

MEDIA RELEASE



1pm, Monday 13 September, 2010

Indigenous health must remain key focus

Responding to the announcement of the new Labor Government Ministry, ANTaR has expressed concern at the loss of a dedicated minister for Indigenous health.

'The abolition of a dedicated Indigenous Health Minister sends a worrying signal about the priority accorded to Indigenous health by the new Government', said Dr Janet Hunt, ANTaR President.

'A stand-alone Indigenous Health Minister helped to ensure that the Close the Gap agenda remained a key focus for the Government and provided an important point of contact for Indigenous health organisations and communities.'

'We urge the Prime Minister to review her decision to abolish this important portfolio. Indigenous health remains a major national issue.'

'At the very least, the Government must ensure that there is a very strong focus on Indigenous health within the broader health portfolio and ensure effective mechanisms to engage with the Indigenous health sector.'

'ANTaR welcomes the creation of an Indigenous Employment and Economic Development portfolio and urges Minister Arbib to ensure broad engagement with Indigenous organisations and communities as the Government develops an Indigenous economic development strategy.'

'It is vital that the various Ministers with designated responsibility for Indigenous policy issues work collaboratively to coordinate their reform agendas and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples to achieve better outcomes.'

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

Media contact:

Dr Janet Hunt, President – 0408 170 448

Jacqueline Phillips, National Director – 0423 773 395