



National Aboriginal Community  
Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Yet another report confirms current health approaches are failing Indigenous people**

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) says the latest report confirming the poor health status of Indigenous Australians presents a strong case, for a change in approach to Indigenous health.

NACCHO Chairperson, Mr Henry Councillor says lack of progress in improving health outcomes requires greater support for primary health care and Aboriginal community controlled health service delivery.

“Prevention through culturally appropriate services is a better strategy,” Mr Councillor said.

“More doctor places will not necessary improve Indigenous health –but greater support for Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal specific health programs will, without question, directly influence Indigenous health outcomes,” he said.

Mr Councillor was commenting on the latest National Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004-2005 that found chronic disease was a significant factor to the ill-health of Indigenous people, of all ages.

“It is incomprehensible for most non-Indigenous Australians to suffer chronic disease and many forms of chronic disease, from infancy through to old age, but that is the experience of Aboriginal Australians,” he said.

“We would like governments to work in partnership with NACCHO and recognise that our services complement, not compete with, mainstream services and are a vital part of the Australian Health System”.

The ABS report, which is largest ever national health survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people found:

- Eye/sight problems were the most commonly reported conditions among Indigenous people (30%), followed by asthma (15%), various back problems (13%), heart and circulatory diseases (12%) and ear/hearing problems (12%).
- High blood pressure was reported by one in five (22%) of those aged 35 years and over.

- Indigenous Australians were more than three times as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to report having diabetes (including high sugar levels). Indigenous people in remote areas were almost twice (9%) as likely to have diabetes than those in non-remote (5%) areas. Nearly one-third (32%) of those 55 years and over had diabetes (including high sugar levels).
- One in ten Indigenous children under 15 years old reported having ear/hearing problems, about three times the rate of non-Indigenous children.

**For interview or further comment please contact:**

Executive Officer, Ms Dea Delaney-Thiele (m) 0417 046692)

Media Liaison, Ms Kerrynne Liddle (m) 041 981 8406

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