



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH EQUALITY COUNCIL

Meeting 6

9 and 10 December 2009

COMMUNIQUÉ

The National Indigenous Health Equality Council (NIHEC) held its sixth meeting in Perth on 9 and 10 December 2009.

The Council continued its work on the National Target Setting Instrument and its modules. The first module on Child Mortality is expected to be provided to Government soon. The Council also progressed the work of two other modules on Workforce module and Chronic Disease. The Instrument and its modules will be important to encourage best practice in target setting for Indigenous health and will be invaluable for monitoring and informing progress towards the Closing the Gap measures.

The Council further progressed work on the health workforce. It was agreed that Council will host a high level workforce forum in mid 2010 to discuss how to overcome the educational and system barriers in implementing an effective Indigenous health workforce strategy including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the health workforce and a health workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In liaison with the National Advisory Council on Mental Health (NACMH), NIHEC will co-convene an Indigenous Mental Health Forum early next year and will work with NACMH to progress work on Indigenous mental health issues.

The preliminary outcomes of the Indigenous Adolescent Roundtable that was hosted by NIHEC on 3 December 2009 were presented to Council. The Council discussed the preliminary advice from the roundtable that will be finalised and provided to Government in the new year.

Other topics for discussion included: the Commonwealth's Indigenous Chronic Disease Package; the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan; the proposed Health Risks Survey (with a presentation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics) and priorities for health and medical research.

Council members undertook a site visit which was generously hosted by the Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service to discuss their role and local issues for the health sector.

NIHEC's Meeting 7 is in Melbourne on 9 and 10 March 2010.