



Media Release

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10 years on, more to do to Close the Gap

Still more needs to be done to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live strong, proud and healthy lives, ten years after Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued the Apology to the Stolen Generations and more than 20 years after the *Bringing Them Home* report.

Marking the tenth anniversary of the Apology, the Chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Mr John Singer reflected on the momentous day.

“It was a time that the Government seriously committed to doing better by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into the future, where we committed to Closing the Gap in life expectancy between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

“Today we commemorate this significant milestone whilst reflecting on the work that still needs to be done – the truth that still needs to be told and the work that still needs to happen to Close the Gap,” Mr Singer said.

“We also welcome a commitment to convene a national summit on First Nation’s Children to address the very high rates of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, and prevent the emergence of another generation of children living away from family, community and culture,” said Mr Singer.

NACCHO knows that closing the gap depends on putting Aboriginal Health in Aboriginal hands so they can guide dealing with the trauma and pain of the past.

“We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be in charge of their own development, health and wellbeing. And that is why Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) are so important.”

ACCHOs put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the driving seat of their own health. They consistently demonstrate better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than mainstream health services, at better value for money.

“Forty years on from the first community controlled service in Redfern, there are still regions where there is low access to health services and elevated levels of disease experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Government needs to



fund what is working in improving Aboriginal health and provide funding for new ACCHOs in these regions.

“We could also do better if more funding for disease specific initiatives was provided by Government.

“We need to get serious about Closing the Gap and that means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their organisations co-designing policies and service delivery,” Mr Singer said.

NACCHO acknowledges the streamlined funding from the Australian Government, signed on 1 July 2017 and mentioned by the Prime Minister in his recent Closing the Gap Statement to Parliament. The new funding arrangement streamlines the provision of our health service support funding so that we can better represent the needs of ACCHOs in our policy development and advice.

The anniversary of the apology is a day to reflect on the past but also to recommit to a brighter future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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