



Media Release

National Health Leadership Forum call for greater transparency and partnership in the Closing the Gap Refresh

The National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF), comprised of leaders from Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health peak sector has serious concerns with the Government's Closing the Gap (CTG) refresh process and the way it has been managed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

"We are disappointed that as an expert body on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, the NHLF was not invited or specifically consulted by the Department of the Prime Minister process." said NHLF Chair, Ms Janine Mohamed.

"Further, we await the availability of a full draft of the refreshed CTG framework so that we can fully consider how it may be implemented and work in practice, and are ready to offer our feedback and expertise accordingly." said Ms Mohamed

The NHLF have previously sent formal written correspondence to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Nigel Scullion (dated 20 July 2018) outlining concerns around the CTG refresh process and are disappointed that no formal reply was ever received.

Ms Mohamed went on to say "We think this is a lost opportunity for the government to engage in good faith with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. No one wants better health outcomes for our people than we do, and we need to be at the table, in the co-design process if we really want to affect change and deliver better outcomes."

The NHLF have the following broad concerns:

- Racism adversely impacts on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and must be included as a target in the refreshed CTG framework
- The CTG Refresh must support the Implementation Plan for the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023*
- The NHLF strongly recommends that 'prosperity' be removed as a central tenet in the refreshed CTG framework
- The CTG framework should remain underpinned by human rights principles

The NHLF remain open to constructive dialogue and engagement to ensure this consultation process is meaningful and leads to the development of a renewed Closing the Gap framework that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector can stand behind.