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**INDIGENOUS MALES –IMPROVING THEIR HEALTH FOR LONGER LIVES AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE**  
*AMA Indigenous Health Report Card 2009*

The eighth AMA Indigenous Health Report Card – *The Health of Indigenous Males: Building Capacity, Securing the Future* – was launched in Darwin today by the Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, and AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce.

Dr Pesce said the Report Card this year highlights the tragic state of health for Indigenous males in Australia today, and proposes solutions that will ensure longer and better quality lives.

“Indigenous males are much more likely to die earlier from preventable causes than non-Indigenous males and Indigenous females,” Dr Pesce said.

“At every age – from boyhood to manhood – Indigenous males experience higher rates of diseases and conditions that are totally preventable.

“We need to take action to change this.

“There is evidence that the loss of status, self-esteem and sense of purpose experienced by many Indigenous men is intimately bound up with their poor health as both a cause and an effect.

“All Australian men need a sense of purpose in their lives, and they deserve to feel pride in themselves, their families and their culture.

“The absence of these things has had profound implications for the health of Indigenous men, who may have also lost their connection to their country, their language, and their spirit.

“A key element of the solution is for Indigenous men to recapture control of their lives and the factors that determine their health and life prospects.

“This cannot be achieved without genuine collaborative relationships between Indigenous Australians, governments and health agencies, and a national plan for closing the gap.

“The AMA believes it is important not to become overwhelmed or paralysed by the dire facts about the health of Indigenous males.

“Our efforts as a nation to close the gap on Indigenous life expectancy will not succeed unless we turn around the high rates of poor health and early death among Indigenous boys, adolescents and men.

“We must work together to provide the right support, the right partnerships, and the right opportunities for Indigenous people to empower themselves for better health,” Dr Pesce said.

