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ABORIGINAL PEAK BODIES WRITE TO FIRST MINISTERS TO EXPRESS CONCERN ON CLOSING THE GAP REFRESH AHEAD OF COAG

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and other Aboriginal peak bodies across Australia have written to COAG First Ministers seeking a full partnership approach between Indigenous people and governments in refreshing the Closing the Gap Strategy, scheduled to be put to COAG for consideration in Adelaide on 12 December.

The letter, signed by 13 peak bodies, proposes an urgent meeting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies to meet with COAG representatives to determine a framework for reaching agreement on a refreshed Closing the Gap strategy.

It's the second letter the group has written to COAG after failing to receive a response to their initial letter in early October from any government except the Northern Territory.

"We understand that at this stage it is intended that new Closing the Gap targets will be settled at COAG's December meeting," NACCHO chief executive Pat Turner AM said.

"We are calling on COAG to hold off doing this and instead put in place a proper partnership mechanism with us. The new targets haven't been published and Indigenous peaks are uncertain what the targets will be and therefore we cannot provide our support.

"NACCHO and the peak bodies engaged with the process, took time to submit written submissions and attend workshops to discuss refreshing the Closing the Gap strategy earlier this year. But we can't see how our input has been taken into account," Ms Turner said.

"As a first step we propose a meeting with COAG representatives and the peak bodies to discuss a way forward that includes a genuine partnership approach.

"Aboriginal people need to be at the centre of the Closing the Gap Refresh policy; the gap won't close without our full engagement and involvement.

"Having Aboriginal people involved in the design of the Refresh and proposed revised targets will lead to Aboriginal people taking greater responsibility for the outcomes. It's been proven that Aboriginal community control is vital and delivers better outcomes for our people.



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community
Controlled Health Organisation

We stand ready to work with governments to agree a refreshed framework that is inclusive of the Indigenous sector, its representatives and ultimately, Indigenous people,” Ms Turner said.

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

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