



CLOSE THE GAP

Achieving Indigenous Health Equality through the Close the Gap Campaign

The Close the Gap (CTG) Campaign was launched in 2006 as part of a public call to action to address the unacceptable gap in life expectancy and other health indicators between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. The Campaign includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and non-Indigenous health and advocacy organisations and is co-chaired by two senior Aboriginal leaders.

The CTG Campaign takes a human rights-based approach to achieving health equality within a generation. It is distinct from, and precedes, the Federal government's *Closing the Gap Strategy*, which was launched in 2008 in response to the CTG Campaign.

The life expectancy gap is widening, in part because of inequitable expenditure on health, housing and other issues. The proposed policy agenda set out below will, if fully funded and implemented, provide a pathway forward for an incoming government to achieve tangible improvements in life expectancy and other key health indicators. They are:

1. Support the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak bodies to progress a formal partnership with the Council of Australian Governments on Closing the Gap
2. Ensure more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed in the health workforce to ensure that primary health care and prevention measures are culturally safe, to avoid avoidable hospital admissions and premature deaths
3. Commit a minimum \$100 million towards a four-year Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services capacity-building program as seed funding to fill the highest priority service gaps, noting that the amount needed, once fully costed, will be significantly higher and is dependent upon the service gap mapping exercise in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan [Implementation Plan] being undertaken
4. Commit to a 'Good Housing for Good Health' strategy to improve home health and safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the 'Housing for Health' program to eradicate third world diseases
5. Address systemic racism in the mainstream health system by establishing an Aboriginal Health Authority to oversee service delivery, professional training and policy and accreditation processes that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and health care.

The CTG Campaign's leadership is available to provide further detail and evidence to support each proposal. We urge all political parties to include the funded proposals outlined in this document in their election platforms and commitments.

