

Oxfam International (Global/Australia/Non-Profit)

www.oxfam.org

<http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous-health/>

Section I: Summary

Oxfam International is a confederation of 13 country-based organizations located throughout the world who seek to bring about lasting change by improving health. Oxfam works directly with communities to influence decision makers and ensure that disadvantaged groups can improve their lives and livelihoods and have a say in decisions that affect them.

Oxfam Australia, one of the country specific organizations has supported opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to exercise their rights to basic social services, sustainable livelihoods, a strong voice and cultural diversity, for more than 30 years. Their work includes education, advocacy and intervention efforts.

Section II: Statement of purpose

Indigenous Australians life expectancy is nearly 20 years shorter than non-indigenous Australians. While most women in Australia can expect to live to an average age of 82 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women only live an average of 65 years. The situation is even worse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men whose life expectancy is only 59 years. Furthermore, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders end up in hospitals at twice the rate of other Australians.

Oxfam Australia seeks to address the fact that indigenous Australians have not shared in the health gains enjoyed by other Australians over the last twenty years and improve their access to health education, care, and other vital resources.

Section III: Outcomes

Oxfam Australia has launched efforts in areas of advocacy and education, youth outreach, health and wellness infrastructure, and community development.

Advocacy and education

Oxfam Australia founded the Close the Gap coalition to increase awareness of this disparity and achieve health equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Publicizing is nearly 20 year life expectancy difference between indigenous people and other Australians, the campaign seeks to educate the general public as well as encourage state and federal governments to increase spending. The Coalition has advocated for:

- Increasing annual Indigenous health funding by \$460 million to enable equal access to health services

- Increasing Indigenous control and participation in the delivery of health services
- Addressing critical social issues such as housing, education and self-determination which contribute to the Indigenous health crisisⁱ

In part due to their efforts, Federal and State Governments announced on November 29, 2008 a significant investment to close the unacceptable gap in health and other outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous youth outreach

Oxfam Australia works in the community with young Indigenous men and women to:

- Develop their leadership capacity;
- Strengthen cultural identity, responsibility and rights;
- Develop indigenous youth networks in Australia and internationally; and
- Take greater control over their lives and actively engage in their communities and the wider society.

Health and wellness infrastructure

Oxfam Australia has developed programming to address the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Efforts include strengthening the governance, management systems and policy work of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and other Aboriginal health organizations.

Community development

With funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, Oxfam Australia has managed the Gulf Regional Health Service in north-west Queensland. This service takes a community development approach to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the Gulf region, through the appointment of community development officers and health promotion officers in each community.

ⁱ <http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous-health/the-issue/>