



## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH EQUALITY COUNCIL

### Meeting 2

9 and 10 December 2008

### COMMUNIQUÉ

The National Indigenous Health Equality Council (NIHEC) held a productive second meeting in Alice Springs on 9 – 10 December 2008.

Council members initially met informally with local Indigenous leaders and groups to hear first hand their experiences before continuing on to more formal proceedings.

The outcomes from this second meeting will further assist Council in developing advice to the Minister in support of the Australian Government's commitments for achieving equality of health status and life expectancy for Indigenous Australians.

NIHEC agreed to the development of a national instrument for a set of evidence-based targets and priorities that integrates accountability measures and regular reporting frameworks. Members believe that this framework will be a useful instrument for all bodies and invaluable to measuring Indigenous health outcomes.

Council agreed that workforce issues needed to be addressed as a top priority with discussions centering on workforce announcements from the recent Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting. Further work by Council will determine how NIHEC can best contribute to addressing workforce priorities, in collaborating with existing committees and taskforces.

To further enhance the work of NIHEC on workforce issues two technical sub-groups were formed. The first referred to as the "*Helicopter*" Project, was established to provide an overarching view of present activity; by mapping and triaging current activity to identify gaps as well as any overlaps on existing policies that are not meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The second sub-group, the "*Vision/Futures*" Project will develop strategic interventions where gaps exist.

Members agreed that although challenges exist, appropriate solutions can be found through genuine engagement with Indigenous communities. NIHEC looks forward to working in partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector and the Australian Government to achieve better health outcomes for all Indigenous Australians.

The next meeting of NIHEC is scheduled for 10 – 11 March 2009, in Adelaide, South Australia.