



# CLOSE THE GAP

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### FAILURE TO CLOSE THE GAP PUTS INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AT INCREASED RISK

**Friday 13 March 2020**

The Close the Gap Campaign is cancelling its public events to mark Close the Gap Day on Thursday 19 March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to endure higher levels of illness and higher levels of comorbidity. We 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.

"The Close the Gap Campaign exists to raise awareness of the need to close the gap in Indigenous health equity to prevent needless Indigenous deaths," said June Oscar and Karl Briscoe.

"Indigenous people in Australia are more likely than most other population groups to have pre-existing health conditions – this is due in large part to the catastrophic failure of successive governments, state and federal, to close the gaps in Indigenous health equity in Australia.

"The increased incidence of pre-existing health conditions makes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more vulnerable to more severe impacts from the Coronavirus, and so cancelling our planned public events to mark Close the Gap Day is the responsible thing to do.

"We need urgent systemic reform in Australia to close the gaps in health equity, and to address the social and economic disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to suffer in their own country."

Close the Gap Campaign co-Chairs, June Oscar and Karl Briscoe call on supporters to sign the campaign pledge on the ANTaR website and hold online events to mark the day instead.

"The Close the Gap campaign is encouraging our supporters to sign the Close the Gap pledge on the ANTaR website and hold online events on the day," said June Oscar and Karl Briscoe.

"We will be releasing the Close the Gap Campaign report online on Thursday 19 March – while we may not be able to hold live events, we will never be silent on the shameful gaps in health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

**The Close the Gap Campaign report will be launched online on Close the Gap Day – this Thursday 19 March 2020.**

You can show your support by signing the Close the Gap campaign pledge at <https://antar.org.au/closethegappledge>. Follow #CloseTheGap, #closethegapday, #nurtureculturefuture and @closethegapOZ for more details.

You can read more about the Close the Gap Campaign on the ANTaR website at <https://antar.org.au/close-gap>

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