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Media Release

ABORIGINAL PEAK BODIES WELCOME COAG'S NEW COMMITMENT TO CLOSING THE GAP REFRESH

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) has today welcomed COAG's announcement to a formal partnership approach to the Closing the Gap Refresh.

Following the tireless campaigning from NACCHO and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies across Australia, Prime Minister Scott Morrison last week agreed to a full partnership approach between Indigenous people and governments to agree the Closing the Gap framework and targets and to put it to COAG for their consideration.

Before the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies intervened, COAG was due to settle a new Closing the Gap framework and targets without the full involvement and agreement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through their representatives.

The details of formal partnership between COAG and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be settled in February 2019. It will include a Ministerial Council on Closing the Gap with expanded membership to include representation from COAG and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through their peak bodies.

"COAG's commitment to a genuine formal partnership approach between the government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the Closing the Gap strategy is a welcome step in the right direction," NACCHO Chief Executive Pat Turner AM said.

"This is something that we've long campaigned for – because involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions that affect their lives will lead to far better outcomes.

"We as a sector are looking forward to working with the Prime Minister and COAG to negotiate and agree the refreshed framework, targets and action plans which will be finalised through the committee by mid-2019.

"We are pleased that the Prime Minister and COAG have finally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must play an integral part in the making of the decisions that affect their lives – and it's the only way forward to closing the gap."

NACCHO is the national peak body representing 145 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) across the country on Aboriginal health and wellbeing issues.

MEDIA CONTACTS: For more information or to arrange interviews contact Jackie Hanafie on 0412 652 439 or Charly Binney on 0435 356 530.