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## **CLOSING THE GAP PLAN A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BUT A LONG WAY TO GO**

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid has welcomed the federal government's announcement of measures worth more than \$1 billion to reduce social, health and economic disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The *Closing the Gap Implementation Plan*, announced yesterday by the Prime Minister Scott Morrison, is part of a new model to address the unacceptable disparity in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and includes more community driven programs and partnerships.

Dr Khorshid acknowledged the leadership and commitment of the Indigenous-led Coalition of Peaks to hold governments accountable for improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"The job is a long way from being done, and all governments need to commit to their implementation plans, however the Prime Minister's announcement today is an important step.

"Full healing and equity can only come however, when the Uluru Statement from the Heart is recognised, accepted and acted on. This means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are given a genuine and rightful seat, on their terms, in Australia's decision-making institutions, from federal parliament to local government. This is self-determination fully realised.

"Likewise, the AMA reiterates our call to all Australian governments raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years of age. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system. If governments are genuinely committed to closing the gap this is a change they should be prioritising," said Dr Khorshid.

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