

1 April 2016

Close the Gap- 10 years on

Liverpool Hospital will mark the 10 year anniversary of Close the Gap day with the launch of the District wide Close the Gap Report Card at a celebration event next week.

The report card is a health snapshot that identifies physical and lifestyle health risks within south western Sydney's Aboriginal population, helping the District target programs to address these areas.

SWSLHD Aboriginal Health Director Nathan Jones said after 10 years, positive change is happening.

"Today the rate of Aboriginal children fully immunised at 12 months is almost on par with that of non-Aboriginal children," said Mr Jones.

"The rate of Aboriginal children fully immunised at the age of five is actually higher than non-Aboriginal children and sits at over 95 per cent.

"To ensure that these children remain on a healthy path, we are also launching the 2 to School program which is being funded by Commonwealth Department of Health.

"The program includes a multidisciplinary group of an Aboriginal Health Worker, Child and Family Nurse, Speech Pathologist and social worker to work with families to support their children's transition to kindergarten.

"This follows on from the Aboriginal sustained home visiting programs that engage with families up until baby turns two and will help ensure key developmental milestones are reached and the child successfully transitions to school.

"While these results are encouraging, there's still work to be done. The Report Card tells us that Aboriginal people are twice as likely to die from heart disease and also twice as likely to be hospitalised for endocrine diseases," he said.

The event will be held on Wednesday 6 April at 10am and will also include an Aboriginal performance as well as a screening of the Best is Breast YouTube video, followed by morning tea.

Close Gap Day is Australia's largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health campaign which aims to close the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and other Australians.