

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**



Date 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008

**Spending on Indigenous Health – time to get the focus right**

“A much greater focus is needed on public health spending in indigenous communities” according to Professor Mike Daube, President of the Public Health Association. Prof Daube was referring to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Report on Indigenous health spending released today (29 Feb).

“The report provides a catalyst for the new government to make a difference. Firstly, it requires an appropriate increase in expenditure and secondly, it requires the right balance of preventive and primary health care. These should be carefully coordinated along with spending in such as housing, education and community services.”

“Government expenditure in primary health care is a good start. There is no doubt that we need appropriate levels of access to GPs and community nurses if we are to see improvements in the morbidity and mortality statistics. However, wellness is dependent on much, much more,” he said. “A collaborative approach using all the tools that are available provides the greatest chance of improving health outcomes,” he added.

“The report shows that expenditure over the past ten years has only just kept pace with the CPI. With a new government and a new attitude to public health the opportunity exists for specifically directed affirmative health action to bring indigenous health on to a par with the rest of the community.”

Public health includes a breadth of social, socioeconomic, cultural, environmental and individual conditions which impact on the health of the population. It encompasses all the efforts by a society to promote, protect and sustain the population’s health. Adequate housing, immunisation and effective education are basic and important public health initiatives, greatly contributing to tackling preventive diseases. Access to clean water alone goes a long way to fighting disease, improving health and transforming lives.

“The AIHW report is another reminder of the importance of increased funding that is appropriately targeted for the most effective health outcomes,” Professor Daube concluded.

Contact: Michael Moore 0417 249 731(m) 02 6247 2304 (h) [mmoore@phaa.net.au](mailto:mmoore@phaa.net.au)

*The Public Health Association of Australia is a non-party-political organisation with a membership drawn from more than 40 health-related professions. The Association makes a major contribution to health policy in Australia and has branches in every State and Territory.* [www.phaa.net.au](http://www.phaa.net.au)

ADDRESS: PO BOX 319, CURTIN ACT 2605 TELEPHONE: 02 6285 2373 FAX: 02 6282 5438 EMAIL [phaa@phaa.net.au](mailto:phaa@phaa.net.au)