

19 May 2023

**Budget good start to assist those most in need, but more around the social determinants of health would be better for more Australians.**

There is much about the 2023 Commonwealth Budget that for the Government to be congratulated with its investment in First Nations Health and its beginnings to address social and economic disadvantage due to the cost-of-living crisis. However, there is a glaring gap and that is the lack of investment in social housing and investment in homelessness experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community.

Secure, affordable shelter is intrinsic to good health outcomes for all Australians. Housing should not be viewed as a means to wealth creation or a property ownership opportunity, but as a foundation for a healthy and thriving Australia. Housing as well as many other social determinants such as employment, education, a respectful social support system, health, justice, water and food security and so on, are essential components of well-being and having the ability to participate in the social and economic life of this country.

The Chair of the NHLF, Fiona Cornforth, said that without our communities having safe, secure and affordable housing it will not be possible to address the health gap and tackle chronic disease, mental ill-health, or improve the social and emotional wellbeing of people when they are in a day-to-day fight to put a roof over their heads.

The NHLF recognises that this budget and the October 2022 Budget has provided much investment in First Nations peoples across a range of portfolios. But how well this investment is implemented, and outcomes achieved, will be dependent on how well the relevant government portfolio agencies take up the intent of the priority reforms under the National Agreement to Closing the Gap and work with First Nations peoples/communities to deliver the intended benefits.

“The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan specifically and consciously highlights the needs for governments to acknowledge the value of investment in the social determinants of health to achieve good health outcomes. This investment is good for the economy and our long-term investment in health care. We ask all governments to accept investment in the social determinants is a benefit not a cost burden” Says Fiona Cornforth

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### **National Health Leadership Forum Membership**

- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- Australian Indigenous Psychologists' Association
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia
- The Healing Foundation
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia
- Indigenous Dentists' Association of Australia
- The Lowitja Institute
- National Association Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health
- National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists
- Torres Strait Regional Authority

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- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists and
- Torres Strait Regional Authority