Press Release
16 January 2015

Apunipima calls for smart policy not more policy

Apunipima Cape York Health Council in the lead up to the State election is today calling on both major political parties to get smarter when it comes to policy making.

While acknowledging that both parties have published policies on health, employment and economic development, there is no clear policy direction from either camp on addressing the needs of the people of Cape York.

Apunipima want both parties to move away from the one size fits all approach and develop a policy specifically for the people of Cape York.

Apunipima are looking for a policy framework that is flexible enough to be community led and driven that will address all of the issues faced in Cape York communities. Apunipima is calling for the policy to:

1. Immediately reinvest health funds into transforming primary health care services in Cape York to an Aboriginal Community Controlled comprehensive primary health care service
2. Enable ‘community building initiatives for a society dedicated to growing happy, healthy, safe, smart and economically viable communities.
3. Build and maintain stronger and resilient communities.
4. Build and enhance existing local leadership.
5. Protect and recognise the importance of culture in communities including enabling cultural education and the acknowledgement of positive cultural practices.

“Policy designed for people in urban areas with choices of where to live, where to work, shop and eat, with a multitude of options when it comes to accessing the full range of health services do not work in places like Cape York.” explains Cleveland Fagan, Chief Executive Officer of Apunipima.

“Mainstream policy transplanted into remote Aboriginal communities does not take into account the social determinants, burden of disease, cultural values, remote location and seasonal isolation experienced by Cape York people. This is why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are dying on average 24 years earlier than their non-indigenous counterparts.

“We are calling on today’s policy makers to get smarter and recognise that the siloed approach to policy of the past is no longer relevant, appropriate or effective. In order to make real change we need a specific framework for Cape York that addresses all of the issues under one coherent, coordinated, policy that is flexible enough to be community led and driven.

“Without specific political will and policy we will continue to see the effects of ill-considered policy on individuals, families and communities in the Cape and we will continue going to an increasing number of funerals rather than less.”

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