



CLOSE THE GAP DAY

Third Thursday of March

History

The Close the Gap campaign arose in response to [Professor Tom Calma's Social Justice Report \(2005\)](#) which challenged governments to bring about health equality within a generation.

The first campaign was launched in April 2007 and in the same year, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) set measurable targets to track and assess developments in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. These targets included achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality within a generation and halving the mortality rate gap for children under five years old within a decade.

National Apology

In February 2008, in his Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd pledged the government would attempt to bridge the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australian health, education and living conditions, in a way that respects their rights to self-determination.

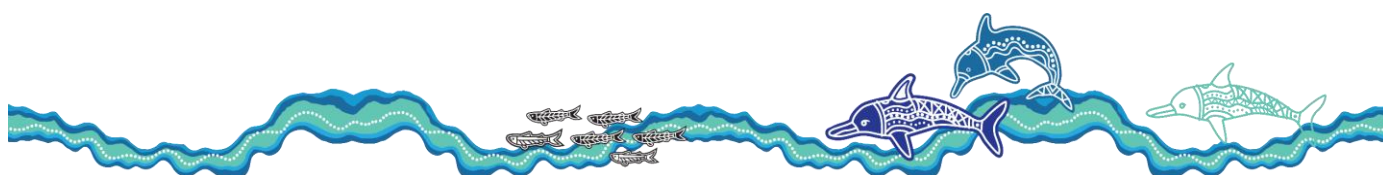
Mr Rudd also proposed to establish a commission to “close the gap” between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people in “life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity”.

What is closing the gap?

On 20 March 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and then Opposition Leader Brendan Nelson, signed the Close the Gap [Statement of Intent](#) at the Close the Gap Campaign's National Indigenous Health Equality Summit. The Statement of Intent committed the government to nine actions, including:

- developing a comprehensive, long-term plan of action, that is targeted to need, evidence-based and capable of addressing the existing inequities in health services, in order to achieve equality of health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by 2030.
- ensuring the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representative bodies in all aspects of addressing their health needs.
- achieving improved access to, and outcomes from, mainstream services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- respecting and promoting the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by ensuring that health services are available, appropriate, accessible, affordable and good quality

In 2009 the Australian government committed to making an annual progress report to Parliament on progress with the Closing the Gap strategy.



Artwork produced for Gold Coast Health by Riki Salam, We are 27 Creative.



First Nations Health Equity

The Queensland Parliament passed the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 in August 2020 requiring each Hospital and Health Service to develop a local strategy to achieve health equity in partnership with First Nations peoples, and to appoint one or more First Nations person as board members.

A First Nations health equity approach launches a shared agenda to improve First Nations peoples' health outcomes, lived experiences, and access to care across the health system.

This Health Equity Strategy sits within the policy context of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 which aims to overcome the inequality in life outcomes experienced by First Nations peoples compared to other Australians.

Released on the 12 August 2022, the [GCHHS First Nations Health Equity Strategy](#) details our **commitment to work with the Gold Coast First Nations community, delivering real outcomes and lasting change through a genuine partnership approach of co-design, co-ownership and co-implementation.**

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

GCHHS First Nations Health Equity Strategy 2022 was informed by the voices of almost 400 unique participants and conversations with more than 2400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult community members. The Strategy details six First Nations Health Equity key areas for action (**Error! Reference source not found.**) and is a first step to embedding the community voice throughout our health care system.



The GCHHS First Nations Health Equity Implementation plan is being progressed with a public release scheduled for May 2023.