



AIDA

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
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MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association

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Australians must not accept the widening life expectancy gap as the norm

Ten years on from the launch of the Closing the Gap (CTG) Strategy the Government is still failing to deliver improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Today, as the [2018 AMA Indigenous Health Report Card](#) is released, one clear message must be heard; Australians must not accept the widening life expectancy gap as the norm.

As a member of the AMA Taskforce for Indigenous Health, The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) supports the AMA's six recommendations. Primarily, we support the AMA's recommendation to rebuild the Strategy, and their call on the Government to target health funding and investment to where it is needed the most.

AIDA agrees with AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, who said, "[The Strategy has all but unravelled, and efforts underway now to refresh the Strategy run the risk of simply perpetuating the current implementation failures.](#)"

AIDA President, Dr Kris Rallah-Baker said, "any new CTG strategy will not work unless there is buy in from all sides of government, and a commitment to properly invest in long term strategies to improve Indigenous health."

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is set to announce the finding of the CTG Refresh consultation process at their next meeting on 12 December, and without seeing the proposed framework, we do not accept that we have been properly consulted.

AIDA's view, along with that of many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health peak organisations is that our voices have not been heard during the Government's CTG Refresh consultations.

In addition to a rebuild of the Strategy, needs-based funding for health services is also critical in closing the gap. AIDA would also like to see needs-based workforce mapping for the entire health system.

Dr Rallah-Baker said, "we can't deliver better health outcomes where they are most needed without a well-trained and appropriately distributed health workforce. A well-trained and culturally safe health workforce is essential to deliver better health outcomes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and is vital to closing the gap."

Simply put, meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health peak organisations to rebuild the CTG Strategy and needs-based funding for health services are crucial steps our Government must make if they are committed to absolutely close the gap in Indigenous health.

END MESSAGE

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