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**IMPROVEMENT IN SOME KEY INDICATORS, BUT LONG-TERM  
 MULTI-PARTISAN COMMITMENT NEEDED TO TRULY CLOSE THE GAP**  
*Close the Gap Progress and Priorities Report 2016*

The AMA is pleased to see some improvement in a number of key indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, but warns that a long-term commitment across all political parties is needed if targets for closing the health gap are to be met within a generation.

The Close the Gap Steering Committee *Progress and Priorities Report 2016* was released this morning, on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Closing the Gap Campaign.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, said today that it is encouraging that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Checks have increased, Indigenous peoples’ access to medicines has improved, and there have been improvements in infant and child health outcomes.

“The latest Report shows that there has been a mixed bag on progress in some of the health and social determinants of health indicators,” Professor Owler said.

“Work to improve year 12 attainment rates by 2020 is on track, but halving the gap in reading, writing, and numeracy is falling behind.

“Halving the gap in employment outcomes by 2018 is not on track, while halving the mortality rate gap for young children by 2018 is on track.

“It is disappointing that the target to close the gap in life expectancy by 2013 is not on track.

“This is a clear signal that we have to put politics aside, and work together to reach this important milestone.

“We need a long-term, multi-partisan, whole-of-government approach to once and for all close the gap,” Professor Owler said.

Professor Owler said the AMA wants the Government to fully fund the new *Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan (2013-2013)*, which would be a catalyst for speeding up action on closing the gap initiatives.

“Above all, we need consistent funding and support from all governments to reach Close the Gap targets,” Professor Owler said.

“And there must be genuine engagement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in the delivery of health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

Professor Owler said the Government should reverse recent Budget cuts to programs such as the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and the Indigenous Australian Health Programme, and there should be a new Closing the Gap target to reduce Indigenous imprisonment rates.

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