



# Media Statement

30 November, 2017

## **Tribute to a great elder and advocator for social change**

The Healing Foundation pays tribute today to a great advocate for social justice and the driving force behind many initiatives which improved the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Sol Bellear AM, a Bundjalung man from Mullumbimby who has passed away, was the Chair of the first Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern.

“Thanks to his passion and commitment there are now more than 140 of these services across Australia, providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the medical care they need, including services to address unresolved trauma,” said Healing Foundation Chair Steve Larkin.

“As a founding member of the service, Sol helped to show Australia that we can break down barriers and fix the health problems plaguing our communities if we invest in services that meet our specific needs and we involve Aboriginal people in their design and delivery.

“He was a powerful voice for self-determination and a man who empowered our people to find solutions.”

Sol was also the first Chair of the Aboriginal Legal Service and a NSW Councillor, and then Commissioner, for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

“As a young man he played an important role in achieving land rights for Aboriginal people through NSW legislation. He remained an advocate for advance through his work with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, for many years.

“He will be remembered as a lifetime Aboriginal activist, a strong and passionate voice for change, and a man who could achieve change because of the respect he commanded in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sectors,” said Professor Larkin.

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