginal people are not getting the commitment to what has been promised. It is time to stop the red tape bullshit and start to work with Aboriginal people to address their needs.” Dr Adams said.

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