



# Media Release

## Indigenous child health measures welcomed

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The announcement of an additional \$204 million for remote primary health in last night's budget has been welcomed by the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health.

CEO Mick Gooda said the Government's concentration on building investment in early childhood development was a "positive strategy" and increased allocations to ear and eye health is welcome after "an extended period of ignoring the problem and condemning our children to a life of disability and reduced opportunities."

"A new long overdue program aimed at improving Indigenous rural and regional dental health is also welcomed," said Mick Gooda. "However you would have to question how far an investment of \$11 million over four years is going to go, given the extent of the problem and the debilitating impact of poor dental health on a range of other health outcomes."

Mr Gooda said the budget allocations to Indigenous education, housing, employment, infrastructure, sport and other social determinants of health would have a longer term positive impact of Indigenous health.

"The relationship between these social determinants and the current poor health of our people means that increased investment in health services without concurrent advances in areas such as housing quality, education and employment will not necessarily pay the health-improvement dividends that might otherwise result.

"The key to making sure we get the best results out of health and other investments into the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is good evidence about what the priorities are and what works; and the key to developing this evidence base is high quality research.

"The CRCAH will continue to provide the Rudd Government and the States and Territories with the sort of research advice that will ensure dollars go to where they will have the biggest impact", said Mick Gooda.

"One area that needs an immediate boost is health workforce training and we intend to work to ensure that a fair share of the \$108 million allocated to increase access to higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is used to increase the current low representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying medicine and the health sciences."

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