



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP

Minister for Health and Ageing

THE HON WARREN SNOWDON MP

**Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health
and Regional Services Delivery**

MEDIA RELEASE

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**CLOSING THE GAP – INDIGENOUS HEALTH PROJECT OFFICERS IN
DIVISIONS OF GENERAL PRACTICE**

The Rudd Government has provided \$34.7 million over three years to fund 94 full-time equivalent new Indigenous Health Project Officer positions as a part of the historic \$1.6 billion COAG National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes.

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, and the Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, said the project officers will help Indigenous Australians negotiate uncoordinated or fragmented care, get better information, and improve their access to health services.

“Indigenous Health Project Officers in the Divisions of General Practice network and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector will work to deliver culturally appropriate primary care services to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders,” Ms Roxon said.

“They will ensure that health care is responsive to the needs of local communities.

“Funds have also been provided to state and territory-based Aboriginal Community Controlled Health peak bodies to support employment of project officers, recognising the need for close cooperation between mainstream providers and the community controlled health sector.

“This will also assist these Aboriginal Community Controlled Health peak bodies in supporting member organisations to implement other elements of the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package,” she said.

Recruitment of the Indigenous Health Project Officers is expected to begin next month.

Mr Snowdon said a further 160 full-time equivalent positions would be funded over four years commencing in 2009-10 for local Indigenous Australians to work as Outreach Workers in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Divisions of General Practice.

“Indigenous Outreach Workers will encourage and support Indigenous Australians to follow-up care and access health services,” he said.

“Up to 80 of these positions are expected to be available from late this year.”

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