



AIDA

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
ABN: 84 131 668 936

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association

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Does the 2017 Budget show that the Government understands the frustrations of Indigenous Australians?

Treasurer Scott Morrison says the 2017 Budget will show that the Government understands the frustrations of many Australians. For Indigenous Australians, the greatest frustration is the slow pace of change in closing the gap in disadvantage, and the continuation of poor health and wellbeing.

The announcement to lift the freeze on Medicare rebates and increase the Medicare levy is encouraging for disadvantaged Australians. The lift allowing GP's to charge more for their services, will hopefully see bulk-billing practices remain operational or increase in number, and the increase to the levy to provide long term secure funding for the NDIS is wanted.

AIDA welcomes the announcement of the Indigenous Research Fund but would have preferred more commitment to resourcing existing Indigenous health programs and service delivery. We also welcome the budget measures that are specifically aimed at closing the employment gap, but we more commitment around the other health targets in needed.

It has also been promising to see measures to enhance the delivery and relevance of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. We note that it has already been reviewed by a Senate committee and the Australian National Audit Office and look forward to the implementation of the recommendations contained in those reports.

The Australian Government must commit to a new relationship and genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions made about Indigenous Australians; decisions that address housing, health, education, justice, disability and representation.

If the Government is serious about closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage, it is essential that secure, long term funding be allocated to:

- Building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce;
- Resourcing the Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023 (NATSHP); and
- Tackling and abolishing racism in the Australian health system.

END MESSAGE

Media enquiries to

P: 02 6273 5013

E: communications@aida.org.au