



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY
CONTROLLED HEALTH ORGANISATION

NACCHO Media Release

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Closing the Aboriginal health gap

NACCHO welcomes the statement of intent (attached) signed today by the Prime Minister and the 'Close the Gap' coalition committing to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy for Aboriginal peoples by 2030.

Dr Mick Adams, chair of National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) the peak body for Aboriginal Medical Services says his members are proud to be part of the 'Close the Gap' coalition.

The coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream health bodies, and non-government organisations have come together over the last two years to fight for equality in health for Aboriginal people including closing the 17-year life expectancy gap.

Coalition members met in Canberra over the previous two days in the first ever Indigenous Health Equality Summit. The statement of intent signed today with the Prime Minister is one outcome of those discussions.

The Summit also agreed on the commitments needed to fulfil the targets of the declaration.

"I am especially pleased on behalf of the Aboriginal community controlled health services by the statement in the declaration that, 'Crucial to ensuring equal access to health services is ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are actively involved in the design, delivery and control of these (health) services'" Dr Adams said.

"We welcome the commitment to ensuring that by 2018 there are 'primary health care services and health infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples which are capable of bridging the gap in health standards'.

There is also a significant commitment 'To supporting and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services in urban, rural and remote areas in order to achieve lasting improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing'.

"Today is a major step forward for the Aboriginal community and Australia in general" Dr Adams said. I also welcome the announcements by the Prime Minister of:

- a program to tackle Indigenous smoking rates - \$14.5m over four years
- \$19m over three years for indigenous workforce initiatives including facilitating more Aboriginal Health Workers to work in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations as well as assisting the training and mentoring of more Indigenous doctors and nurses
- and the creation from June of a new Indigenous Health Equity Council to set goals to close the gap.

"We look forward to working with government and other stakeholders to achieving the 2018 and 2030 targets" Dr Adams said.

NACCHO Media Contacts:

Chairperson, Dr Mick Adams 04 0964 6952
CEO Dea Thiele 04 1704 6692
Media, Chris Hallett 04 0770 4788