



EMBARGOED TO 1PM Thursday 11 February 2010

DOORSTOP

**Close the Gap steering committee chair Tom Calma's
Response to the Prime Minister's report on 'closing the gap' on
Indigenous health
&
Launch of the Close the Gap Shadow Report
Parliament House
Senate Courtyard
Thursday 11 February, 1.30pm**

The Australian Government is yet to develop a comprehensive plan to close the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health inequality by 2030 despite committing to one almost two years ago, according to a new report out today (Thursday 11 February 2010).

The Close the Gap campaign's *Shadow Report*, on the Government's progress on 'closing the gap', also found a lack of critical support for Aboriginal medical services and the absence of a true partnership approach by Government.

Chair of the Close the Gap Steering Committee and former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma, whose 2005 Social Justice Report laid the groundwork for the Close the Gap campaign, said the Shadow Report outlined what was missing in the Government's approach and detailed ways in which its commitments to closing the gap could be met.

It holds the Prime Minister accountable to key commitments he and former Opposition Leader Brendan Nelson made in the Statement of Intent at the Indigenous Health Equality Summit in March 2008.

"The Government should be commended for taking significant steps forward and for honouring its commitment to report annually, but there are gaps in its approach, and the lack of a comprehensive, long-term plan of action is one of these," Mr Calma said. "Without an evidence-based and targeted plan, efforts to close the gap will simply fail."

Close the Gap steering committee chairman Tom Calma will be available for interview on the Prime Minister's report on closing the gap on Indigenous health, as well as on the Close The Gap's Shadow Report, launched today at 1.30pm.

For copies of the report or for further information, please contact Laurelle Keough at Oxfam Australia on 0409 960 100



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