



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Media Release

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COAG: A significant step towards Closing the Gap

Dr Mick Adams, Chair of NACCHO*, the peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) says the COAG package for Aboriginal health is unprecedented, is a huge step forward to closing the life expectancy gap, and is one that NACCHO welcomes with much excitement and anticipation to work collaboratively with Governments to implement this awesome package over the next four years.

"An additional \$806 million from the Federal Government for Indigenous health over four years and \$772 million from the states is a major funding boost that I look forward to seeing deployed in our primary health care services on the frontline of closing the gap" Dr Adams said.

"The emphasis on chronic disease, strengthening primary health care services, training, access to specialists, access to medicines and prevention programmes are all welcome.

"I look forward to a meaningful partnership between, the over 140 ACCHSs represented by NACCHO and the federal, state and territory governments to ensure Aboriginal Peoples are involved in the development, delivery and implementation of this new package" Dr Adams said.

A recommendation endorsed by delegates from ACCHSs across the country at our Annual General Meeting two weeks ago was:

NACCHO members believe that Aboriginal People's full participation in the health service design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation is integral to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples. Therefore in order to Close the Gap of life expectancy within a generation NACCHO Members call on the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments to ensure that as much of the funding as possible for Aboriginal primary health care is provided through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, where it to have the greatest effect in terms of access to services and comprehensive models of care.

"The philosophy of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services expressed in the resolution was endorsed in March by the Prime Minister and Minister Roxon as part of the Close the Gap Statement of Intent** they signed" Dr Adams said.

The government has committed to a national partnership with us through the Statement of Intent and we would like to see that put in action, particularly the commitment to "Ensuring the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative bodies in all aspects of addressing their health needs".

"Accordingly, we would now like to sit down with government and work out how to get the best value from the funds committed so far, and to develop a long term comprehensive strategic plan that covers all areas of closing the gap.

"I also welcome the ongoing support from the AMA for our Community Controlled Services that was expressed again in the last week by Dr Capolingua in the AMAs Indigenous Health Report Card.

"I believe this package announced at COAG is an important start to also fulfilling the commitment in the Close the Gap Statement of Intent to ensure our people have access to adequate and culturally appropriate health services in order for us to play our important part in Closing the Gap in life expectancy for our people by 2018" Dr Adams said.

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

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