



## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

### Set aside politics and close the gap

Grass-roots organisations like Children's Ground are providing strong evidence that community-led approaches achieve tangible results against Closing the Gap targets.

We are distressed by the Productivity Commission's latest report on Closing the Gap.

Nationally, only 5 of the 19 targets are on track. 4 are worsening.

In the Northern Territory, 8 of the targets are worsening.

This is deeply concerning, and indicative of governments unwillingness to genuinely relinquish and share power, step away from business-as-usual and invest in First Nations led solutions.

William Tilmouth, Chair of Children's Ground, said "the latest Closing the Gap data deepens the erosion of trust between First Nations communities and government,"

It's been 16 years since the statement of intent for Closing the Gap was signed and governments are failing to achieve the reform needed for our people to live with basic dignity. This is being driven by a stubborn reluctance to genuinely engage with grassroots, community-led and owned solutions," he said.

Governments talk about doing things differently, and the strong recommendations from the Productivity Commission tell them to fundamentally rethink their ways of working, and all the while First Nations people are still waiting. While we wait, our children aren't meeting early development targets and are being taken away from families and held in out-of-home care, and our people are being thrown into prisons and the rates of suicide grow," he said.

The community-controlled sector can receive copious amounts of funding from government. It's time government demands tangible results from this funding," he said.

I want to see governments and opposition set aside politics, especially in the lead up to the Territory elections, and commit to improving the lives of First Nations people. I am looking forward to engaging with the newly appointed Minister for Aboriginal Australians, Minister McCarthy, to tackle this challenge," he said.

**END**

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Since 2017 Children's Ground has:

- engaged 736 First Nations children (0-5 years) in high quality, cultural and Western early learning
  - contributing to targets: 3 and 4
- employed 209 First Nations people, including 102 young people (16-30 years)
  - contributing to targets: 6, 7, 8 and 14
- engaged 3130 First Nations children and their family members in targeted and universal health promotion and support
  - contributing to targets: 1, 2, 4 and 14
- 2,229 First Nations people have engaged with cultural practices in learning, health, wellbeing, governance and employment. Including speaking and strengthening first language
  - contributing to targets: 3, 4, 14 and 16

For more information visit <https://childrensground.org.au/reports/>

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