



PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Reference: C14/6838

Mr Bret Hart
Unity of First People of Australia
PO Box 1053
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Mr Hart

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, enclosing a Discussion Paper on Aboriginal Health which reinforces the importance of cultural connectedness in achieving positive health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Prime Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

I appreciate your views on this important matter and thank you for sharing your experience as a public health physician with the Unity of First People of Australia. Your perspective is highly valued and, as you have noted, the issues are indeed complex.

The importance of strong cultural connections to good health and a sense of self worth and identity is well understood by the Indigenous community. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework is currently being renewed as an agreed activity under the Forth National Mental Health Plan and I understand that the renewed Framework will include clear and strong statements about the critical role culture plays in achieving positive health outcomes and in helping to close the gap in life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Australian government is working hard to get children to school, adults into work and building safer communities. Improved health is an important foundation and building block to achieving these outcomes and the government remains committed to addressing Indigenous disadvantage in this area. Your interest and support is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Alan Tudge', written over the printed name.

ALAN TUDGE