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Indigenous Students Plan to Launch National Initiative to Close the Gap.

The tenth annual Close the Gap report demonstrates that Indigenous Australians are some of the most disadvantaged people in the world, a fact that Indigenous students will not continue to stand for as the Union of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (UATSIS) announces it will be launching an inter-campus initiative in response to the Close the Gap report.

The National President of UATSIS, the representative body for Indigenous undergraduate students in Australia, has firmly stated the organisation's disappointment in the current and preceding government's ability meet the Close the Gap targets, as well as UATSIS' intention to direct the Indigenous student cohort to initiate change by implementing an intercampus Close the Gap initiative.

“The pain of the tenth Close the Gap report is felt by all Indigenous people, including Indigenous students who remain the most disadvantaged group in University.

“Currently, the gap in retention rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous University students sits at just under 10%. Similarly, less than half of all Indigenous University students that begun their degree in 2006 had completed it by 2014, demonstrating the lack of ability to address the gap in University education in the last decade.

“Indigenous University students continue to face structural disadvantages, brought about by years of trauma and oppression, that would see us fail, not pass. Gaps in cultural understanding, racism and intergenerational cycles of trauma and poverty continue to create a gap in University education.

“It's hard to put your head down and study when you find out a family member has passed away 10 years before they should have from an easily preventable disease. It's hard to keep attending a tutorial after a tutor or a student makes racist comments towards you or the class. It's hard buying textbooks when your people are so deeply ingrained within poverty.

“UATSIS will work with Indigenous student leaders across the country, student unions and University administration to launch an intercampus initiative in August 2018, that will bring together University students and staff from across Australia to fight the gap inside and outside University.

More details on the initiative to come in the following month.

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