



# The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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22 March, 2012

## CLOSING THE GAP: A 10-YEAR PLAN TO IMPROVE ABORIGINAL HEALTH

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, today released *Towards an Aboriginal Health Plan for NSW*, a discussion and consultation paper to support the development of a new 10-year plan to improve Aboriginal health.

“The NSW Government is committed to closing the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people,” Minister Skinner said.

There is a large disparity in life expectancy and the burden of disease is higher in Aboriginal people particularly in preventable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, mental health conditions, chronic respiratory disease and cancer.

“An urgent response is required to meet our commitment to closing the gap in Aboriginal health,” she said.

“The discussion paper proposes new strategic directions, actions and underpins principles to improve health service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal people.

“The discussion paper is the result of extensive consultation, which included individual stakeholder interviews, regional workshops, a Health and Wellbeing Forum and written submissions. Staff from the NSW Health system, the Aboriginal community controlled health sector and other partners, stakeholders and community members were all involved in the initial consultation process,” Minister Skinner said.

“The NSW Government is pleased to work closely with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, the peak representative body and voice of Aboriginal communities on health in NSW, throughout this process.”

The council’s chief executive officer, Sandra Bailey said it welcomed the commitment of the NSW Government to developing the 10-year Aboriginal Health Plan.

“We look forward to working in partnership to shape the direction of Aboriginal health over the next 10 years,” she said.

“This plan represents a significant step towards more positive health outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW,” Ms Bailey said.

The Aboriginal Health Report Card, also released today, provides a summary of the Aboriginal Health Report, highlighting the gap which exists between the health of indigenous and non-indigenous people including lower life expectancy, higher mortality rates for infants, higher rates of hospitalisation and chronic disease.

Submissions to the discussion paper are encouraged, and can be made at:  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/aboriginal/plan/index.asp>

Submissions close 22 June 2012.