



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# **To Close the Gap, We Need a Strengths Based Discourse and Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture**

The 2020 Close the Gap Campaign Report is focussed on culture and demonstrating the relationship between culture and good health and wellbeing. Culture is central to sense of identity to self and community and the connections people have between and within community and country.

The NHLF was instrumental in the formation of the Close the Gap Campaign and continues to lead the Campaign as the senior collective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leadership. We are committed to achieving health equality, we draw strength from cultural integrity, the evidence base and community.

The NHLF says that this report demonstrates that the vision and outcomes sought within health and the other social determinants under the proposed National Agreement to Closing the Gap is possible.

The NHLF supports the partnership and shared decision-making arrangements between the Coalition of Peaks and the Council of Australian Governments in developing the National Agreement. The CtG Report validates strengths-based approaches and by accepting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture as part of the process we can finally start to close the gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The NHLF acknowledges the work of the Lowitja Institute in writing this report and the contributions by communities to the case studies. The Report's case studies highlight the work of communities and organisations that are achieving results within systems and structures that are not design for our ways of Knowing, being and doing.

"It is time for all Governments to step back and let Aboriginal peoples to decide how to solve the problems and to deliver the solutions and for governments to support us in this work" said Ms Donna Murray, acting Chair of NHLF.

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