

FEDERAL ELECTION 2010

HOT ISSUES

The State of Indigenous Health

BUILDING AN
ECONOMY FOR LIFE

Your faith, your vote, your voice.



Produced by
The Uniting Church in Australia
National Assembly

The health of Indigenous Australians is in crisis

- An Aboriginal child born in 2008 will still, on average, live for 17 years less than a non-Aboriginal child.
- Indigenous people were 5 times as likely to die from heart attack, twice as likely to die from cancer, 18 times as likely to die from diabetes, and twice as likely to die from suicide as non-Indigenous people, in the period 2002-2006 in QLD, WA, SA and NT. (Productivity Commission, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009*)
- Federal Government health spending on Indigenous Australians is less per capita than for other Australians.
- Poor health outcomes are directly affected by inadequate housing, education, employment and access to basic services.

Why is it an issue in 2010?

- A concerted public push to end the Indigenous health crisis led to the signing of the *Close the Gap Statement of Intent* by the Government, Opposition and peak Indigenous and mainstream health bodies in March 2008.
- *Close the Gap* commits to the achievement of equality in health status and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2030.
- While some progress has been achieved, such as the appointment of a National Indigenous Health Equality Council and a significant boost in government funding, key commitments from the Statement remain unmet, including the development of a comprehensive, long-term plan of action to address existing inequalities in health services.

SOLVING THE CRISIS IS POSSIBLE

In New Zealand, the USA and Canada, indigenous health has improved over the past 25 years through Government action. The same is possible here. The essential elements of an improved Indigenous health system would include:

- primary health care delivered on the basis of need, through Aboriginal community-controlled health services and more accessible mainstream services;
- a significantly increased health workforce, particularly of Indigenous background;
- comprehensive early intervention and prevention programs; and
- significantly improved education and employment outcomes, housing and infrastructure provision.

Ask your candidates

- What will you do to support the campaign to end the health and life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?
- How would you use your elected position to substantially address the disadvantage suffered by Indigenous people?
- Does your party have any plans for improving consultation with Indigenous peoples, and if so what are they?
- If your party is elected how will it begin to address current inequities in the provision of health, education and housing in Indigenous communities?

