

## Joint Media Release: Close the Gap event

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### Working together to Close the Gap

Five years on from co-signing a South Australian Statement of Intent to take action to close the unacceptable gap in health outcomes and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians, the community sector is leading the way in achieving targets.

On Thursday 26 March 2015, the Aboriginal community controlled health sector, community organisations, key stakeholders, government and non - government representatives will come together to celebrate recent achievements and reinforce their commitment to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health inequities.

The event will be hosted by the Aboriginal Health Council of SA Inc. (AHCSA), and co-hosted by Oxfam Australia and Reconciliation SA. Guest speakers will include: John Singer, AHCSA Chair; Shane Mohor, Acting CEO AHCSA; and Matthew Cooke, Chair of National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Originally launched in 2006, the Close the Gap campaign is an initiative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal national health and human rights organizations and non-Aboriginal organisations. Underpinning the campaign is the importance of collaborative and meaningful approaches between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Government and the not-for-profit sector.

Co-host of Thursday's event, Judee Adams, Oxfam Community Campaign & Engagement Coordinator SA/NT, says 'Closing the gap in health equality between Aboriginal people and other South Australians is an agreed priority, as shown by the State Parliament bipartisan signing of the Statement of Intent in 2010. For this to be achieved, it is imperative that the South Australian Government continues to work in partnership with Aboriginal people and their representative organisations in the development, implementation and monitoring of health policy and programs.'

Although gaps in health outcomes and life expectancy are still of great concern, there is strong evidence that targets are being achieved, as demonstrated in the recently released *Healthy Future: Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Report Card*.

'The Health Futures Report really highlights the evidence of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector's achievements in providing comprehensive primary health care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and continually demonstrates best practice in comprehensive primary health care.' says Shane Mohor, Acting CEO AHCSA.

Reconciliation SA is also supporting the event. Mark Waters, State Manager of Reconciliation SA, says that 'Improving health outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians is a critical issue for South Australians. Our emerging priorities are health and well-being and the impact of, and how to respond to, racism in particular in systems such as health.'

Through continued partnerships, and evidence-based community-led approaches, the shared vision to close the gap in health and wellbeing is highly achievable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

#### **For further media enquiries please contact:**

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