



# NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

## Media Release

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### **New Directions needed to Close the Gap**

The Prime Minister's Aboriginal health announcement of \$9.1m over three years for new mothers and babies programs based at 10 health services across Australia is a further step forward in closing the life expectancy gap says Mr Justin Mohamed, Chair of NACCHO.

"This is welcome recognition by the Rudd government of the further valuable work Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services can do when better resourced to meet the level of need in our communities.

"Support for births and care for new mothers and babies has always been a high priority for all of our 150 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services nationwide. This new funding can build on what is already being done.

"We look forward to the day when governments at all levels recognise meaningful engagement and equal partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector and at the national level through a partnership between NACCHO and the Federal Government and its agencies.

"Compared to nations like the USA, Canada and New Zealand, Australia falls behind in closing the life expectancy gap largely because Aboriginal peoples here have less control of the design and delivery of their health services.

"Mr Rudd in his Ministerial Statement on the Closing the Gap yesterday recognised not enough had been done in the past to bridge Aboriginal disadvantage and that while his government was trying to address it, much more was required.

"While we welcome the rollout of programs such as New Directions to assist our services to care for mothers and babies what we need ultimately is to be involved at the table when setting priorities, and developing solutions, in equal partnership with governments, if we are to Close the Gap", Mr Mohamed said.

\*National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

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