

A holistic approach on Aboriginal health

The issue of Aboriginal health is of great concern to all Australians. It is far too important an issue to be used as a political and bureaucratic football.

Some people seem to think that we can “cure” Aboriginal health by simply providing funding for increased medical care. A classic example of this is the treatment of middle ear infection in the Northern Territory.

The problem of poverty in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory leads to children getting terrible middle ear infections. The medical solution: give all Aboriginal infants prophylactic antibiotics.

Australia’s health care policies (more aptly referred to as “sick care policies”) have not provided the answers for Aboriginal communities. Maybe it is time to try a more holistic approach. Surely addressing the social, economic and environmental conditions of poverty and poor sanitation are the fundamental issues.

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