



# CLOSE THE GAP

NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY

YOUR "HOW TO" GUIDE

FOR STUDENTS



## WHAT IS

## CLOSE THE GAP?

Close the Gap is Australia's biggest health equality campaign, which aims to achieve health equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians within our generation.

It's a horrible fact that in 2015, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples die 10–17 years younger than other Australians. If your best mate was likely to die nearly two decades before you, just because of his or her background, would you be okay with that?

No way! And more than 200,000 Australians reckon this is just not good enough either. Last year alone, almost 50,000 students and teachers joined the Close the Gap campaign, calling on our state, territory and federal governments to work with Australia's First Peoples to achieve health equality by 2030.

In 2015, National Close the Gap Day (NCTGD) is on 19 March. It's a day when hundreds of thousands of Australians take action by holding events around the nation to celebrate the successes of Close the Gap so far and raise awareness about the work that still needs to be done.

The support of students like you is REALLY important. Why? Because you might be under 18 but you are powerful. This is your generation we are talking about! When we're trying to change a problem that has been around for more than 200 years, it's going to take a lot of public pressure over the long-term to keep governments focused on their commitments to closing the gap.

This NCTGD "How To" Guide is designed for you, Australian schools students, who are looking to make some noise, make a difference, and show support for closing the gap. This guide will help you prepare your event, help you decide what actions to take, and is full of tips and suggestions to make your event a success.

Register your school at: [www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap](http://www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap)

You can also download heaps of goodies, including videos, animations, action guides and more from: [www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools](http://www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools)

If you've already done this, let's get started!

# WHAT IS “THE GAP” AND WHY

## DOES IT NEED TO BE CLOSED?

**The United Nations Human Development Index consistently ranks Australia as one of the most developed nations in the world. We’re an enormously wealthy nation, and have among the highest life expectancies in the world.**

But not, unfortunately, if you’re an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. In fact, mortality rates for Indigenous Australians are on par with some of the poorest countries in the world. In 2009, the United Nations’ State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples report found that Australia and Nepal tie for having the world’s worst life expectancy gaps between its Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Ouch.

The horrible reality is that in 2015, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live 10–17 years less than non-Indigenous Australians (this number is even higher in some parts of the country) and have more — and more serious — health problems.

Access to health care is generally more difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, whether it be because of geographic distance, lack of services, lack of culturally appropriate services, or intergenerational trauma leading to mistrust of mainstream health services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are more likely to have high rates of chronic disease such as a kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes and eye diseases that cause blindness. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids are also more likely to get sick, especially with ear and eye conditions, which make it super hard to do well at school.

Huge numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experience racism, which can have serious impacts on their mental health. Unsurprisingly in the face of this, there are high rates of smoking and substance abuse.

### THE STORY SO FAR

But hold up, it’s not all doom and gloom! Since Close the Gap started in 2007, there are many positive stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people successfully improving their health around Australia. For starters, smoking rates have significantly declined. Infant and child mortality rates have also dropped too, thanks to some amazing programs run by a number of Aboriginal Medical Services around the nation.

Most federal, state and territory governments have also signed the Close the Gap Statement of Intent, committing them to take action on Indigenous health equality. Close the Gap is also supported by all the major political parties.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

Whether you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or a non-Indigenous Australian, health is a basic human right.

It’s about standing together with your friends, your school, your community and your nation to show support for achieving Indigenous health equality by the year 2030.

Think about how old you’ll be in 2030 — it’s our generation! That means your help in closing the gap is even more important. Will you look back on your actions when 2030 rocks around and think, “I did everything I could to help Close the Gap?”

### WHAT MORE NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

The campaign is in a really critical stage. Eight years in, with 15 more to go — we can’t give up or lose momentum! We know it’s ambitious, but with the support of young people like you, we know it’s possible.

We need to make sure that governments know their citizens haven’t forgotten the promises they made, and expect them to keep health equality on the political agenda. Signing and saying is one thing, but doing is another!

We also want to make sure that the government works in genuine, meaningful partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Close the Gap in life expectancy and health standards. This means making sure local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are involved in creating and delivering solutions, services, programs and policies — after all, it’s their lives, their health, and their communities!

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are proud, capable and passionate about changing their communities — just watch the NCTGD DVD or videos online at [www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap](http://www.oxfam.org.au/closethegap) to see what we mean!

### HOW DOES NCTGD HELP?

National Close the Gap Day is a way for all Australians to join together in support on Indigenous health equality and remind our political leaders of their commitment to Close the Gap.

Basically, it’s a big awesome day where hundreds of thousands of people run all sorts of creative, noisy, inspiring and fun awareness-raising events that show our government that every day Australians still care about this issue, and we haven’t forgotten their promises.

More than 150,000 people came together last year for NCTGD, and every voice makes a difference. Think of the roar of the crowd on Grand Final Day or the Boxing Day Test — we’re double that! No matter how big or small our events are, we all pack a powerful political punch! We can’t do it without your help, so let’s get to it!



## OUR CULTURE — OUR HEALTH

### We travelled to Canberra in the ACT and Jabiru in the NT, and learned how young people are the shining light in helping to Close the Gap.

Alicia, 16, and Sophia, 15, are sisters growing up in Canberra. Sitting on their couch at home, we chat about what it's like to be a young Aboriginal person growing up in Australia.

“Because I'm lighter-skinned people say to me, “You're not Aboriginal”, or “You don't look Aboriginal”, and that really does attack me mentally,” Alicia says. However, like many young people, she finds her strength through exploring her identity and trying to find where she belongs.

Alicia and Sophia are part of Solid Young Sistas and Brothas Aboriginal youth group, where young people from the area get together to discuss the health, wellbeing and cultural issues they face, and reflect on their many strengths as young Aboriginal people.

Alicia says the group has helped her find her foundation, and she sees that being more connected to culture makes people stronger and healthier. “Solids is a great way of helping me know my identity. It helps me know my people are strong and we know how to get through all this ... Mental and physical health gets better through the support of our community,” she says.

Sophia agrees: “Most Aboriginal people haven't had a that good string of health because of things that have happened in the past,” she says. But young people are determined to change their future. “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.”

Indigenous communities around the country are returning to the healing power of their culture. Children's Ground, designed and led by locals in Jabiru, is also helping strengthen this process. Children's Ground is working to give the next generation a chance to live full, happy and healthy lives by strengthening traditional customs and history, together with strong education, mentoring and health programs.



Peter Djandjomerr, 19, is part of the Morle Boys program at Children’s Ground. It teams up young men and boys to teach traditional culture like singing and dancing, practical life skills like building and maintenance work, as well as mentoring. Peter says the program aims to help get his community back into shape.

“We always try and keep the community safe, keep it strong, try to build it back,” he says. “What I want to see in the future is families getting together, and the family helping each other to be strong.”

But leading the Morle Boys also has its own benefits for Peter: “It makes you feel healthy, makes you feel proud about where you’re from and what you do for your culture, for your people.”

Justin Mohamed, former CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), says the medical component of health is just one part of Close the Gap — the trauma and loss of culture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have experienced also heavily impacts on other elements of health.

“This can be changed in a generation — land, family, clan groups, knowing your foundations makes you a stronger and healthier person,” Justin says. “We have so many vibrant and resilient young people coming through now, and they know the answers. All we need are partners.”

**“Respect for culture is the foundation to Close the Gap — and when all Australians and our government accept this, it gives us a clear way forward. Respect for the world’s oldest culture means Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can’t be overlooked.”**

**Respect is central to how we are seeking to Close the Gap:**

- **Building a National Action Plan through genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.**
- **Providing equal access to healthcare and adequate and ongoing health funding for all Australians.**
- **Ensuring healthcare is provided in a culturally appropriate manner.**

**“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, Alicia and Sophia’s mum. “So thank you for joining with us.”**

# PLANNING YOUR DAY



Photo: Bonnie Savage/OxfamAUS

## So ... How on earth do we choose activities to run on National Close the Gap Day? You've come to right place!

This is the fun bit. To start, just ask yourself:

- What are my friends and I good at? What are we into? Sport? Music? Dance? Social media?
- How can we incorporate those things on the day?
- How can we get everyone involved at some stage?
- How can we entertain people and make sure they have fun?
- How can we make sure people learn more about the campaign and how they can get involved?
- Your event needs to be meaningful to you and your school — make sure it is relevant to the stuff people in your community might understand or experience themselves. Ask yourself:
- Will it be enjoyable?
- Will we get people thinking, asking questions and wanting to make a difference?

Be passionate AND realistic — what can you do with what you've got? You'll be surprised at how even a small group of students, with just a few resources, can end up creating an awesome event!

Make sure someone is on hand to document your day. Who are your student journalists taking photos, videos or writing reflection pieces? Recording your day can help ensure your voice is heard by even more people than those in your school. You can also email them to Oxfam — you might make yourself, your friends and your school famous on our blog! Just email them to [annalisedm@oxfam.org.au](mailto:annalisedm@oxfam.org.au), along with the release form from [oxfam.org.au/ctgschools](http://oxfam.org.au/ctgschools) (your teacher needs to fill this bit out).

We've included some ideas on page 8 as a starting point. Get a group together to brainstorm; we know you can come up with WAY more activity ideas!

# NINE TOP TIPS

The issue of Indigenous health equality is everyone's business. As Janine explained earlier, it's only together that we can Close the Gap. So let's make National Close the Gap Day 2015 as big as we can. Let's get so many people involved that governments are compelled to take further action. That means planning for success! Here are some tips to help you maximise the impact of your activity.

## 1. Know what you want to achieve

The aim of National Close the Gap Day is to bring people together — both at your school, and also across Australia! What do you want people to get out of the day? To know more about the issue? To know how to make a difference? Have fun? Sign the pledge? All of the above?

## 2. Build a team

Friends make it fun, and a group guarantees a great event. P.S. It's always good to get a teacher or other school leader involved to help out!

## 3. Choose your date

We are asking you to hold your activity on NCTGD, Thursday 19 March 2015, to maximise the impact of the day. But sometimes this may not be possible. If it's not, why not integrate it with Harmony Day (21 March), or hold it during NAIDOC week (7–14 July) or Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June)?

## 4. Make an invite list

Invite students, teachers, family, community members, elders, your local MP, the local paper and any other important people. Create your own invites and send them out, and put up posters around your school and community.

## 5. Plan your event!

Check out the ideas over the page for inspiration, take the *30 for 2030 Challenge* and get on board with the Close the Gap student photo challenge on Instagram! We've included an example action plan and checklist, and one for you to fill out yourself on page 13 and 14 to help you get cracking.

## 6. Make it awesome

The best events are fun, informative and interactive. Use music, play the Close the Gap video, get peeps involved in activities and sign the pledge.

## 7. Plan your resources

What do you already have and what will you need to make it all happen? Get those cameras, paints, props, music and more ready!

## 8. Make some noise!

Tell us what you're planning on our Facebook page: [facebook.com/closethegapcampaign](https://facebook.com/closethegapcampaign) and post your pics! You can also follow us on Instagram at @closethegapcampaign and tag us into your photos via #closethegap — don't forget to join our Instagram challenge! You can also send or email us your event photos, video and audio (along with the photo release available to download at [www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools](http://www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools)) so we can show you off on Oxfam's website. Email Annalise at [annalisedm@oxfam.org.au](mailto:annalisedm@oxfam.org.au)

## 9. Celebrate and reflect on your achievements

Have a post-event celebration and thank everyone who helped out. How many students did you reach? How many stickers did you give away? How many people organised and participated in events? How many people signed the pledge in total? Talk about what worked well and what you would change for next year. Look back and enjoy your success — you've earned it!

For more tips, ideas, videos, downloadable materials and more, visit [www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools](http://www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools)

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## MAKE IT

- Create a banner, mural or sculpture.
- Do the Close the Gap student photo challenge on Instagram (see page 10 and 11).
- Turn your event photos into a Flipagram video.
- Create artwork exploring differing perspectives on Close the Gap.
- Make a short film of your event — use your camera or even your phone!
- Make your own Close the Gap posters by hand or using design software.
- Design a healthy eating cookbook, using Australian native foods or “bush tucker”.
- Make a Close the Gap photo booth.



## PLAY IT

- Create your own competition — for example, who can get the most *30 for 2030 Challenge* pledges?
- Play Quizmaster — test your Close the Gap trivia knowledge by creating a comp using our chatterboxes.
- Get your music on — whether you're a singer, rapper, DJ, songwriter or in a band.
- Move it Mob Style! Check out [www.moveitmobstyle.com.au](http://www.moveitmobstyle.com.au) and create a flash mob, run a dance class, or host a dance concert.
- Run a sport game/event — we can send you Close the Gap sport tape for the players to wear on their arms!
- Take it to the stage — write and perform your own play.



## SHOW IT

- Show your respect for Australia's First Peoples and their culture by starting with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land on which you are meeting — maybe even invite a local elder to participate too?
- Use your art and photos to hold a Close the Gap themed exhibition.
- Set up a display or a stall in the playground for the week leading up to NCTGD.
- Upload a link to the Close the Gap pledge on your school website (see page 10).
- Decorate your school and classroom with posters — even change your school sign to show your support!
- Show the Close the Gap DVD in class or assembly and use the related chatterbox to answer questions.
- Wear the NCTGD tattoos, stickers, wristbands — or even make your own badges.



Photos: Jason Malouin/OxfamAUS



## SAY IT

- Write a letter to your local Member of Parliament (federal and/or state or territory) asking how they are demonstrating a commitment to closing the gap, and why you think it's important they back words with actions! You could also invite them to your NCTGD event as a special guest.
- Invite an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member to talk to your class or the school — you'll get a personal perspective of the issues involved in closing the gap; our older generations are often amazing storytellers.
- Dive to the depths and have a debate. This is a great way to look at all the factors that are part of the issue — for example, "Is it possible to Close the Gap in Indigenous health outcomes?", "Are young people the key to closing the gap?" and "Should closing the gap in Indigenous health be a priority for our governments at state and federal levels?"
- See if you can get on your community radio station to talk about what your school is doing on NCTGD — they'll want a run-down of what Close the Gap is, so get yourself prepared!
- Write it, rhyme it, tell a story — we've all got different experiences of "the gap". What does it mean to you? Say it in a rap, a poem, a story or any style you like. Say it at assembly, in class, or write it down and put it in the school newsletter.
- Write to your local paper to see if they'd like to cover your event. They'll want to interview a spokesperson, so nominate a student and brush up on your Close the Gap knowledge!

Even if you can't vote yet, your voice still counts! When we're talking closing the gap by the year 2030, think about how old you'll be in 15 years time. Change is possible, it's already happening now — this is one of the key issues of our generation, and we have to be proactive in maintaining the momentum towards health equality.

Making your voice heard by our nation's leaders is not hard or scary. In fact, we've made it super easy for you!

Take the *30 for 2030 Challenge*, and collect signatures from friends, family and everyone else. Your nan, your teacher, your bus driver, your mum's best friend, your sports coach ... when you think about it, you've got a lot of people around you who can help!



## So how does the photo challenge work?

Take the Close the Gap student photo challenge, it's mega easy. Follow [@closethegapcampaign](#) on Instagram. Check out the Close the Gap student photo challenge list below and on Instagram at [@closethegapcampaign](#).

- Each day from 16–20 March, look at the daily theme and take a photo according to whatever that theme is.
- Once you've snapped your masterpiece, it's time to show us! Upload your photo to Instagram, apply a fantastic filter, and add a caption.
- This next bit is super important: Make sure in the caption you use the hashtag [#ctgstudents](#), [@closethegapcampaign](#) and [@3thingsoxfam](#), so we know the photo is part of the competition. If you forget, you can post it as a comment and we'll still find you.
- Check out other students' photos! Search for the [#ctgstudents](#) hashtag on Instagram to see them all.

We only have two rules:

1. No faces allowed in photos! And always get people's permission if you are taking photos of them. We take your privacy super-seriously.

While this means our challenge is a selfie-free zone (awww!), on the upside it means you can go crazy taking the most creative photos ever. Crop images in unique ways, take some super-close ups, focus on hands and feet, snap objects rather than people — the options are endless!

2. Any photo you submit must be your own. No uploading other people's photos and claiming it as yours — apart from it being totally not cool, you may also be in breach of copyright laws.

If you take a photo of someone else's artwork, make sure you give them credit! For example, "This is an amazing dot painting we saw by local artist X, who visited our class this week."



## What's the Daily Deadly Four?

At the end of each day, Team NCTGD will go through the photos shared on Instagram with the [#ctgstudents](#) hashtag and give a shout out to our four favourite photos. We want to put a spotlight on the best snaps shared by students across Australia, and show them off to the NCTGD community. You'll be insta-famous!

To be in the running to have your photo selected, just make sure your photo includes the hashtag [#ctgstudents](#) in your caption and you might soon be basking in Instagram glory. But wait, there's more!

Every student or school whose photo is chosen will go into the running to win some awesome prizes at the end of the week. Keep your eye on [@closethegapcampaign](#) to find out what they are.

## So what are the themes?

You can be creative as you like with the Close the Gap student photo challenge! You can interpret the themes any way you want to capture your amazing photo. The themes are as follows:

**Day 1** (Monday 16 March): In our hands.

**Day 2** (Tuesday 17 March): Healthy.

**Day 3** (Wednesday 18 March): Our generation.

**Day 4** (Thursday 19 March): Together.

**Day 5** (Friday 20 March): 3things: Circles, lines and dots.

So fly my pretties! Create! Snap some beautiful shots and use your creativity to make a difference this National Close the Gap Day. But remember — no faces!

Boring but important stuff: If your teachers have more questions about the competition, they can contact Annalise De Mel, Oxfam Australia's Schools Program Coordinator on 1800 088 110. This competition is a "game of skill". Images posted for the competition may be published by Oxfam Australia in any form, including print, audiovisual, websites and email newsletters.



## TAKE THE

## 30 FOR 2030 CHALLENGE

**Even if you can't vote yet, your still voice counts! When we're talking closing the gap by the year 2030, think about how old you'll be in 15 years time. Change is possible, it's already happening now — this is one of the key issues of our generation, and we have to be proactive in maintaining the momentum towards health equality.**

Making your voice heard by our nation's leaders is not hard or scary. In fact, we've made it super easy for you! Take the "30 for 2030 Challenge", and collect signatures from friends, family and everyone else. Your nan, your teacher, your bus driver, your mum's best friend, your sports coach ... when you think about it, you've got a lot of people around you who can help!

You can send a strong message to our political leaders that Australians still care about health equality, just by collecting signatures for the pledge. We need to make sure the Close the Gap funding continues, is seen as important, and is still a priority to people like you!

What to do:

1. Photocopy the *30 for 2030 Challenge* pledge sheets in this pack, or download them from [www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools](http://www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools)
2. Ask everyone you can possibly think of to sign the pledge.
3. Give your completed form back to your teacher by 31 March to send back to us.
4. Give yourself a massive high-five for being part of the change you wish to see in the world!

## NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY 2015

### EVENT ACTION PLAN AND CHECKLIST EXAMPLE

KEY THINGS TO DO	KEY THINGS NEEDED	WHO	DUE DATE	ON THE INTERNET	IT'S COMPLETE BE-CAUSE ...	DONE
Register for Close the Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet access</li> <li>School consent</li> </ul>	Janet	ASAP	<a href="http://www.oxfam.org.au/national-day">www.oxfam.org.au/national-day</a>	I've received a confirmation email	YES!
Get a team together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My friends</li> <li>SRC support</li> <li>A room to meet in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Me to start</li> <li>Mr Farrell to support</li> </ul>	Mid Feb	Get each other's email	We have a list of names and have set a meeting date	YES!
Research Indigenous health equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close the Gap info</li> <li>Speak to an indigenous community member in our area</li> <li>Watch "Close the Gap 2014 video"</li> </ul>	All of us	The whole time up to the event and after	<a href="http://www.oxfam.org.au/close-the-gap">www.oxfam.org.au/close-the-gap</a>	We all feel like we can talk to people about our personal understanding of the issue	YES!
Get the Take the "30 for 2030" Challenge Pledge sheets photocopied and handed out to everyone	Download	All of us	ASAP	<a href="http://www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools">www.oxfam.org.au/ctgschools</a>	We have handed out all the pledges to other students	YES!
Spread the word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>URLs to Close the Gap, Facebook page and Youtube channel</li> <li>Phone number of the local paper and radio station</li> <li>School newsletter and website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul and Jo to collect</li> <li>All of us to look at</li> </ul>	Mid March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="http://fb.com/closethegapcampaign">fb.com/closethegapcampaign</a></li> <li>Called our local newspaper and sending them the story</li> </ul>	Everyone has a list of Close the Gap Facebook page and Youtube channel, contact details of local paper and radio station.	YES!

**NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY 2014**

**EVENT ACTION PLAN AND CHECKLIST**

KEY THINGS TO DO	KEY THINGS NEEDED	WHO	DUE DATE	ON THE INTERNET	IT'S COMPLETE BECAUSE ...	DONE