

Indigenous leaders call for Close the Gap reset

After 10 years and despite bipartisan support for closing the gap, Australian governments at all levels are failing Australia's First Peoples. But there is a way forward.

This is the blunt assessment delivered by the Close the Gap Campaign [2017 Progress and Priorities Report](#), released on 16 March 2017 to mark National Close the Gap Day.

"Closing the gap in health equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is an agreed national priority, but governments are failing to meet nearly every key measure. This has to change," said Close the Gap Campaign co-chairs, Jackie Huggins and Patricia Turner.

Dr Huggins also co-chairs the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples; Ms Turner is chief executive of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO). Together, they will launch the Close the Gap Campaign's *2017 Progress and Priorities Report* at the Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, Federation Road, Sydney, on 16 March at 10.30am.

Dr Huggins and Ms Turner will be joined by guest speakers Sandra Bailey, who is the chief executive of the Aboriginal Health and Research Council; and Indigenous health worker Banok Rind.

Key recommendations in the Close the Gap Campaign's *2017 Progress and Priorities Report* are:

- State, territory and federal governments must meaningfully commit to closing the health gap by implementing co-ordinated partnerships with the Commonwealth
- Strategies must take account of the social and cultural determinants of health
- The Federal Government should initiate a national inquiry into racism in hospitals and other health care settings to help identify and counter racism's impact on health care

"The reality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is that we have a life expectancy at least 10 years shorter than non-Indigenous Australians. We need urgent action," Dr Huggins said.

The Close the Gap Campaign's 2017 report follows the Prime Minister's Closing the Gap Report to Parliament in February which indicated that only one key target of the Government's strategy was on track to close the gap by 2030.

Over 1,000 Close the Gap events will take place around Australia on 16 March to highlight the campaign for health equality. At the Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, the *2017 Progress and Priorities Report* launch coincides with a Sea of Hands installation, with 10,000 hands planted over three days in support of Close the Gap.

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