



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH LEADERS CALL FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE HEALTH OF AUSTRALIA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS**

Late yesterday at the close of the 4 day international conference of the International Network of Indigenous Health Knowledge Development (INHKD) in Rotorua the Network issued the **Aotearoa Declaration**.

Ms Delaney Thiele, Chief Executive Officer of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), welcomed the declaration saying she hopes that both parties will react positively to its call for change.

Specifically, the Indigenous Health Leaders call on all Australian political parties to:

- Close the 17 yr life expectancy gap by half within 10 years, and completely within 25 years;
- Make constitutional change the highest priority. Any amendment to the Constitutional preamble must be accompanied by the substantive recognition of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders rights in the operative text;
- Demand that the incoming Australian Prime Minister deliver a formal apology;
- Establish dedicated Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders seats in both houses of the Australian Federal Parliament;
- Establish a legislated and democratically elected national Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders peak body. This body would negotiate with government to right the wrongs of the past; monitor the implementation of policies and reviews (past and present) and create strong future pathways;
- Respect Aboriginal and Islander knowledge and support Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders solutions;
- Make decisions based on the best evidence instead of the politically expedient;
- Appropriately and accurately count Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in all administrative data collections, ensuring that these collections are governed by Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;
- Provide resources that match true need. Financing for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders health must mirror the actual state of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders health – three times the level of non Indigenous Peoples per capita for a disease burden at least three times greater;
- Repeal all discriminatory aspects of the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation.

Ms Thiele calls on all sides of politics, in the run up to the Federal Election, to clarify for the Australian public exactly what they plan to do for the First Australians should they win the election.

A full copy of the declaration is available from NACCHO or can be found on our website.

### **For more information:**

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