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Media Statement

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Closing the gap

The failure to close the gap is not confined to a single party, institution, or government. There has been a collective effort across Australian politics to succeed in this area, but closing the gap has not been achieved.

These failures are not from lack of effort, good will, or funding. We have been too content to maintain the status quo, which we know is not working. While progress has been made, we continue to fail our most marginalised Australians, especially those living in remote communities, particularly women and children.

Increasing jobs and opportunities in remote Australia is an admirable aim and critical to closing the gap, as we know that is where indigenous disadvantage is most pronounced. For meaningful change to occur, we must be consistent in our approach. We cannot chop and change, we cannot close the gap with policy on the run.

New arrangements need accountability and follow through, to ensure that announcements made in this area are more than just a headline. Without an audit into indigenous expenditure, we will not know in detail what is working and what is failing. We will not know if today's announcement simply collects and replicates existing gaps and leaks in how taxpayer money is spent.

Only a Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse in Indigenous Communities will reveal the full extent of the problem in remote communities and what we must do to put it to an end. This Royal Commission would also support the work of the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

ENDS