



## **Aboriginal Health Council** of South Australia Inc.

**'Our health, our choice, our way'**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Snowdon's Visit Inspires SA Aboriginal Health Leaders**

Ms Yvonne Buza, Chairperson of the Aboriginal Health Council of SA Inc. said last week's visit by the Federal Minister for Indigenous Health Warren Snowdon inspired South Australia's Aboriginal community health leaders.

The Aboriginal Health Council held a special meeting between Minister Snowdon and key representatives of South Australian Aboriginal community controlled health services to discuss various issues associated with the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

Ms Buza said, "Minister Snowdon's face-to-face visit was an example of how to meaningfully engage with the Aboriginal community. Being able to deliver and discuss key issues directly with the Minister is invaluable in knowing our voice has been heard at the right level in a timely and accurate manner.

"We would like to thank Minister Snowdon for his commitment and concern. All stakeholders at the meeting were able to willingly share the real concerns expressed by Aboriginal Health Services across South Australia and felt their input was heard and respected."

The various issues discussed at the meeting included GP recruitment and services, patient assisted transport for dental services, renal services and access to dialysis, lack of housing, lack of infrastructure for primary health services, superannuation/aged pension, funding for COAG initiatives, governance and other issues.

COAG issues dominated the main part of the meeting with stakeholders highlighting that much of the funding is being directed to non-Indigenous organisations. Ms Buza reiterated if Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are given responsibility for delivering COAG initiatives that much more progress would be made in Closing the Gap.

"As a result of the COAG funding allocations, the Aboriginal Health Council has taken the initiative to form partnerships with the non-Indigenous organisations which will receive the funds including General Practice SA and the Royal Doctors Workforce Agency.

Minister Snowdon confirmed his view that Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are supported and promoted as a good role model for the delivery of primary health to Aboriginal communities.

Ms Buza said, "Our Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are and will continue to make real gains in Aboriginal health and wellbeing because we consult with community members and deliver the services and programs that they need in the way that is most appropriate to them.

"Government and mainstream programs have proven over and over again to be ineffective for our people. They lack consultation and cultural appropriateness, thereby rendering the programs useless in achieving any gains towards Closing the Gap," she said.

Ms Buza, who chaired the meeting, hopes that this will be the first of many opportunities to discuss issues directly with Minister Snowdon.

The Aboriginal Health Council of SA Inc. is an Aboriginal community controlled organisation and is the peak body for Aboriginal health in South Australia. The Council represents Aboriginal health and substance misuse services, and Aboriginal health advisory committees across the state.

ENDS. For further information contact: Mrs Mary Buckskin, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Inc., 08 8273 7200.