

STATEMENT 21 March, 2024

Today is Close the Gap Day, a fitting occasion for Anglicare NT to congratulate the Prime Minister on his announcement to invest \$4 billion in NT remote housing over 10 years.

We also welcome the promise from Commonwealth and NT governments of \$1.1 billion of new investment in NT public schools, with priority to the most disadvantaged schools.

“Investment is critical for transformational change. The other vital ingredient is self-determination. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be in the driver’s seat because change can’t happen without it” said Leonie Patterson, Executive Manager, Cultural Safety and Partnerships at Anglicare NT.

Progressing voice, treaty, truth, leadership and governance and building our economies

Our friends at Close the Gap are asking all of us to join in demanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality within a generation.

Anglicare NT agrees closing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy gap is everyone’s business. We agree it is a national issue in which every individual, organisation and group in Australia can play a role.

To achieve health equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians within 25 years, we echo Close the Gap’s call on the Australian Government to:

1. Commit to providing adequate and long-term financial resources to achieve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality.
2. Invest in real partnerships, including increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and control around health service delivery.
3. Address critical social issues of housing, education and self-determination that contribute to the health crisis affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Closing the gap through economic justice

Economic justice is investing in all Australians, regardless of their background and circumstances, and provides opportunities for all people to participate in the economy and access opportunities to thrive. Investing in remote housing and remote education is an example of economic justice.

The CEO of Aboriginal Housing NT Skye Thompson said “as Aboriginal people we know that sustained effort is required to achieve transformational change. This is not just an investment in housing – it is an investment in people”.

Anglicare NT envisions a full life and social justice for all, and we support closing the gap of inequity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.