

ACT ON HEALTH NOW TO CLOSE THE GAP - GREENS

To mark the recent third anniversary of the Rudd Government's apology to the stolen generations, Greens candidate for the Bega electorate, Harriett Swift is calling on the NSW Government and Opposition to do more to end discrimination against Aboriginal Australians and work towards improving their health services on the far south coast.

"After 3 years we are no closer to closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia," Ms Swift said.

"There remains a substantial life expectancy difference of ten years between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and we will never close this gap without culturally appropriate health services."

"The Koori community in our own region is facing the imminent loss of vital services of the community controlled Katungal Health Service because of a stupid bureaucratic and political impasse that could easily be solved."

"There can be no higher priority than health and all the evidence shows that these kinds of services are exactly what is needed to close the life expectancy gap," Ms Swift said.

"It is not good enough for State governments to stand back and wait for Commonwealth action."

"Both State and Federal governments must also move urgently to address the root causes of Aboriginal injustice such as poor nutrition, lack of education, inadequate housing, low employment and consequentially high imprisonment rates.

"I know that many in the Koori community and mainstream Australia welcomed the apology as a first step towards healing and strengthening reconciliation and left many of us hopeful about the future."

"Saying sorry without action, however, means nothing and may be even worse than saying nothing at all."

"The Greens approach to these issues is different. We believe policy making should be based on listening to and engaging with Aboriginal Australia," Ms Swift said.