



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**10 May 2023**

**This Budget shows that the new Government is listening to Aboriginal people.**

Last night's Commonwealth Budget contains welcome measures to help close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

In Cairns this morning, Donnella Mills, the Chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) said, 'This Budget shows that the Government is listening. It is full of important health measures that will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country'.

'You would have to say that the Government has been bold. Be it in the improvements to Medicare, the cheaper access to pharmaceuticals, the courageous plan to stamp out vaping, or the mental health funding for the referendum on the Voice. All these measures will help. But I am particularly pleased to see the \$238m announced to help close the cancer gap. Cancer is the number one killer of our people'.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 1.4 times more likely to die from cancer than other Australians. Cancer outcomes, while improving for other Australians, have been worsening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The acting CEO of NACCHO, Dr Dawn Casey, said 'When we told the Government that the cancer gap was widening and that we needed a national strategy to address this, they listened and supported our proposal. More importantly, they worked with us to co-design a plan'.

In 2019, the potentially avoidable mortality rate from cancer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was over three times the rate for other Australians: 323 and 98 per 100,000 respectively. While mortality rates have been declining for other Australians for at least two decades, there has been an uptrend in cancer mortality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The situation is far worse in regional, remote and very remote areas.

Donnella Mills said, 'In a year in which we are moving towards a referendum on a Voice, this Budget measure shows what happens when you listen to Aboriginal people and how genuine partnerships can be formed with governments in which we co-design solutions. Nobody knows better than local people what local solutions should be. And it is great to see a government that is prepared to listen'.

'Of course, there are areas we still need to progress. For example, the [health funding gap](#) (\$4.4b per year or about \$5,000 per Aboriginal person) needs to close. And NACCHO is concerned that palliative care, related to cancer and other health issues, remains unfunded in the ACCHO sector. But today, we want to acknowledge the ambitious cancer package and the positive outcomes that it will undoubtedly deliver for our people. The Albanese Government has listened to us, and we look forward to working with them on the cancer package'.

-END-

**For media enquiries contact Verity Leach at [verity.leach@naccho.org.au](mailto:verity.leach@naccho.org.au) or 0438 944 113.**

*NACCHO is the national peak body representing 145 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across the country on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing issues. NACCHO is the third largest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, with over 3,500 out of the 6,000 staff working in ACCHOs being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.*



**NACCHO**  
National Aboriginal Community  
Controlled Health Organisation

**Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands**

[www.naccho.org.au](http://www.naccho.org.au)