



## **NACCHO WELCOMES THE 2018 AMA REPORT CARD ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: REBUILDING THE CLOSING THE GAP HEALTH STRATEGY**

The peak body for Aboriginal controlled health services today welcomed the release of the AMA's 2018 Report Card on Indigenous Health and joined its call for rebuilding the Closing the Gap from the ground up.

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Chairperson, Ms Donnella Mills said, "We congratulate the AMA on their work to support closing the gap and endorse the recommendations in the report."

The report highlights research which indicates the mortality gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians are widening, not narrowing.

"Urgent and systematic action is needed to reverse these failures and to have any prospect of meeting the Council of Australian Governments' goal to Close the Gap in life expectancy by 2031" Ms Mills said. "NACCHO calls for the immediate adoption of the Report Card's recommendations."

The AMA estimate that the Commonwealth government spend on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is only 53% of needs-based requirements. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have at least twice the per capita need of the rest of the population because of much higher levels of illness and burden of disease.

"This underspend represents a significant failure" Ms Mills said. "Genuine commitment by Australian governments to Closing the Gap requires equitable funding."

The funding shortfall is particularly important for primary health care services where big gains could be made in improving health, keeping people out of hospital and preventing premature deaths. Funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, which deliver accessible, culturally safe, comprehensive primary health care across Australia, is not keeping up with need.

Alongside the increased funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service there is an urgent need for government to address the environmental health, housing and other social determinants of health inequality.

"We are seeking a formal partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments to be included in the Closing the Gap Refresh policy" Ms Mills said. "Aboriginal people need to be at the centre of Closing the Gap strategies; the gap won't close without our full engagement and involvement."

NACCHO, its Affiliates and members will continue to work with the AMA to urge the adoption of the Report Card's recommendations by Australian governments.

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