

CLOSING THE GAP ACTIVITY

Ten years after the launch of the Closing the Gap Strategy the life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians has actually widened. The target of health equality by 2030 is unlikely to succeed if the current course continues.

Class exercise

The following exercise can be undertaken by your class to help them understand what's involved. Divide the class into 3 groups. Give each group member a copy of their profile. Facilitate a role play in which Group 2 explains the unfairness of their situation to Group 3. Group 2 and Group 3 then ask Group 1 to fix the unfairness. All groups brainstorm ideas to "close the gap".

GROUP 1

You are the Government. You believe in human rights. You also know that health is not equal in Australia. Some people's lives will be 10 years shorter than others. You want to close that gap and help everyone to live a long and healthy life.

In 2008 you committed to making changes for Group 2.

In 2015 you made a health equality plan but it doesn't have any funding.

You made a mental health plan for 2017-2023 but it doesn't have any funding.

Your plans are falling apart because not everyone has agreed how to pay for them.

GROUP 3

You enjoy good health. Many of your health needs are met by private health insurance and private health providers.

You expect to live to 84.5 years (women) and 80.4 years (men).

Your students' school attendance rate is 93%.

The government spends \$1 on your health for every \$1.38 it spends on Group 2.
Is this fair?

GROUP 2

You are born in Australia. But your life will be 10 years shorter than other Australians. You expect to live to 73.7 years (women) and 69.1 years (men).

Half of your group is unemployed.

Your students' school attendance rate is 83.2%.

You need equal opportunities to get health goods and services.

You need health workers who are adequate and capable.

You need housing, food and water.

You need a focus on health for mothers and babies and for chronic disease.

You need income, education and racism to be addressed so that your health outcomes can be the same as everyone else.

Nearly 3 out of every 4 deaths in your group are from chronic diseases but the government doesn't pay this much extra to help your group. It pays extra for the elderly because they have greater health needs. Why doesn't it pay more for your greater health needs?

For more information see:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/close-gap-10-year-review>