



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Media Release

14 May 2008

Ongoing Effort Needed to Close Aboriginal Health Gap

Dr Mick Adams, chair of NACCHO*, the peak body for Aboriginal medical services says “The Aboriginal health measures in the federal budget are welcomed but they will need to be ramped up dramatically to achieve the Prime Minister’s promise to get Aboriginal medical services up to scratch by 2018”.

The Prime Minister Kevin Rudd committed to “ensuring primary health care services and health infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which are capable of bridging the gap in health standards by 2018” when he signed the Indigenous Health Equality Summit Statement of Intent** in the Great Hall on 20 March along with the ‘Close the Gap’ coalition.

Dr Adams said, “NACCHO has welcomed the government’s ongoing commitment to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services but a major injection of funds is needed to bring the sector to a level that would, for the first time, match the level of need in the Aboriginal community”

“NACCHO’s hope is that a significant part of the \$10 billion Health and Hospitals Fund for strategic investments will be allocated to a desperately needed upgrade of Aboriginal Medical Services to a 21st century standard of facilities and resources by 2018.

“The honouring of the Government’s election commitment of \$101.5m to maternal and child health, including \$11.2m for rheumatic fever and heart disease is appreciated.

“As well as the \$49.3m expansion of alcohol and drug services, the \$14.5m tobacco control initiatives, the \$19m Indigenous health workforce training plan and the ongoing commitment to health services in the Northern Territory worth \$196m over three years are all important contributions to closing the life expectancy gap” Dr Adams said.

“As well as better infrastructure our sector urgently needs improved funding to pay competitive salaries to our doctors, nurses, Aboriginal Health Workers, allied health, dental and support staff to operate effectively.

“The Close the Gap Coalition has set goals and targets that include appropriate additional funding for Aboriginal primary health care services increasing over five years from \$150m the first year to \$250m, \$350m, \$400m and \$500m the fifth year with funding maintained at that level in real terms until the Aboriginal health gap closes.

“I look forward to working closely with the government on its health reform agenda to ensure that in future budgets we get the needed funding and initiatives to make progress on delivering effective primary health services for Aboriginal peoples” Dr Adams said.

* National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

** Indigenous Health Equality Summit Statement of Intent

http://www.naccho.org.au/Files/Documents/statement_intent_20_3_8.pdf

NACCHO Media Contacts:

Chairperson Dr Mick Adams 04 0964 6952

CEO Dea Thiele 04 1704 6692

Media Chris Hallett 04 0770 4788