



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

3 August 2007

### **Indigenous doctors to present Mal Brough with a statement of Indigenous identity, strength and culture at the Garma Festival**

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) will present the Hon Mal Brough MP, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, with a statement reflecting Indigenous cultural strength and knowledge at the Garma Festival on Saturday 4 August.

Dr Mark Wenitong, AIDA President said that he hoped the Minister would use the opportunity afforded by the festival and Indigenous Health forum to open his mind and heart to the great depth of knowledge and wisdom possessed by Indigenous people, particularly in the area of Indigenous health and healing.

"The Garma Festival has been a forum where Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge and identity are negotiated in a respectful and culturally-safe environment. I hope the Minister accepts our statement in the spirit of good faith that we, as Indigenous doctors and advocates for our people, present it.

"We are confident that the Prime Minister, Minister Brough and their cabinet colleagues will come good on their commitment to provide the resources needed to address the findings currently being identified through the child health checks, as well as the health and infrastructure needs of communities as a whole.

"To do anything less is to not follow through with the Prime Minister's stated pledge that 'whatever is needed will be made available by the Commonwealth' said Dr Wenitong.

AIDA will present the following statement to the Minister at the Garma Festival:

***Body, mind, spirit and 'country' are all connected as one***

***Each critical for the survival of the other***

***All fundamental to health and wellbeing***

***Success will come when***

***Our culture is valued***

***Our relationships are respected***

***Our identity is protected***

***By all Australians***

***It is time to see through our eyes***

***Hear our words***

***And heal all of our hearts together***

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