The Turnbull Government has today released results of national consultations that highlight the importance of culture and tackling the social determinants of health, to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Minister for Indigenous Health, Ken Wyatt AM, said the wide-ranging *My Life My Lead: Opportunities for strengthening approaches to the social determinants and cultural determinants of Indigenous health* (*My Life My Lead*) report will help inform the whole-of-government approach to better Indigenous health.

“Seven priority areas have been identified in *My Life My Lead*, which will be integral to the next iteration of the Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan. It will also help inform our Closing the Gap refresh agenda,” Minister Wyatt said.

The seven priorities are:

1. Culture at the centre of change  
2. Success and wellbeing for health through employment  
3. Foundations for a healthy life  
4. Environmental health  
5. Healthy living and strong communities  
6. Health service access  
7. Health and opportunity through education

“*My Life My Lead* is an opportunity to build on the work we are doing and the progress we have made, for instance in cutting smoking, reducing infant mortality and chronic disease deaths, and achieving higher immunisation rates.”

The report was compiled from wide-ranging community consultations conducted during March-May 2017. Approximately 600 people attended 13 forums across Australia, and more than 100 written submissions were received. The report was also informed by literature reviews.
“A consistent theme from the consultations was the importance of including parents, Elders and Aboriginal communities in maintaining our people’s connections with culture and country,” Minister Wyatt said.

“While governments have a critical role in setting policies and implementing programs, true and lasting gains are made when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a say in those areas that impact on their health and wellbeing.

“To have strong, healthy children who grow into healthy adults leading fulfilling and long lives, we need to have effective and accessible childhood health care and education, wrapped with positive employment, housing and economic development opportunities.”

Minister Wyatt extended his deep gratitude and respect to the hundreds of individuals and organisations who contributed to the consultations, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from so many parts of Australia, who often travelled significant distances to participate.

Copies of ‘My Life My Lead’ can be found at www.health.gov.au/mylifemylead

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