

**HIGH FAIL EXAMPLE – OUT OF DATE REFERENCES THAT DO NOT SUPPORT THE ARGUMENT. ARGUMENT IS NOT DEVELOPED ENOUGH (EXAMPLES GIVEN OR LIMITED REFERENCE TO ACADEMIC SOURCES OR LECTURE CONTENT. HAD THESE BEEN USED IT WOULD HAVE ENHANCED THE DISCUSSION AND AIMED AT DISCUSSING THE QUESTION MORE.**

## **Assessment Task 2: Major Essay**

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**Discuss any one of the weekly topics or film with reference to Aboriginal peoples contribution to Australian society. You may choose to focus your essay on children, youth, women, men or the whole community.**

### **Week 8: The politics of Aboriginal Health and Education**

The ongoing crisis surrounding poor health and lack of education among various Aboriginal and Indigenous communities throughout Australia has become a current and continuous issue. A substantial amount of organisations such as 'Closing The Gap,' which was developed by the Australian Government, has become a recognised organisation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This organisation has been implemented across Australia to help improve education opportunities and health for all Indigenous people. The overall health problems and the inadequacy of education among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders does contribute to Australian society. To support this statement, the wider community of Australia such as the government are regularly ensuring Indigenous people of all ages receive access to healthcare services such as medical clinics, hospitals and dental clinics as well as access to educational facilities being early childhood programs, schools and several resources through implementing different organisation and government funds to assist in achieving better education and allowing Aboriginal people to participate more in their communities. However, in order to achieve this, healthcare and Indigenous workers must ensure they follow the appropriate guidelines and resources provided so they are able to meet the individual needs of all Indigenous people and support them in achieving better health and education opportunities.

The overall health status of Aboriginal and Indigenous people has become a recognised and ongoing issue when compared to non-Indigenous Australians. Between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, there still remains an immense inequality gap between the two. One of the major health differences between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people in Australia is life expectancy. Life expectancy is an important measure of the health status of a population. It signifies how long a person can expect to live. Several studies have shown that the gap in life

expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians between the years 2010 to 2012 was around 10 years. Statistics like this outline that low life expectancy has been a major health status issue among the Indigenous community for many years. The cause of low life expectancy is due to many surrounding factors such as physical, social and environmental. These determinants include issues with not having access to affordable and healthy food, water supply, adequate housing, education, unemployment, smoking, excessive drinking behaviours and historical factors such as racism, discrimination and colonialism. These particular factors all contribute to one another and have strongly influenced the cause of low life expectancy rates among the Indigenous population. They also cause many issues with the overall health of Indigenous people, such as cardiovascular disease, different cancers, respiratory diseases and nutritional disorders. One program that was implemented to help with the concerning rates of life expectancy among Aboriginal and Indigenous people is the 'Australian Institute of Health and Welfare,' also known as the 'AIHW.' The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is a national asset which targets all Australians to improve their health and welfare. This is achieved through providing information and statistics that can be reliable and trusted to the wider Australian community. One of the main projects AIHW undertook in 2016 was a study to measure the burden of disease experienced by the Indigenous population. The study provided information on the impact of diseases and injuries of Indigenous Australians, as well as the gap of disease in burden between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This program was extremely beneficial as it helped to spread awareness to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to focus on their health and livelihood in order to decrease the current rate of life expectancy of the Aboriginal and Indigenous community. The program also contributes to the Australian community as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare provided a program to help decrease health issues among Indigenous people and spread awareness to those less fortunate.

Another health status issue among Aboriginal and Indigenous communities in Australia is mental health. Mental health refers to a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community. Research on mental health issues among the Indigenous community has shown that Indigenous people are unable to meet those requirements and are having issues with their mental health. The concerning rise of poor mental health has become an ongoing matter for Indigenous and Aboriginal people. Overtime, several factors have contributed to the rise in mental health concerns in Australia for Aboriginal and Indigenous Australians, with a consequential difference of mental health rates between non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australians. These factors can include unresolved trauma such as the 'Stolen Generation,' poor physical health, substance abuse and loss of identity and culture, which have all played a part in the concerning rise of mental health illnesses. One program that was introduced in Victoria in November 2015 to help create positive mental health for everyone, in particular those who may be vulnerable and disadvantaged is the 'Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan.' Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan aimed to ensure all Victorians experience the best possible health, including mental health. This program focused

on providing greater efforts in prevention, support and providing better services to those individuals in need. With the suicide rate in the Aboriginal population, particularly young Aboriginal persons being at greater risk, being twice that of the non-Indigenous population, the Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan aimed to close the gap between Indigenous Victorians and non-Indigenous Victorians in regards to mental illness, suicide and psychological distress. A priority the Victorian government is committed to creating is an Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework, combined with the Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan. It will ensure the Indigenous community of Victoria will receive the necessary support and resources to improve the overall health of all Indigenous communities around Victoria. As of today, the Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan is focusing on achieving better outcomes for all people, so they have the opportunity to thrive, enjoy good mental health and wellbeing throughout their lifespan and can progress on their individual journey and participate in welcoming and supportive communities. This program also contributed to the Australian community as the Victorian government aimed to reduce the rise of mental health issues by working with the Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan to spread awareness and support for those struggling with mental health issues.

Improving educational outcomes for all Australians has become another main primary concern within the Australian government. A key purpose in improving educational outcomes for all Australians is to ensure individuals lead meaningful, productive and responsible lives in order for them to contribute within their communities, specifically those individuals who may be more disadvantaged in comparison to others. Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians experience lower levels of educational access, attainment and participation. To support this statement, there is an obvious gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in relation to education. The Australian Government has provided several resources and opportunities for Indigenous Australians to improve their educational access and knowledge. It will firstly provide record levels of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from providing \$17.5 billion in 2017 to \$32.4 billion in 2029. This record funding will allow students to receive improved resources, achieve better individual results, improve school attendance and improve reading, numeracy and writing results. The Australian Government will also invest \$310.3 billion for school recurrent funding over 2018 to 2019. This will include an estimated loading of \$5.2 billion through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander loading. The Australian Government along with many other organisations and programs still aim to continue improving the educational outcomes and access for Indigenous Australians, with some encouraging improvements already, such as improved levels of year 12 attainment. However, the gap still exists and continues to persist in other educational outcomes and the government must focus on achieving those outcomes for an overall improved education system and opportunities for our Indigenous Australians.

A national campaign which was established in 2006 and has become widely recognised throughout Australia is known as 'Closing the Gap.' The aim of this campaign is to achieve

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality as measured by life expectancy and other factors by 2030. Since Closing the Gap was established, Australian Governments have collaborated together to achieve better health, education and employment opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Indigenous Australians and to eliminate the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Closing the Gap has many priorities in which they are focusing on achieving. One of the first priorities is families, children and youth. This priority aims to reduce violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children as well as aiming to ensure 95% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 year olds are enrolled in early childhood education by 2025. Another priority 'Closing the Gap' campaign focuses on is health, as previously discussed. This campaign wants to ensure they close the gap on life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians by 2031. Not only do they prioritise health, they also focus on education issues among Indigenous people in Australia. One of the main targets 'Closing the Gap' campaign aims to ensure is to halve the gap in attainment of Year 12 or other qualifications for individuals aged between 20-24 by 2020. Other priorities such as economic development, housing, justice (including youth justice), land and water are all as important and significant to one another and the Australian Governments must make certain they are providing funds and resources for individuals so they are able to achieve all the priorities listed above. Although the Australian government has seen improvements in relation to the priorities listed above, more needs to be achieved to ensure all priorities are met and accomplished by their set dates.

To conclude, throughout Australia many different organisations supporting Indigenous and Aboriginal health and education, as well as several other programs have been made available to support the current and ongoing issue among the wider Indigenous community of Australia. As previously discussed throughout the essay, many different strategies and approaches have been provided and granted access to Indigenous and Aboriginal people, in order to assist in spreading awareness to ensure all individuals, whether they are of Indigenous or non-Indigenous background experience positive health and education. These strategies and approaches provide support and facilities to assist with the increasing concern of education and health among Aboriginal and Indigenous people to focus on providing positive health and education for these individuals. These programs and campaigns addressed throughout the essay are only a few of the many provided in Australia are consistently contributing Australian society. The broader community of Australia are always ensuring all Individuals throughout Australia even those who may be more disadvantaged compared to others, go through life experiencing good health and adequate access to education. Although there has been a large amount of positive growth in regards to health and education opportunities for Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians, more work and efforts must be done in order to achieve full positive health and education for all Indigenous people.

## **Bibliography**

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