



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Media Release

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Peak Aboriginal health body demands action on Closing the Gap

The annual general meeting in Broome this week of the national peak body for Aboriginal health, NACCHO, including representatives of over 140 Aboriginal Health Services from across Australia has demanded the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd honour the Close the Gap Statement of Intent* he signed in March committing his government to ensure our people have adequate and appropriate health services by 2018.

Dr Mick Adams, chair of NACCHO an instigator of the Close the Gap campaign said, "The Prime Minister has made the historic apology to the stolen generations and significantly, signed the Statement of Intent*".

"After 30 plus years experience running community controlled health services we are still struggling with limited resources to address a burden of disease in our community that is three times higher than in the general community" Dr Adams said.

"Aboriginal health inequality can be addressed but we need to engage in consultations with the government right now. Our health services need immediate and sustainable resources to address these inequalities.

"The AMA has highlighted the massive shortfall of almost \$500m a year in funding for Aboriginal health which the Close the Gap campaign coalition, including NACCHO, HREOC, Oxfam and ANTaR, has followed up with detailed goals and targets to upgrade health services to an appropriate level.

"After almost a year in office; we are yet to see practical measures from this government to help our services meet the level of need we already have in our community.

"The burden of reporting to bureaucrats for the inadequate services we have just keeps growing and we can not wait any longer.

"Just one example of the crisis is the rapidly growing salary gap between our doctors and those in the government and private sectors which is leaving our services 400 doctors short. We can't compete on salaries while the government isn't responding to our concerns.

"New primary health care programs for Aboriginal people are being outsourced, ignoring the government's public commitment in the statement of intent to the community controlled health services that Aboriginal people have established in their communities.

"The government has recognised the success of our model of primary health care in communities by saying the superclinics are modelled on our health services, but we could do so much more to raise the health of our people with a level of resources to match the level of need.

"We have the expertise; we have demonstrated that the Aboriginal community controlled model is successful. It is time the Prime Minister acted on his rhetoric and properly engage the Aboriginal community controlled health sector now" Dr Adams said.

*http://www.naccho.org.au/Files/Documents/statement_intent%20signed%20copy%2020-3-8.pdf

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