

MEDIA RELEASE



4:30pm, Wednesday 23 March, 2011

People power must persist for Gap to Close

The National Director of ANTaR, Jacqueline Phillips, says the large gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in life expectancy and life opportunities will only close if the public pressure on politicians persists for many more years.

Speaking on the eve of National Close the Gap day, Ms Phillips said "the progress that has been made in the five years since the grass-roots campaign for health equality was launched shows people can make a real difference in positively influencing the political agenda."

"The Close the Gap campaign has also shown that there are many successful programs designed and run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that can produce positive results if they are given reliable, adequate support."

"ANTaR's role is to support Indigenous people and organisations in securing that support and making more non-Indigenous Australians aware that they too have an important role to play in making sure this is a top priority for governments."

"There are few areas of public policy which have failed more dismally over many decades than the delivery of proper support and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

"Close the Gap Day reminds us not only that people power makes a difference, but that we have a duty to use that power to effect positive change. By working together and staying the course, we can succeed in achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality."

ANTaR is a national advocacy organisation dedicated specifically to the rights - and overcoming the disadvantage - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. .

Media contact: Jacqueline Phillips – 0423 773 395