**FAST FACTS FOR MEDIA**

**About this year’s *Close the Gap report:***

The *Close the Gap report* is released every year on National Close the Gap Day. This is the 11th *Close the Gap report.*

This year’s report was written by Close the Gap campaign partner, the Lowitja Institute.

This year’s *Close the Gap report* sets out a blueprint for systemic reform, presenting
**14 recommendations** (see p.6-7 of the report) for Australian governments that must be urgently implemented to avoid further preventable deaths and protect Indigenous health, wellbeing, culture and Country.

These include:

* An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament (Recommendation 1)
* Investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (Recommendation 2)
* Investment in collective decision-making and co-design of health, social and wellbeing systems in Australia (Recommendations 3 – 5, 6, 10)
* Indigenous Data Sovereignty (Recommendation 6)
* Investment in and recognition of Indigenous research, wellbeing methods and practices (Recommendations 7 & 8)
* Commitment to truth telling (Recommendation 11)
* Commitment to a culturally safe Australian healthcare system (Recommendation 12)
* Commitment to a 10-year funding horizon and expansion of the Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas programs following this summer’s catastrophic bushfires and further protections for Country (Recommendations 13 & 14) - we’re delighted that this was announced by government last week while the report was at the printers (<https://ministers.pmc.gov.au/wyatt/2020/funding-certainty-indigenous-rangers> )

The report takes a strengths-based approach, featuring case studies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led programs and initiatives that prove how the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander empowerment is vital to wellbeing.

However, a strengths-based approach does not overlook the relationship of power and inequality on health outcomes or the responsibility of governments in leading systems reform. We cannot continue to create solutions inside a system that has not been designed for our needs.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have three times the rate of preventable admissions to hospital, overcrowded housing and a lack of access to basic health services in many areas. Our increased incidence of pre-existing health conditions is due in large part to governments’ failures to close the gaps in health equity for Indigenous people in Australia.**

**About National Close the Gap Day:**

Today (Thursday 19 March 2020) is National Close the Gap Day (19 March 2020).

On National Close the Gap Day, supporters of the Close the Gap campaign traditionally hold their own events across the country to draw attention to the need for urgent funding for healthcare equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. **However, this year, we are recommending that people sign the pledge at** [**https://antar.org.au/closethegappledge**](https://antar.org.au/closethegappledge) **and hold online events instead.**

The Close the Gap campaign will not be holding a public event to launch the Close the Gap Campaign report because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

**About the Close the Gap campaign:**

The Close the Gap campaign is an independent, Indigenous-led campaign that calls on political leaders from all levels of government to take action on health and education equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It is separate to *Closing the Gap,* which is a government strategy.

The Close the Gap (CTG) Campaign was launched in 2006 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. More than 200,000 Australians have signed a pledge supporting the Campaign.

The Close the Gap campaign is co-Chaired by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association (NATSIHWA) CEO Karl Briscoe.

**Further background on the Close the Gap Campaign, including previous reports and media releases, are available on the ANTaR website at** [**https://antar.org.au/close-gap**](https://antar.org.au/close-gap)

**The media pack for the 2020 Close the Gap campaign report (including the report) is available to download here:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n9qwzljbkhogp4o/AADbVy01G5QKWdIXKCUpVt27a?dl=0>