



CLOSE THE GAP

NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY

YOUR "HOW TO" GUIDE



TOGETHER WE'RE CLOSING THE GAP

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can expect to live 10–17 years less than non-Indigenous Australians.

In response, more than 200,000 people have joined the Close the Gap campaign to say this can't continue. Together, we're calling on our government to Close the Gap and achieve Indigenous health equality by 2030.

National Close the Gap Day (NCTGD) has been central to the great progress we've made so far. It has spread awareness of the importance of health equality and reminded governments of their commitment to end the crisis. But most importantly, it's delivered some significant improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

None of this would be possible without the support of schools, workplaces, communities and people like you.

This guide will help you prepare your NCTGD activity and maximise our collective impact.

For all your NCTGD resources, to take action, and for more information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, visit: oxfam.org.au/closethegap

If you have any questions, simply call our customer service team on Freecall 1800 088 110 (9am – 5pm AEST).

**National Close the Gap Day:
Getting together.
Sharing information.
Taking action.
Closing the gap.**

Dr Helen Szoke
Executive Director, Oxfam Australia



OUR CULTURE —

OUR HEALTH

“Although I’m now living in Canberra, I’ve never forgotten where I come from,” says Janine Mohamed, a proud Nurrunga Kurna woman originally from South Australia. “It has helped me succeed in life and I’m sure it will help my children succeed too.”

Currently the Chief Executive of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives, Janine is also a mother of five (including daughters Alicia and Sophia, pictured).

“I’ve heard many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and community members say that it’s only through maintaining our identity, culture and a sense of belonging that we will get widespread improvements in Indigenous health in the future. I couldn’t agree more.”

Indigenous communities around the country are returning to the healing power of their culture. It’s organisations like Children’s Ground, operating in Jabiru in the Northern Territory, that are helping to strengthen this process.

“For my little boy, I want him to respect the old people, that they are giving him knowledge and understanding ... I want him to be strong and healthier,” says Roxanne Naborlhborlh, Family Engagement and Media Coordinator at Children’s Ground.

Children’s Ground is working to give the next generation a chance to live full, happy and healthy lives. It’s passing on traditional customs and history, and providing education, mentoring and health programs. Roxanne believes that it’s the return to Bininj Gunborrk — traditional dance and singing — that’s improved people’s sense of self, diet, physical activity and community pride.

“We just want to make our culture strong and healthy, so our people can be strong and healthy,” says Roxanne.

A sense of culture and identity are equally important in regional centres and big cities. Fifteen-year-old Sophia explains, “We connect back with ourselves, back with our identity, back with how we have survived, and now we want to thrive. It empowers us to be who we are and [be] strong in our identity.”

“Respect for culture is the foundation on which we’ll Close the Gap. Community and government acceptance of this gives us a clear way forward on what needs to be done and how we should go about it.”

Once we accept this as our foundation, the way to Close the Gap — such as building a National Action Plan through genuine partnerships with Indigenous Australians, providing equal access to healthcare, providing adequate and ongoing health funding for all Australians, and providing healthcare in a culturally appropriate manner — becomes self-evident.

“This isn’t just an Aboriginal issue, it’s an Australian issue. But while our culture is central to our health, it’s only together we’ll Close the Gap,” says Janine. “So thank you for joining with us.”

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**HOW TO HOST A GREAT
NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY
EVENT**



Jabiru, Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory: For more than 20 years, the local Bininj people have not performed their traditional dance and songs. However, since the community resurrected the practice in March 2014, there has been a strong sense of renewed community pride, a significant decrease in drinking, and opportunities for the kids to learn traditional cultural practices. Photo: Jason Malouin/OxfamAUS.



STEP 1: WHAT SORT OF ACTIVITY?

With National Close the Gap Day (NCTGD), our aim is to bring people together, have them share information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health inequality, and take action. By working together, we can achieve Indigenous health equality by 2030.

The key to hosting a successful activity is starting a conversation with those who don't know about the Indigenous health crisis. Share your thoughts on the materials we've provided and then take the suggested actions outlined on page 13 of this guide.

These outcomes should be foremost in your mind when you decide what sort of activity to host.

It could be a few friends at home or at a local cafe. Or it could be a large event with 10, 50, or 100 people. It could be held at your work, in a local park, in another community space or on a university campus. Whatever you choose, have fun and spread the word!

GET ACTIVE

You could join in with an existing community or sporting event being held in March ... or even start your own. Anything goes! You could include old favourites like egg-and-spoon races, team relays, sack races, three-legged races or even a tug-of-war. Think about including Close the Gap messages in creative ways.

MAKE A MEAL OF IT

Everyone loves food, and this is a great way to get people talking. Why not hold a picnic lunch, morning or afternoon tea at work, or a community BBQ?

If you're having food, think about including some bush tucker. There are lots of Aboriginal catering companies to choose from. If you're going DIY with your menu, try recipes such as those in Mark Olive's Outback Cafe. Find them here: www.oxfam.org.au/bushfoods

You can also support a local Oxfam producer partner like Robins Foods. Together with their Indigenous community suppliers, Robins Foods make chutneys, salad dressings and sell Australian herbs. Visit: www.oxfamshop.org.au/outbackspirit

"Our event was very successful. [An Aboriginal father and son] played guitars through lunch ... Indigenous Elders cooked damper ... [It] was good for our clients and their families to see there is an interest in closing the gap [between] Indigenous and non-Indigenous people."

Mick McIntyre, Disability SA

GET CREATIVE

You could:

- Hold a trivia competition using the "chatterboxes" supplied.
- Include NCTGD in your staff meeting or conference.
- Design a banner, sculpture, chalk-artwork or mural painting.
- Set up a display, promoting NCTGD with banners, balloons and temporary tattoos.
- Make your own health promotion posters.

"We held a stall on campus [including a] bake sale; the money was donated towards the campaign. We also had a banner where people could put a hand/footprint to show their support [for Indigenous health]. A pledge sheet was signed by everyone who participated."

Iris Lee, UNSW



STEP 2: DATE TIME AND LOCATION

We're asking you to hold your activity on Thursday 19 March 2015, to maximise the impact of National Close the Gap Day. But if that's not possible for you, we encourage you to hold your event on another day in March, or on Harmony Day (21 March), during NAIDOC week (7–14 July) or Reconciliation week (27 May to 3 June).

STEP 3: BEFORE YOUR ACTIVITY

A small bit of preparation goes a long way to ensuring the success of your activity and the impact of National Close the Gap Day.

INVITE YOUR GUESTS

Any event is a good event, but the more people you include, the bigger your impact.

Tell your family, friends and workmates what you're up to. They might want to help you run your activity, or even register their own. Send out invitations by email, use social media, and put up the posters we've supplied. You can download more posters from our website:

www.oxfam.org.au/nctgd

If you're holding a public event, think about promoting it in your local newspaper, community newsletter or on community noticeboards.

SEND A REMINDER

Remind everyone about your event a week beforehand.

BEFORE YOUR ACTIVITY

- Download more resources. If you're holding quite a large activity, visit www.oxfam.org.au/national-day to download additional chatterboxes, posters and "30 for 2030 Challenge" forms.
- Close the Gap T-shirts are discounted in the lead up to NCTGD. Get in quick to make sure your shirts arrive on time. Visit: www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap
- Watch the "Our Culture — Our Health" video online or using the DVD supplied. If you're having an outdoor event, forward a link to the video so people have a chance to watch it before the day.
- Read what's expected as part of the "30 for 2030 Challenge". This is the most important thing we'd like you and your guests to do.



West End, Queensland: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) employees Lenny Dahlen and Anita Heerschop at the 2014 NCTGD event. Photo: Jason Malouin/OxfamAUS.

STEP 4: ON THE DAY

Here are some tips for a fun and effective event. While your activity can be any shape or size, there are a couple of things we'd like you to include.

WATCH, DISCUSS, LEARN AND HAVE FUN

- Start with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land you're meeting on.
- Say hello to everyone and explain why their involvement is important for NCTGD.
- Watch the "Our Culture — Our Health" video together.
- Distribute the "30 for 2030 Challenge" forms. Make sure you have enough copies for everyone.
- Use the chatterboxes that are supplied in your pack. These are great for breaking the ice, starting conversations and helping people understand the health crisis.

TAKE ACTION

We can't stress enough how important it is to take action on and around NCTGD. Here are some things you can do to boost the number of people who join in:

- Encourage people to take the "30 for 2030 challenge" and explain what's involved. You'll find details about it in your event pack. Ask them to return their forms to us as soon as possible (by mid-April at the latest).
- Write to the Prime Minister. You can either use the printed letter supplied or do it online at www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap
- If you're holding a workplace event, ask your CEO or managers to sign the Close the Gap Organisational Pledge (supplied in your activity pack).

Remember to get people to sign up to the "30 for 2030 Challenge".

SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Tell the world what you're up to. Share pictures of your event, and include ones of people holding the "30 for 2030 Challenge" poster. Include a caption encouraging people to sign the Close the Gap pledge or write to the PM, and use this link www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap and this hashtag [#closethegap](https://twitter.com/closethegap)



Photo: Michael Myers/OxfamAUS



Photo: Peter Izard/OxfamAUS/OxfamAUS



Photo: Lara McKinley/OxfamAUS



Photo: Bonnie Savage/OxfamAUS

STEP 5: AFTER YOUR EVENT

There are a couple of really important things to do after the day.

YOUR FEEDBACK

A heads-up that we'll be in touch towards the end of March to get some feedback about your activity. The online survey will take 10–15 minutes to do. Your input will help us shape and improve future events. Thanks in advance!

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS AND THANK EVERYONE

Thank everyone who came, and remind them how important their involvement has been in achieving health equality. You can include some of the achievements listed in the chatterboxes or visit www.oxfam.org.au/closesthegap for more examples.

Remind them of their “30 for 2030 Challenge” pledge and encourage them to fill and return this to us as soon as they can.

Then let the world know what you got up to, what inspired you and what you talked about. Remember to give yourself a pat on the back — it's people like you that make National Close the Gap Day such a success.



Photo: Michael Myers/OxfamAUS



Jabiru, Northern Territory: Peter Djandjomerr runs the Morle Boys program for Children's Ground. This program combines traditional culture with life skills and mentoring. Photo: Jason Malouin/OxfamAUS.



Photo: Jason Malouin/OxfamAUS

GETTING TOGETHER. SHARING STORIES.

TAKING ACTION. CLOSING THE GAP.

CLOSE THE GAP

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