

PREMIER AND OPPOSITION LEADER TO SIGN HISTORIC AGREEMENT: CLOSING THE GAP ON INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE

Thursday 3 June, 2010

In an historic agreement, the NSW Parliament will today officially pledge to work in a bipartisan spirit to close the 17 year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians within 20 years.

Premier Kristina Keneally and the Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell, will today sign **Oxfam's Close The Gap - Statement of Intent** on behalf of the NSW Parliament.

The agreement commits the NSW Parliament to work with NGO's and the community to improve life expectancy and Indigenous health and equality.

NSW Government joins the Commonwealth and the Western Australian, Queensland, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory governments.

Close The Gap - Statement of Intent commits NSW to:

- Developing a comprehensive long-term plan of action to achieve equality of health and life expectancy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians by 2030;
- Ensuring primary health care services and health infrastructure are capable of bridging the gap in health standards by 2018;
- Ensuring full participation of Aboriginal Australians in addressing their health needs;
- Working together to address the social determinants that impact health equality for Aboriginal Australians;
- Building on the evidence base and supporting what works in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and relevant international experience;
- Supporting and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services in urban, rural and remote areas;
- Achieving improved access to, and outcomes from, mainstream services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Respect and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by ensuring that health services are available, appropriate, accessible, affordable, and of good quality; and
- Measure, monitor, and report on our joint efforts, in accordance with benchmarks and targets, to ensure that we are progressively realising our shared ambitions.

Additional signatories will include the NSW Minister for Health, Carmel Tebbutt, and the Chief Executive and Chair of the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council and other State MPs.

In December 2008, the NSW Government signed the *Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Partnership Agreement* – a \$180 million four year plan to improve Aboriginal health.

"This partnership allows us to work closer with Aboriginal communities at the State, regional and local levels to meet the targets set by COAG and achieve real change," Ms Keneally said.

"I commend Oxfam's achievements in bringing together all politicians - regardless of their political backgrounds - to focus on this critical issue - improving the lives of the most disadvantaged in our community.

"I look forward to working with the Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell, and political leaders across the country – together it will be possible to achieve real outcomes."