

Implementation Plan 2023

**Commonwealth
Closing the Gap**



Australian Government



CLOSING THE GAP



Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2023

© Commonwealth of Australia 2023

ISSN 2653-5750 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (print)
ISSN 2653-5769 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (online)

Copyright Notice

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Third party copyright

Wherever a third party holds copyright in this material, the copyright remains with that party. Their permission may be required to use the material. Please contact them directly.

Attribution

This publication should be attributed as follows:
© Commonwealth of Australia, Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2023

Use of the Coat of Arms

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed on the following website:
<https://pmc.gov.au/cca>

Other uses

Enquiries regarding this document are welcome at:
ClosingtheGap@niaa.gov.au
Closing the Gap Branch
National Indigenous Australians Agency
PO Box 2191, Canberra ACT 2600

Design

Dreamtime Creative

Front Cover image

Wave Rock, Hyden, Western Australia

Acknowledgement

The Australian Government acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.



**The Albanese Government
is pleased to present its first
Closing the Gap
Implementation Plan**

Contents

Lasting results can only be accomplished with accelerated efforts.

We outline the Government's forward looking strategic priorities for Closing the Gap over the next 12 to 18 months.

Prime Minister's forward 4

Minister for Indigenous Australians' foreword 6

Executive Summary 8

Overview of the National Agreement 10

Changing the way we work: Embedding the Priority Reforms 11

Priority Reform One 12

Formal partnership and shared decision-making

Priority Reform Two 18

Building the community-controlled sector

Priority Reform Three 22

Transforming government organisations

Priority Reform Four 28

Sharing access to data and information at a regional level

Delivering on Outcomes and Targets	36		
Outcome 1	38	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives	
Outcome 2	43	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong	
Outcome 3	47	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years	
Outcome 4	52	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years	
Outcome 5	57	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential	
Outcome 6	61	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways	
Outcome 7	66	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are engaged in employment or education	
Outcome 8	70	Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities	
Outcome 9	74	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need	
Outcome 10	82	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system	
Outcome 11	87	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system	
Outcome 12	90	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system	
Outcome 13	96	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe	
Outcome 14	100	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing	
Outcome 15	104	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters	
Outcome 16	108	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing	
Outcome 17	112	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives	
Cross-cutting outcome areas	116		
Disability	118		
Gender and sexuality	121		
Ageing populations	123		
Remote Australia	124		
Appendix A: Summary of new actions	126		
Meeting our commitments	134		
Glossary of terms	135		

Prime Minister's forward

And now we measure the legacy of this history every year in the report on Closing the Gap. The gap is not closing. Not fast enough. Even going backwards in some areas.

We say listen to us and we will help make things better so we can close the gap. We say listen to us before making policies that affect us. Please stop ignoring us.

Dr Samuel Bush-Blanasi¹



On behalf of the Commonwealth, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which Australians live and work. I also pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

It is now 15 years since Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, and 14 since the then Labor Government released the first Closing the Gap Report. Three months ago my Government tabled the most recent Closing the Gap Annual Report. In my Ministerial Statement to Parliament, I noted that the persistence - and even worsening - of so many of the gaps must drive a renewed national commitment to genuine partnership between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We cannot continue down the same path of Canberra imposing decisions - and somehow expect a different result. If we are to achieve the better result that is so desperately needed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must have a genuine say in matters that affect them, and a real hand in shaping the solutions.

This Implementation Plan is an important first step - a concrete demonstration of how we will advance real-world solutions that improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It re-affirms Closing the Gap is a top priority for my Government, and it reflects our unwavering commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I gratefully acknowledge the ongoing work of the Coalition of Peaks, so capably led by Pat Turner, in working together with us to develop and deliver tangible, practical and specific actions.

I am also deeply grateful for the wisdom and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives in leadership positions in my Government: the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Linda Burney MP; the Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and the Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy; and the Special Envoy for Reconciliation and Implementation of the Uluru Statement, Senator Pat Dodson. Their leadership and insights are central.

1. Read Article by Dr Samuel Bush-Blanasi, 11 December 2022 (National Indigenous Times).

More broadly, we should also acknowledge the strength that lies at the heart of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and their enduring connection to Country that stretches back more than 60,000 years. At the same time, we recognise what this plan seeks to address: the chasm that lies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia when it comes to incarceration rates, children in out-of-home care, access to health care, education outcomes and employment rates.

This Implementation Plan is about action, action that gives purpose and direction to our efforts to transform government, and enables the full participation and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our national life. This Plan also accelerates specific actions on the National Agreement's four Priority Reforms to transform the relationship between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

The Implementation Plan is a critical part of my Government's work to transform these relationships. It is not the only part.

My Government is committed to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. Later this year, all Australians will have the historic opportunity to vote on enshrining a Voice to Parliament in our Constitution. The Voice will be an avenue to ensure the perspectives, experiences and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are infused in the policies and programs the government delivers with them and for them. I am optimistic about the success of the Voice referendum because I am optimistic that Australians will support this embrace of truth, justice, decency and respect.

The Uluru Statement was a gracious invitation to move forward together, just as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is a respectful commitment to full and genuine partnership. Together, these and other commitments are part of our longer journey towards a better future. A future of equality, respect and dignity for all. A future in which we truly live the spirit of the fair go.



The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
- Prime Minister

February 2023



The Implementation Plan is about action that gives purpose and direction to our efforts to transform government, and enables the full participation and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Minister for Indigenous Australians' foreword

I hope that the renewed focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the commitment for structural reform to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as partners in decision-making that we're currently seeing leads to increased action on the National Agreement next year.

***Ms Pat Turner AM
- Coalition of Peaks***

16 December 2022²



Together with Ms Pat Turner, Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks, it has been my great privilege to co-chair my first two Joint Council meetings in August and December 2022.

I thank all partners, including the Coalition of Peaks members, the President of the Australian Local Government Association and state and territory Ministerial colleagues for the goodwill, cooperation and commitment to working together to progress actions under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement).

2023 will be a landmark year in the history of our nation. As we move towards a referendum on the Voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, there will be unprecedented focus on the challenges facing our people, and the critical need to accelerate progress towards Closing the Gap.

The 2023 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan moves beyond the foundational Commonwealth attitude to Closing the Gap planning. It outlines specific and actionable plans for accelerating efforts to embed the Priority Reforms and achieve the socio-economic targets.

By tabling the Implementation Plan at the very beginning of the parliamentary year, we are placing it at the heart of this government's ambitious agenda to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Like the Voice, the National Agreement is premised on the belief that when First Nations peoples have a genuine say in the design and delivery of services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved. It also recognises that the community-controlled sector is crucial to accelerating progress against targets.

Of course, government has a critical role to play, and we will work to ensure that the National Agreement is built into government decision-making.

2. See the Coalition of Peaks Joint Council [media release](#).



In future, we hope to do this alongside the Voice, whose advice will amplify the important gains already made by the Coalition of Peaks in negotiating the National Agreement.

During 2023, I look forward to leading and coordinating the Commonwealth's contribution to increased action on the National Agreement. Furthermore, I look forward to all Australians having an opportunity to vote on enshrining a First Nations Voice in the Constitution.

Concrete actions are what is required to improve outcomes for First Nations people, and that's exactly what the Voice will help to deliver.



The Hon Linda Burney MP
*- Minister for
Indigenous Australians*

February 2023

**Concrete
actions are
what is required
to improve
outcomes for
First Nations
people.**



Executive Summary

The Albanese Government is pleased to present its first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. The 2023 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) outlines the Government's forward looking strategic priorities for Closing the Gap over the next 12 to 18 months.



The Albanese Government is pleased to present its first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. The 2023 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) outlines the Government's forward looking strategic priorities for Closing the Gap over the next 12 to 18 months.

This plan responds directly to the **2022 Closing the Gap Annual Report** and shows all Australians where efforts will be focused; what tangible, practical actions are being taken; where reform is required; and what further partnerships are required to support progress.

It continues to be a living document that will be updated over the life of the National Agreement to respond to ongoing evaluation of progress to ensure the Commonwealth's actions are meaningful in delivering specific changes to close the gap.

With this Implementation Plan, the Commonwealth will move beyond the foundational work undertaken over the first two years and deliver on specific and tangible actions for accelerating efforts to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by embedding the Priority Reforms and addressing the socio-economic outcomes.

The National Agreement shows us all that to close the gap we need a collective effort by all levels of government in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. Over the life of this Implementation Plan, there will be a focus on further strengthening the partnership with the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations and truly challenging how government works with First Nations peoples.

This Implementation Plan is in two parts – the first part, titled '**Changing the Way We Work**', builds on the lessons from the Annual Report. The Annual Report emphasises both the Commonwealth's key commitments to deliver on the Priority Reforms which seek to address how we partner with rather than do to or for when developing First Nations policies and programs.

One of the critical elements of the National Agreement was the inclusion of four Priority Reforms, to change the way governments work to accelerate outcomes to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2023, work will continue to deliver on the Priority Reforms:

- 1 Partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will continue through Policy Partnerships as the Commonwealth works with the Coalition of Peaks to examine opportunities to establish new Policy Partnerships. For example at the Jobs and Skills Summit, the Government committed to work with members of the Partnership Agreement to examine a policy partnership on economic participation.**
- 2 Continue to strengthen the community-controlled sector through the Commonwealth working in partnership with relevant governments and the Coalition of Peaks to jointly agree additional sectors for Sector Strengthening Plans in 2023, in addition to developing an evaluation methodology for Sector Strengthening Plans.**
- 3 Build on foundational measures undertaken since the establishment of the National Agreement. As an immediate priority the Commonwealth will progress actions to eliminate racism and continue to undertake systemic and structural transformation.**
- 4 Enhancing the evidence base to inform both evaluations of individual policies and programs, and larger reviews, such as those conducted regularly under the National Agreement by the Productivity Commission and the Indigenous-led review mechanism.**

The second part of the Implementation Plan, **'Delivering on Outcomes and Targets'** delves into each of the socio-economic outcomes identified in the National Agreement, including – for the first time – the new Community Infrastructure target (Target 9b), and outlines the clear direction the Commonwealth is taking to close the gap in these 19 important areas.

Efforts on all the Priority Reforms and socio-economic targets take into account a number of critical cross-cutting areas, but in addition there are a number of specific actions identified in the 'Cross Cutting Outcome Areas' chapter.

CROSS-CUTTING OUTCOME AREAS

- 1. Disability**
- 2. Gender and Sexuality**
- 3. Ageing Populations**
- 4. Remote Australia**

A summary of new and renewed commitments made by the Albanese Government in this Implementation Plan is listed at Appendix A on page 126.

A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Overview of the National Agreement

The National Agreement

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) was signed in July 2020 and is a ground-breaking shift in the way governments commit to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the policies that affect them.

The National Agreement recognises that achieving the goal of Closing the Gap, to overcome inequality and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians, can only be achieved when working in genuine formal partnership and through shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Agreement commits all Parties to prepare rigorous Implementation Plans that respond to the differing needs, priorities, and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia (**Clause 96**).

Working in Partnership

The National Agreement is supported by a comprehensive governance structure which establishes formal partnerships and shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making at the partnership table moves beyond funding agreements and other ad hoc processes to structured relationships based on shared objectives, respect and trust.

To view the National Agreement, previous Implementation Plans, and further detail on governing bodies and partnership go to closingthegap.gov.au.

Implementation Plan and Reporting Cycle

The first Commonwealth Implementation Plan was released in July/August 2021. It outlined a series of policies and programs that would contribute to Closing the Gap at the Commonwealth level. The first Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report (Annual Report) was released in November 2022 and showed the previous two years comprised no more than a ‘foundational period’ with disappointing results on both socio-economic targets and Priority Reforms. The Commonwealth will continue to report publicly against its Implementation Plans to ensure accountability across the Commonwealth and to continue to raise the profile and sustain the importance of Closing the Gap.

The Annual Report, with the Productivity Commission data dashboard and annual Productivity Commission Data Compilation Report (pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/annual-data-report) are designed to measure whether the Commonwealth and all parties are meeting the needs and aspirations of First Nations peoples.

The Productivity Commission’s first three-yearly review of the National Agreement will be released later in 2023. The Joint Council Co-Chairs (the Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, and Ms Pat Turner AM, Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks) will address National Cabinet in 2023 to galvanise Closing the Gap efforts. Coordination by governments with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is required to sustain progress on the Priority Reforms and socio-economic targets.

The Implementation Tracker, monitored by the Partnership Working Group, is available on the Closing the Gap website. It provides information on progress for each Party on delivering against commitments in the National Agreement.



Changing the way we work

There are four Priority Reforms at the heart of the National Agreement. The Priority Reforms articulate a program to transform how governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The 2022 Annual Report identified that much more needs to be done to accelerate efforts to embed Priority Reform Three and Priority Reform Four and, with new data for only nine of the 18 socio economic targets available (at the time of reporting), highlighted the need for more relevant and timely data collection.

Embedding the Priority Reforms

The 2023 Implementation Plan commits the Commonwealth to be more ambitious and drive change to ensure the four Priority Reforms are considered in everything the Commonwealth does in relation to policies and programs that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Priority Reform One

Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

OUTCOME

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

TARGET

There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in each state and territory enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have chosen their own representatives.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians

With agreement from all Ministers to maximise opportunities for achievement of Closing the Gap outcomes in their portfolios, with a specific focus on addressing Priority Reforms.

Priority actions

Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enact self-determination in formal partnership and sharing decision making with all levels of government is a key to delivering outcomes under the National Agreement.



Joint National Action

The Partnership Priorities Committee, established in 2023, is convened as a sub-committee of the Commonwealth Secretaries Board. The Committee will be co-chaired by Ray Griggs AO CSC, Secretary of the Department of Social Services, and Jody Broun, Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

The Committee will work to further embed partnership culture and behaviour within the public service to improve policy and delivery outcomes for all Australians. The Committee will be established for a three-year term and deliver a forward work plan which will consider joint national actions that can further support implementation of Closing the Gap and each of the Priority Reforms in alignment with the Australian Public Service Reform Agenda, which includes development of a Charter of Partnerships and Engagement.

Taking stock of our new and existing partnerships

The 2022 Partnership Stocktake identified 31 Partnerships³ across the Commonwealth that met the Strong Partnership Elements at **Clauses 32** and **33** of the National Agreement.

3. The list of 31 partnerships is available in Appendix 1 of the 2022 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/commonwealth-closing-gap-annual-report-2022

Strong Partnership Elements

- Strong partnerships – between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and up to three levels of government, and others (where agreed).
- Formal agreements – signed by all parties, structured well, accessible for the public and protected by law (where needed).
- Shared decision-making – where:
 1. voices are diverse and hold equal weight
 2. decisions are transparent and well-understood
 3. self-determination is supported
 4. everyone has equal access to data and information.
- Adequate funding – to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties to be partners with governments.

Priority Reform One continued

A key finding of the Partnership Stocktake was that the Strong Partnership Elements need to be better understood and reflected in current practice across the Commonwealth. To support this, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, with direction from the Coalition of Peaks, continue to develop a Commonwealth Engagement and Partnership Framework and seek to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in the broader Australian Public Service Reform Agenda and development of a Charter of Partnerships and Engagement.

The 2023 Partnership Stocktake will provide an opportunity to assess the existing and new partnerships against the baseline stocktake of 2022, to understand how and if arrangements have been strengthened to meet the strong partnership elements, key gaps in the partnership arrangements, and what further work is needed to support the Commonwealth to develop and strengthen partnerships.

Partnering with First Nations people on policy development

The Commonwealth contributes to Policy Partnerships through co-chairing, funding and sharing decision-making to influence policy reforms.

The Commonwealth, in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and all

levels of government, is looking at opportunities, including undertaking a gap analysis, to establish further Policy Partnerships, building on those already established (the Justice Policy Partnership; the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Mental Health) Policy Partnership; the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership; and the Housing Policy Partnership). An outcome of the Jobs and Skills Summit was to examine an economic participation Policy Partnership.

The Commonwealth is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country to design and deliver options that will strengthen self-determination and build the community-controlled sector. The National Partnership Agreement on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment, which provides supplementary funding to the Northern Territory Government for programs and services including Aboriginal interpreters, women's safe houses, remote policing, alcohol management programs and educational programs, is due to end in June 2024.

The Commonwealth is working in partnership with the Aboriginal Peak Organisation Northern Territory (APO NT)

and the Northern Territory Government to design options to improve service delivery in remote Northern Territory communities. Options will aim to increase access to services that are high-quality, culturally safe, appropriate and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote Northern Territory, to embed the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.

In 2023, the Commonwealth will develop an evaluation framework in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and all levels of government, to ensure Policy Partnerships meet their full potential. The evaluation approach will be applied to the Justice Policy Partnership in the first instance, with evaluation of further Policy Partnerships to occur in 2024.

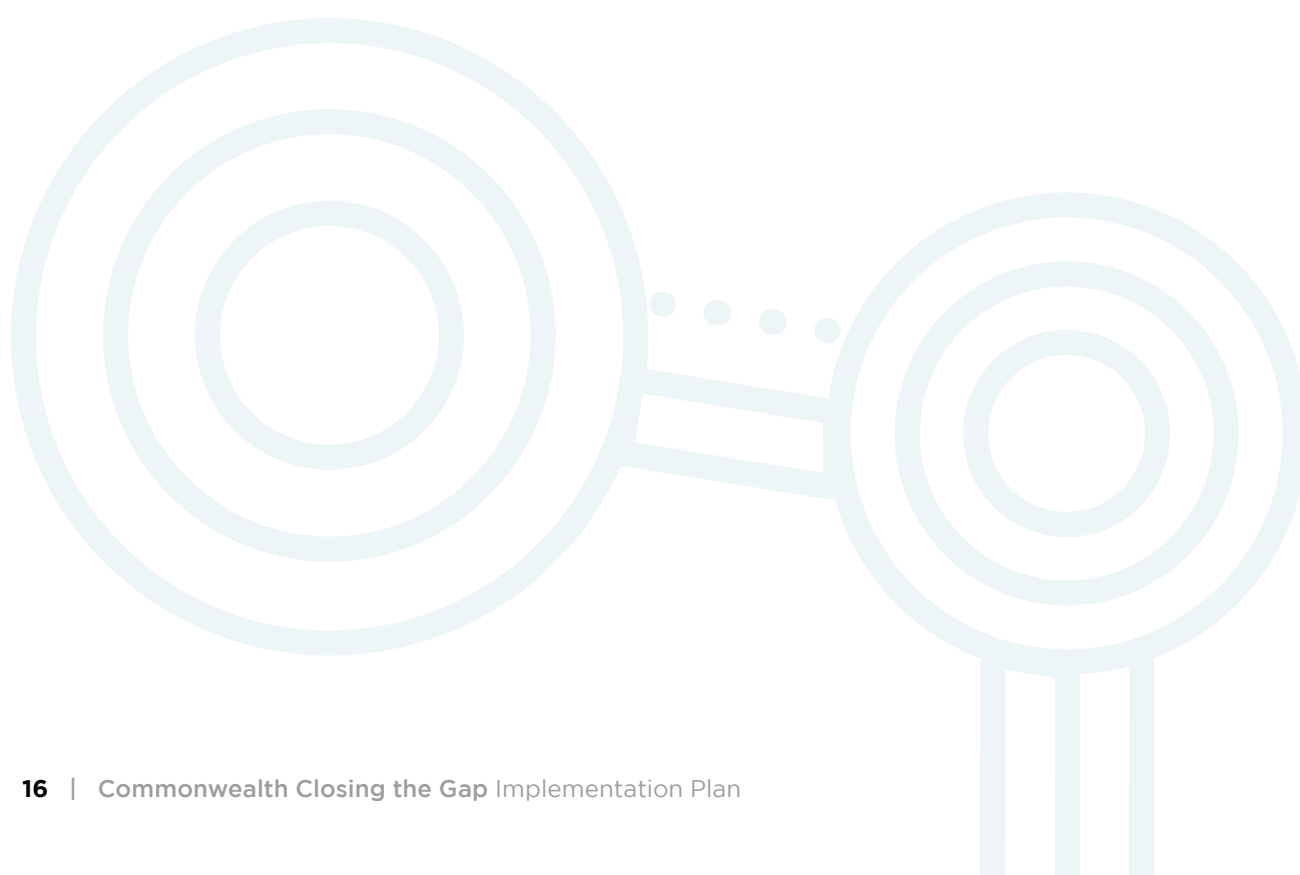
First Nations foreign policy

The Commonwealth is delivering on its commitment to embed Indigenous perspectives, experiences and interests into our foreign policy by appointing an Ambassador for First Nations peoples and establishing an Office of First Nations Engagement within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These actions will help grow First Nations trade and investment, contribute to Australia's effort to progress First Nations rights globally, and enhance Australia's regional engagement by fostering cooperation on shared interests.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Commonwealth Engagement and Partnership Framework	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Partnership Stocktake – critical value assessment of Partnerships	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Policy Partnership evaluation methodology	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Gap Analysis to identify future Policy Partnerships	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Sectors to be decided over 2023 and 2024
Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in the APS Reforms Charter of Partnerships and Engagement	Partnership Priorities Committee	TBC
First Nations Foreign Policy	Minister for Foreign Affairs	Completed within 2022-23 financial year

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.



The Commonwealth has focused on establishing the policy and place-based partnerships to support shared decision-making between the Coalition of Peaks members and all levels of government.



Priority Reform Two

Building the community-controlled sector

OUTCOME

There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.

TARGET

Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians

With agreement from all Ministers to maximise opportunities for achievement of Closing the Gap outcomes in their portfolios, with a specific focus on addressing Priority Reforms.

The path forward

Through this Implementation Plan, the Commonwealth reaffirms its commitment to build the capacity and capability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector. Across Commonwealth departments, efforts are underway to advance the priority actions below to increase the amount of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services being delivered and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, in particular the community-controlled sector.

THE COMMONWEALTH COMMITS TO:

- **Working in partnership with all levels of government and the Coalition of Peaks to jointly agree additional sectors for Sector Strengthening Plans in 2023 as well as develop an evaluation methodology**
- **Improving the transparency, consistency, identification and reporting of expenditure on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services**
- **Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, including community-controlled organisations, to access grant funding opportunities, including through finalising a business case for a grant connected policy.**

Priority actions

Under the National Agreement, funding prioritisation policies will be implemented progressively, with implementation complete by 2024.



Strengthening the community-controlled sector

The Commonwealth will work in partnership with relevant governments and the Coalition of Peaks to jointly agree additional sectors for Sector Strengthening Plans in 2023, as well as develop an evaluation methodology. The evaluation approach will be applied to the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan as one of the mature community-controlled sectors. Findings from the evaluation will be used to inform development of additional plans.

To support the sector, the **Virtual Funding Pool (VFP)** is available. All governments can draw on their contribution to the VFP in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to increase capacity where agreed to deliver more high quality, culturally appropriate services to their communities.

Identifying First Nations expenditure

Clause 113 of the National Agreement required government parties to review and identify current spending on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services. In 2022, the National Indigenous Australians Agency led a Commonwealth-wide review. A report outlining key findings of the review and tangible opportunities

was provided to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap in December 2022. Further opportunities for the collection, recording and reporting of First Nations expenditure are being explored. This includes an approach to better identify service providers, particularly community controlled organisations, as part of future First Nations expenditure reporting. Future approaches should contribute to increased transparency and reporting requirements under **Clauses 59(d)** and **118(d)** of the National Agreement.

Prioritising funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations

The current Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 provide flexibility in how entities can work with stakeholders, including community-controlled organisations, to administer grants and achieve government policy outcomes. This means there is flexibility now for Commonwealth entities to preference Indigenous organisations in the selection of grants, to achieve government objectives.

Under the National Agreement, funding prioritisation policies will be implemented progressively, with implementation complete by 2024. As a first step, a business case for a Grant Connected Policy will be finalised for government

Priority Reform Two continued

consideration, to give effect to funding prioritisation policies under **Clause 55(a)** of the National Agreement.

The Commonwealth is working with the Coalition of Peaks to identify evidence-led approaches to applying a ‘meaningful proportion’ of funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (**Clause 55(b)** of the National Agreement) to develop an enduring policy and budget framework for implementation by 2024.

To enable this, a working group has been established comprising representatives from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Finance, Treasury and the National Indigenous Australians Agency, with an initial focus on the 2023–24 Budget context. Guidance has been developed by the Coalition of Peaks in agreement with the Commonwealth, for agencies when developing policies or proposals for the 2023–24 Budget context.



Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Agree additional sectors for Sector Strengthening Plans	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Sector Strengthening Plan evaluation methodology	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Clause 55(b) ‘meaningful proportion’ guidance for agencies	Prime Minister with Minister for Finance	2023

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Priority Reform Three

Transforming Government Organisations

OUTCOME

Improving mainstream institutions: governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.

TARGET

Decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experiences of racism.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians

With agreement from all Ministers to maximise opportunities for achievement of Closing the Gap outcomes in their portfolios, with a specific focus on addressing Priority Reforms.

The path forward

The Commonwealth acknowledges that institutional racism is at the core of entrenched disadvantage and exclusion and contributes to intergenerational trauma for First Nations people and communities. It makes policies, programs and services that the Commonwealth develops, delivers and funds discriminative, culturally inappropriate and unsafe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These consequences thereby limit access to quality services and assistance that all Australians should receive and deserve.

The Commonwealth's commitment to Reconciliation Action Plans is a necessary step towards creating a culturally safe environment. However, the Commonwealth acknowledges that the transformational change required to eliminate institutional racism in government organisations requires additional resources and efforts and will take time. The Commonwealth must and will do the heavy lifting to lead and action system-wide change to deliver greater outcomes under Priority Reform Three for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

THE COMMONWEALTH COMMITS TO:

- **Enacting real and impactful structural change to eliminate racism and ensure government organisations and services are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**
- **Improving transparency and accountability through a Monitoring and Accountability Framework and stronger reporting and independent mechanism/s (i.e. Clause 67)**
- **Making practical changes to better enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement in decision-making and policy development.**

Priority actions

The Commonwealth will implement a First Nations Impact Assessments Framework to support Australian Public Service agencies.



Systemic and structural transformation

In 2023, the Commonwealth will introduce legislative amendments to the Public Service Act 1999 to support the Australian Public Service to embody integrity in all that it does. The responsibility of stewardship will be included as an Australian Public Service value.

The Commonwealth is also identifying how the Australian Public Service values and principles can be extended to other Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 agencies. Amendments will be informed by consultations, including with First Nations partners in the first half of 2023.

In the second half of 2023, the Commonwealth will explore further opportunities to review the Public Service Act 1999 and related legislation to embed the Priority Reforms. Making these changes to the legislative frameworks that govern how the public service operates will better enable government organisations, and the services they provide, to be culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Strengthening accountability and transparency

By the end of 2023, the Commonwealth will develop a Monitoring and Accountability Framework (the Framework) in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise and the Coalition of Peaks. This will measure and drive cultural, systemic and structural transformation across Commonwealth agencies. The Framework will be tested with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and the Department of Social Services.

The Commonwealth commits to prioritising work to identify, develop or strengthen an independent mechanism(s) (**Clause 67** of the National Agreement) which will support, monitor, and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions. Initial options for an independent mechanism(s) will be developed in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and all levels of government for consideration by the Secretaries Board.

Developing and establishing these reporting and accountability mechanisms are critical to measuring and evaluating progress of the Commonwealth against Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement.

Priority Reform Three continued

Changing government processes at the highest levels

Embedding the Priority Reforms in the design and delivery of new policies and decision-making at the highest levels of governments is pivotal to driving systemic transformation. The Commonwealth is committed to strengthening processes for the Australian Public Service to meaningfully engage throughout policy development in Budget and Cabinet frameworks to elevate consideration of First Nations impacts in all new policies. The Commonwealth will implement a First Nations Impact Assessments Framework to support Australian Public Service agencies to assess the implementation of the Priority Reforms in the development of new policies and programs, and effectively consider the impact on First Nations peoples.

Strengthening cultural capability and embedding cultural safety across the Australian Public Service

By mid-2023, the Commonwealth, through the Survey of Trust in Australian Public Service, in partnership with First Nations peoples, will include additional questions into the survey on understanding the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when engaging with Australian public services.

A new communication and learning strategy by 2023

The Commonwealth will work in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks to develop a communication and learning strategy to complement the national **Joint Council Communication Strategy**, with a focus on educating and mobilising Australian public servants to enact the Priority Reform agenda.

E-learning resources will be developed to support public servants in how they can continue to work differently to meet the objectives outlined in the National Agreement. Resources will also be developed for specific areas of focus, including cultural safety and the Commonwealth Engagement and Partnership Framework.

Boosting First Nations employment in the Australian Public Service

An action plan will be developed to support the implementation of the second half of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–2024. This recognises the Commonwealth's commitment to boost First Nations employment in the Australian Public Service, including in the Senior Executive Service, from 3.5 per cent to 5 per cent by 2030 through accelerated reforms to enhance the recruitment, retention and development of First Nations officers and the cultural capability of the Australian Public Service as a whole.

Defining key concepts for action

The Commonwealth, through the Partnership Working Group, and on behalf of all Parties to the National Agreement, will commission First Nations-led research to support a nationally consistent understanding of Priority Three transformational elements to better enable governments to deliver on their transformational commitments under the National Agreement.

Priority Reform Three continued

National Anti-Racism Strategy

The Commonwealth is providing funding to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to lead development of a national anti-racism strategy, providing a coordinated, shared vision to address racism in Australia. In developing the strategy, the AHRC will conduct community-led consultation, prioritising cultural safety and accessibility.

Leading into 2024 and 2025

By 2024, the Commonwealth will implement a Priority Reform Three strategy to improve service delivery and policy development that genuinely takes into account First Nations perspectives and expertise. This will include identification of legislation, policies and programs due for review, undertaken in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and experts, as well as identification of Australian Public Service-wide frameworks and templates to incorporate the Priority Reforms.

Government organisations and institutions will be supported to identify their history with First Nations peoples and facilitate truth-telling to enable reconciliation and active, ongoing healing. To support interpersonal change within the public service, the concept of allyship will be developed and introduced within broader capability building measures.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Legislative amendments to the Public Service Act	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for the Public Service	2023
Monitoring and Accountability Framework	The Prime Minister with the Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Identify, develop or strengthen an independent mechanism(s) to support, monitor, and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions	The Prime Minister with the Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
First Nations Impact Assessments Framework	The Prime Minister with the Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Additions to the Australian Public Service Survey of Trust	Minister for the Public Service	Expected in 2023
Communication and learning strategy	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Boosting First Nations Employment	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for the Public Service	By 2030
First Nations-led research into transformation elements	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
National Anti-Racism Strategy	Attorney-General with Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	Ongoing

* AA full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Priority Reform Four

Shared access to data and information at a regional level

OUTCOME

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

TARGET

Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians

With agreement from all Ministers to maximise opportunities for achievement of Closing the Gap outcomes in their portfolios, with a specific focus on addressing Priority Reforms.

The path forward

The Commonwealth is working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the following main priorities:

- Provision by governments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities of access to disaggregated regional data and information on Closing the Gap, subject to meeting privacy requirements
- Establishment of partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and government agencies to improve collection, access, management and use of data, including identifying improvements to existing data collection and management
- Governments making data more transparent by informing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people what data they have and how it can be accessed
- Building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to collect and use data.

These strategic priorities emphasise the importance of working in partnership. They aim to provide significant changes in data availability and use arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

The focus on Priority Reform Four will, over time, produce more in-depth data stocktakes and a far greater flow of data from governments to Indigenous organisations and communities. This will identify what data is currently collected, who holds it, what data is missing, and how key data collections can be returned to communities.

Actions under Priority Reform Four will also assist in enhancing the evidence base to inform both evaluations of individual policies and programs, and larger reviews, such as those conducted regularly under the National Agreement by the Productivity Commission and the Indigenous-led review.

THE COMMONWEALTH COMMITS TO:

- **Providing equal access for communities to locally relevant data and information, based on priorities set by the community, and identification by communities of data that would be of greatest use to their objectives**
- **Coordinating and providing equal access for communities to data and information that may be collected and held by other levels of government, and by other sectors and entities, where required**
- **Facilitating data capability within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, in line with Clauses 71(d) and 72(d) of the National Agreement**
- **Providing meaningful change in relation to Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance, and working with other levels of government, and other sectors and entities, to make practical changes.**

Priority actions

The focus on Priority Reform Four will, over time, produce more in-depth data stocktakes and a far greater flow of data from governments to Indigenous organisations and communities.



Establishing community data projects

The National Agreement requires that, by 2023, the Parties will establish data projects in up to six locations across Australia. By late 2022, nominations for five project locations have been received. These are South Australia (Western Suburbs of Adelaide); the Northern Territory (Maningrida); Western Australia (Kimberley); New South Wales (Blacktown Local Government Area); and Queensland (Doomadgee). There is scope for additional nominations to be received. The Commonwealth, through NIAA, is playing a key coordinating role for the projects through the provision of secretariat functions.

As part of its commitment to the Community Data Projects, the Commonwealth has also funded the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to develop up to six pilot community data portal sites by the end of 2023. The six Community Data Projects will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to access and use locally relevant disaggregated data and information in partnership with all levels of government.

The NSW data project has advanced to the community consultation stage, which has identified a number of topics for consideration. Commonwealth, state and local governments are working together to identify data sources for the identified topics and to create a secure portal to share that data with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

Considerations of Indigenous Data Sovereignty, Indigenous Data Governance, privacy, data repatriation and data linkage are regularly worked through by communities in overseeing these projects.

Implementing the Data Development Plan (Clause 92 of the National Agreement)

The Closing the Gap Data Development Plan (DDP) was approved by Joint Council in August 2022. It outlines and prioritises the data development actions under each socio-economic outcome, and is intended to facilitate a richer array of high quality data sources attached to all socio-economic outcomes over the life of the National Agreement. The Plan explicitly considered the importance of community data sources, and of community access to data, within each priority item identified. Further, a key weighting was given to items that prioritised or furthered the use of community data – reflecting the importance of Priority Reform Four.

Priority Reform Four continued

The Commonwealth has established an Interdepartmental Committee focused on the implementation of the DDP, as well as a Data and Reporting Working Group, co-chaired by the Commonwealth and the Coalition of the Peaks. These entities will continue to play a key role in assigning responsibilities and tracking actions for data development.

A priority action for the Commonwealth in the next 12 months is to ensure that all socio-economic outcomes and Priority Reforms have fully established measurement frameworks and data development timelines, and that data gaps, where identified, are given highest priority with regard to development actions. As outlined in the DDP, further work on supplementary data sources, and more frequent data collection, will also be prioritised.

Deputy Secretaries Data Group on Indigenous Data

The Deputy Secretaries Data Group Sub-Committee and Data Champions Network Working Group on Indigenous data emerged out of the recommendations of a 2021 'Guidance Paper on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data'. The paper recognised the need across the Commonwealth for: increased consistency with practices regarding Indigenous Data; better data quality (to address gaps in regional data); improved access and relevance of data to Indigenous peoples; and respectful engagement with the Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement in Australia.

The Deputy Secretaries Data Group agreed to establish a sub-committee to address these issues. In the spirit of co-design, the sub-committee is composed of Australian Public Service, non-Australian Public Service, and Indigenous members, including Coalition of Peaks members, academics, community representatives and data experts. This body is working to produce an Australian Public Service-wide Framework relating to Indigenous data and its governance by the end of 2023.

Connected Beginnings to solve complex problems

The Connected Beginnings Program is committed to empowering communities with the confidence, power, and efficiency to know what's working and to solve complex social problems together. This is being achieved by ensuring communities have access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to embed Priority Reform Four, achieve their priorities and drive their own development. The program acknowledges Maïam nayri Wingara principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and respects that the realisation of IDS will be different for each partnering community.

To reduce the burden of data collection at the site level, the Commonwealth has undertaken data sharing arrangements across agencies and state and territory governments. The data collected is contextual and disaggregated at community level and incorporated into a set of interactive digital data dashboards that allows communities to track the numbers that are important to them and use this data to inform priorities and local decision-making. Data is relevant to the program goals around children thriving by the age of five and empowers sustainable self-determination and effective self-governance.

Priority Reform Four continued

The Department of Education is also working with colleagues across the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health and Aged Care, and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to ensure a coordinated approach to data sharing in communities where there is an overlap of respective programs. This work will commence in early 2023 with bringing together communities to plan how this work can best achieve their data needs.

First Nations Disability Data Scoping Study

Access to relevant, appropriate, culturally safe, local and national First Nations disability data is critical to enabling community-controlled organisations and the wider disability sector, including government, to design and deliver responsive policies and programs to improve outcomes with and for First Nations peoples with disability. The First Nations Disability Data Scoping Study aims to identify data gaps in First Nations and disability prevalence, administrative and community-led data infrastructures. An important objective of the project is to deliver improvements in identifying the extent of disability in First Nations populations as previous siloed data collections have underestimated prevalence. The Scoping Study will

develop a First Nations Data Strategy to strengthen approaches to collection, administration and analysis of First Nations and disability data to provide sufficient focus to all experiences of disability in regional, remote or urban contexts, gender, age or other intersectional lenses.

The Scoping Study was developed in partnership by First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN), Department of Social Services, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Worimi Scholar Dr Scott Avery of Western Sydney University, other members of the Coalition of Peaks, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. As an action under the Closing the Gap Disability Sector Strengthening Plan, the two-year project commenced in mid-2022. The project is funded by the Commonwealth through the Sector Strengthening Plan Virtual Funding Pool.

The project supports Priority Reform Four, including commitments to ensure communities have access to, and the capability to use locally relevant data, can inform how data is disaggregated, ensure a focus on diverse experiences (regional and remote) and aligning with principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Six community data portal sites	Minister for Indigenous Australians	End 2023
Fully established measurement frameworks and data development timeline for socio-economic outcomes	Minister for Indigenous Australians	End 2023
Fully established measurement frameworks and data development timeline for Priority Reforms	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Completion by mid-2024
APS-wide Framework for Indigenous Data and Governance (Deputy Secretaries Sub-Committee and Working Group)	Minister for Finance Minister for Indigenous Australians	End 2023
Connected Beginnings development of approach to data sharing in communities with overlap of programs	Minister for Early Childhood Education Minister for Indigenous Australians Minister for Health and Ageing	Commence early 2023
First Nations Disability Data Scoping Study	Treasurer Minister for Social Services Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022 to 2024

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.



As part of its commitment to the Community Data Projects, the Commonwealth has also funded the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to develop up to six pilot community data portal sites by the end of 2023.



Delivering on Outcomes and Targets

The National Agreement includes a set of socio-economic targets that focus on measuring the outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These targets are designed to be met at a national level, with all governments contributing towards the same goal.

There are currently 19 socio-economic targets in place, including the recently agreed community infrastructure target.

The measures referred to in the following chapters include a combination of new and existing measures, which are scheduled in the next 12-18 months. New measures are identified separately at the bottom of each chapter.

The details in this chapter also demonstrate how a number of policies and measures are being developed and delivered in a manner which adheres to the Priority Reforms and the principles of partnership and shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Outcome 1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives

TARGET 1

Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Health and Aged Care,
Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline	Latest	Assessment date
Not on track	2005–2007	2015–2017	March 2022

Cohort	Baseline gap (years)	Latest gap (years)	Latest life expectancy (years)
Females	9.6	7.8	75.6
Males	11.4	8.6	71.6

The path forward

The Commonwealth recognises that health is a holistic concept that encompasses the cultural and social determinants of health across the life course.



The strengths and leadership of First Nations peoples and communities are critical to driving all First Nations health and wellbeing actions to close the gap in life expectancy.

First Nations health leaders co-designed the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031 (Health Plan) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031 (Workforce Plan) in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Through these plans, First Nations decision-making sets the strategic priorities to close the gap in life expectancy, including the allocation of \$4.8 billion over four years (2022–23 to 2025–26) through the Indigenous Australians’ Health Programme. Both plans give practical effect to the Priority Reforms and embed First Nations leadership in governance and accountability mechanisms within the health sector. These plans will contribute to ensuring First Nations access to data to support shared decision making is achieved.

The Commonwealth will continue to support and grow the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) sector. As outlined in the Core Services and Outcomes Framework, this will address complex First Nations health needs through a wide range of culturally safe and responsive services, and

delivers better health and wellbeing outcomes for First Nations populations compared to mainstream primary care services.

To eliminate racism and build the capacity of mainstream settings to deliver culturally safe, trauma informed, and appropriate health care to First Nations peoples, the Commonwealth will support and grow the First Nations health workforce across all levels, roles, and locations. This workforce is vital to service capacity in ACCHS and ensuring the mainstream health system is effective, accessible, and culturally safe.

The Commonwealth recognises that health is a holistic concept that encompasses the cultural and social determinants of health across the life course. Actions will therefore prioritise health promotion, prevention and early intervention for the conditions that disproportionately impact First Nations populations.

In recognition of the key role that older First Nations Australians play in their communities, there will be a particular focus on healthy ageing and the diverse and changing needs of older First Nations peoples. This includes ensuring the aged care system is accessible, culturally safe and responsive, with services delivered close to families, communities and Country.

Priority actions

In recognition of the key role that First Nations Elders play in their communities, there will be a particular focus on healthy ageing and the diverse and changing needs of First Nations Elders.



Supporting and growing the community-controlled health sector

Work has commenced to prioritise the delivery of care through ACCHS by:

- Funding the delivery of 17 critical ACCHS infrastructure projects in key high-need and remote areas across the country to support health care access for First Nations communities
- Working with the ACCHS sector to design and implement a transparent, needs-based and sustainable national approach to expand access to comprehensive primary health care, including transitioning services to Aboriginal community control.

Mainstream health services

The Commonwealth will make the mainstream health system more culturally safe and responsive by:

- Ensuring First Nations priorities are embedded in mainstream health reforms, including the Medicare Taskforce
- Working with states and territories to address racism and embed cultural safety across the health care system, in alignment with Priority Reform Three
- Prioritising First Nations priorities in the Improving Care Pathways work commissioned by National Cabinet with states and territories.

First Nations workforce

The Commonwealth is growing and strengthening the First Nations health workforce by:

- Working in partnership with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to train up to 500 First Nations health workers through the First Nations Health Workers Traineeship Program in alignment with Priority Reform Two
- Implementing Workforce Plan actions and providing annual progress reports.

Holistic health approaches

The Commonwealth is prioritising cultural determinants and social determinants approaches in preventive health, health promotion and early intervention action for chronic diseases by:

- Funding up to 30 four-chair dialysis units and two dialysis treatment buses to allow more First Nations peoples to receive culturally safe care closer to home and on Country
- Increasing funding to NACCHO to help prevent acute rheumatic fever and improve evidence based care of First Nations peoples with rheumatic heart disease through the Rheumatic Fever Strategy
- Improving access to primary health care and referral services in rural and remote settings

Outcome 1 continued

- Increasing distribution and availability uptake of community-led preventive health, health promotion and early intervention activities
- Implementing the Workforce Plan to support the professional development and growth of the First Nations health workforce in these areas.

Rapid point-of-care cervical screening tests and follow-up

The Commonwealth is providing rapid point-of-care cervical screening tests and follow up in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This will:

- Overcome delays in cervical cancer screening
- Support prevention
- Remove the requirement for women to travel from Country to follow up.

This initiative also aims to increase access and participation in cervical screening for First Nations women who are generally under-screened and more likely to develop cervical cancer than women who are regular screeners.

Indigenous media strategy

The Commonwealth, through the Australian Digital Health Agency's Communications and Marketing Team, is ensuring comprehensive coverage of First Nations communities by:

- Developing an Indigenous media strategy
- Implementing an ongoing media outreach program.

This action is aimed at driving awareness and uptake of key digital health technology in First Nations communities. Utilising existing budgets and resources, the audit and strategy will be delivered by June 2023, with delivery to commence from July 2023.

AFL in First Nations communities in Northern Territory

The Commonwealth is supporting the AFL through \$2.2 million in funding to boost physical activity amongst First Nations communities in the Northern Territory. The program will address prevalence rates of health risk factors (physical activity) by:

- Focusing on increasing participation amongst Indigenous school-aged women and girls across the Northern Territory in AFL training and competitions
- Promoting the physical and mental health benefits of participating in sport.

Supporting healthy ageing

In 2023, the Commonwealth is continuing to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety by:

- Increasing the First Nations aged care workforce by providing trusted face-to-face support and assisting older First Nations people and families better navigate and access care
- Upgrading existing buildings and construct purpose-built care services and essential staff housing, including funding to support ACCHS to expand into aged care
- Increasing delivery of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Care Services to support delivery of quality and culturally safe aged care services to older First Nations peoples
- Assisting First Nations organisations with capacity for governance, business, training and leadership
- Assisting mainstream organisations build their capacity to deliver culturally safe aged care services to older First Nations peoples.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Additional Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Service sector funding for improved infrastructure	Minister for Health and Aged Care with Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health	Funding expended by June 2026
Implementation of the Department of Health and Aged Care's Closing the Gap Action Plan to lead structural change required under Priority Reforms	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Ongoing
Funding 500 First Nations health workers	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Anticipated start date for traineeships is 1 July 2023 and completion due by 30 June 2027
Dialysis Treatment Buses in Far West NSW	Minister for Health and Aged Care	This one-off funding is scheduled for the 2nd half of 2022-23
Better Renal Services for First Nations peoples (Dialysis Units)	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Delivered over 2022-23 to 2025-26. Funding for the first 6 sites anticipated for early 2023.
Improving Renal and Cardiac care for First Nations peoples (Upgrades and purchase of medical equipment)	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Funding to be provided within the 2022-23 financial year
Provision of rapid point-of-care cervical screening tests and follow up in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	Minister for Health	Completion due by June 2025
Indigenous media strategy and outreach program to increase uptake of digital health technologies	N/A	Audit and Strategy to be delivered by June 2023 Delivery to commence July 2023
AFL boosting physical activity in First Nations communities in Northern Territory	Minister for Aged Care and Sport	31 December 2024

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 2

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong

TARGET 2

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Health and Aged Care,
Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2017)	Latest (2019)	Assessment date
On track	88.8%	89.5%	June 2022

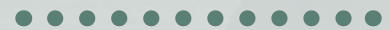
The path forward

Increasing the proportion of First Nations babies with a healthy birthweight will significantly improve the health of First Nations infants and lay the foundations for better lifelong health.

The Commonwealth will strengthen and expand partnership arrangements with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services sector to support the design and delivery of culturally safe perinatal and child health services, in line with Priority Reform Two.

The Commonwealth will prioritise activities that address the most influential factors contributing to healthy birthweight among First Nations babies, including maternal smoking, underweight mothers, gestational diabetes and access to culturally safe perinatal care and wrap around support.

The Commonwealth will prioritise activities that address the most influential factors contributing to healthy birthweight.



Priority actions

Birthing on Country Centre of Excellence

The Commonwealth is investing \$22.5 million for a dedicated Birthing on Country Centre of Excellence at Waminda in Nowra, NSW. This will support cultural safety during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. The Birth Centre, to be operational in 2025–26, will also be used as a national Birthing on Country demonstration site. Birthing on Country models of care return maternity services to communities and First Nations control and enable self-determination and connection to family, culture and community across the perinatal period, which improves birth outcomes for First Nations mothers and babies.

Maternal and child health model of care

The Department of Health and Aged Care is partnering with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to develop a maternal and child health model of care to enable First Nations mothers and families to access consistent, culturally safe and effective care.

Programs to improve maternal and perinatal health outcomes

Implementation is underway of the Closing the Gap Healthy Mums, Healthy Bubs measure, through which the Commonwealth is investing \$45 million over four years (2021–22 to 2024–25). This investment is being targeted towards:

- Expansion of the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program from 13 to 15 sites, to holistically support more women pregnant with a First Nations baby from pregnancy to toddlerhood
- Supporting Birthing on Country and culturally safe continuous midwifery care projects for women pregnant with a First Nations baby, including Waminda's Workforce Readiness Program, the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health's Birthing in Our Community program, and Charles Darwin University's Djakamirr Birth Companion model
- Supporting projects to grow the First Nations maternal health workforce, inclusive of midwives, maternal health nurses, obstetricians, and birth doulas; and supporting training to ensure that this workforce can provide culturally safe support to all First Nations peoples.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Birthing on Country Centre of Excellence	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Construction will commence in 2022-23 and the Birth Centre will be operational in 2025-26. A workforce transition plan will commence to ensure a ready maternal workforce when the Birth Centre opens (see below).
Closing the Gap Healthy Mums, Healthy Bubs measure	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Ongoing

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 3

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years

TARGET 3

By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling early childhood education to 95 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Early Childhood Education,
Minister for Education**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2016)	Latest (2021)	Assessment date
On track	76.7%	96.7%	June 2022

The path forward

Access to culturally appropriate quality early childhood education and care is critical for preparing First Nations children to participate in and enjoy life-long learning.



Work is underway to increase First Nations children preschool enrolments and attendance. Outcomes 3 and 4 aim to improve access to and quality of early childhood education and care for First Nations children. Access to culturally appropriate quality early childhood education and care is critical for preparing First Nations children to participate in and enjoy life-long learning, assisting them to build language, cognitive, social and emotional skills, and engage with their peers.

Implementing the Commonwealth's early childhood reforms, including the Plan for Cheaper Child Care, and the Preschool Reform Agreement with states and territories, will drive improved engagement in early learning for First Nations children. In addition, the Productivity Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the early childhood education and care sector.

The Commonwealth's Early Years Strategy supports these early childhood reforms and will create a new integrated, holistic approach to the early years and strengthen strategic efforts across Outcomes 3 and 4. Early childhood learning outcomes are foundational for laying the pathway for success in secondary and tertiary education and furthering progress against Outcomes 5 and 6.

A 10-year formal partnership has been established with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, First Nations representatives, community-controlled sectors and the Commonwealth. This partnership is developing initiatives to increase outcomes across early childhood education and care, maternal and child health, child safety, children and families, and across intersecting areas such as disability and housing.

Priority actions

Preschool Reform Agreement

The Commonwealth has committed \$2 billion over four years from 2022 to 2025 to states and territories through the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA), which will support universal access of 15 hours of quality preschool a week for every child in the year before full-time school. Through the PRA, the Commonwealth, states and territories have agreed to a reform agenda that aims to improve participation and maximise the benefits of preschool for children, with a particular focus on increasing participation of at risk First Nations children and children from communities experiencing disadvantage.

Access to child care

The Plan for Cheaper Child Care will make early childhood education more affordable for First Nations families by increasing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rates. From 10 July 2023, CCS rates will lift from 85 per cent to 90 per cent for families earning \$80,000 or less, and subsidy rates will increase for families earning less than \$530,000. Families will continue to receive existing higher subsidy rates for their second and subsequent children aged five years or under in care, up to a maximum rate of 95 per cent.

The Commonwealth is also amending the CCS activity test to introduce a base level of 36 hours per fortnight of early learning for First Nations

children, regardless of a family's activity levels. It is expected the base entitlement will benefit up to 6,600 families in the first year and encourage more families to engage in early childhood education and care. The measure will commence from 10 July 2023.

The Productivity Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the early childhood education and care sector. The review is expected to commence in the first half of 2023, with a final report in 2024.

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy Partnership enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in partnership with government to accelerate and increase outcomes for First Nations children and their families. The Commonwealth has committed \$10.2 million to support the ECCD Policy Partnership, ensuring First Nations peoples have a say in early childhood matters that affect them, strengthening the formal partnership mechanism to develop advice on measures and reforms to support First Nations children to thrive in their early years.

Outcome 3 continued

The ECCD Policy Partnership has identified priority areas which will progress action on Priority Reforms and Closing the Gap Targets 2, 3, 4, 12 and 13. Key themes across the opportunities include:

- Reforming funding models for early years community-controlled services to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families (consistent with Priority Reform Two)
- Improving government procurement processes to support community-led service delivery
- Enhancing system accountability, coordination and integration across the sectors and government agencies that influence the health and wellbeing of children and families.

The ECCD Policy Partnership provides for a coordinated approach to drive reform opportunities from the evidence-based and co-designed National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy and actions from the ECCD Sector Strengthening Plan.

The ECCD Policy Partnership will meet four times a year, and make recommendations to Joint Council to drive progress on early childhood outcomes for First Nations children and families.

Shaping Our Future

The National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy 'Shaping Our Future' aims to address the complex issues associated with the attraction, development, and retention of a high-quality early childhood workforce. Aligning with Priority Reform Two, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations have a critical leadership and service delivery role across the country supporting the safety, wellbeing, health and development of children in their early years.

Two key priorities for targeted workforce programs under the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy's Focus Area 2: Attraction and Retention, are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the regional and remote workforce. As implementation of the Strategy progresses in 2023, the Commonwealth and SNAICC will remain engaged to help build strategic partnerships that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enrol in and complete early childhood education and care qualifications.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission childcare inquiry

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will carry out a wide range of consultation and information gathering activities as part of an inquiry into early childhood education and care prices. This includes running roundtables with a broad range of stakeholders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Preschool Reform Agreement funding	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2022-2025
Plan for Cheaper Childcare	Minister for Education	Commencing July 2023
Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership	Minister for Early Childhood Education with Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022-2025
National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy 'Shaping Our Future'	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2022-2031
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission childcare inquiry	Treasurer	Completion by 31 December 2023

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 4

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years

TARGET 4

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Early Childhood Education,
Minister for Education**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2018)	Latest (2021)	Assessment date
Not on track	35.2%	34.3%	June 2022

The path forward

Governments have worked in genuine partnership with First Nations partners to guide the direction of future policy making and shape the vision for early childhood care and development of First Nations children.



A strong start in life provides the necessary foundation for the years ahead. Increased access to preschool and early childhood education and care through Outcome 3 will support better Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) outcomes for First Nations children.

The Commonwealth has begun to address First Nations children meeting all five AEDC domains, by addressing multiple interconnected socio-economic factors like health, education and employment that contribute to a child's development. Strong early childhood learning outcomes is foundational for laying the pathway for success in secondary and tertiary education, and furthering progress against Outcomes 5 and 6.

Governments have worked in genuine partnership with First Nations partners to guide the direction of future policy making and shape the vision for early childhood care and development of First Nations children. This work includes multiple strategies, including the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Sector Strengthening Plan, the ECCD Policy Partnership, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy (the Strategy). This evidence-based, holistic national Strategy aims to align and coordinate cross-portfolio effort across whole-of-government and the early childhood systems and sectors, including funding, with a focus on the priority areas of education, health, workforce, safety, housing, disability and cultural connection.

Through the ECCD Policy Partnership, the Commonwealth is working in partnership with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, other First Nations stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors to develop initiatives to increase the participation of First Nations children in quality and culturally responsive early childhood education and care services.

Priority actions

Early Years Strategy

The Commonwealth has committed \$4.2 million to develop and implement a whole of Commonwealth Early Years Strategy to create a new integrated and holistic approach to investments in the early years. The Strategy will set out the Commonwealth's vision to best support Australia's children and their families in the early years, will create a more coordinated approach to the early years across government, and increase overall responsibility and accountability for the wellbeing, education and development of Australia's children, including First Nations children. The Strategy will seek to reduce program and funding silos, and better integrate and coordinate functions across government to deliver improved early childhood outcomes.

Connected Beginnings

Work is continuing between the Commonwealth and SNAICC and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to support delivery of the Connected Beginnings Program. As a priority, this includes developing a new framework to support greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation's engagement, which will guide the approach to funding arrangements in new and existing sites and ensure Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations lead and manage projects. Work is underway to support the mapping, planning and coordination of maternal and child health activities, and the development of a broader strategy or model of care for maternal and child health future policies.

The Connected Beginnings Program expansion is on track with 33 sites now established. In 2022-23 the latest sites to be established are in Wagga Wagga (NSW), Whittlesea (VIC), Ngukurr (NT), Hervey Bay (QLD) and Maryborough (QLD).

Community consultations for future sites are due to commence in Broken Hill (NSW), and four Queensland locations in Ipswich, Bundaberg, Cairns and Woorabinda (Central Capricorn). Consultations will be led by SNAICC as the community partner, and reflect the community's priorities and decision-making. It is expected at least three of these sites will be established before June 2023.

Work is underway to support the mapping, planning and coordination of maternal and child health activities, and the development of a broader strategy or model of care for maternal and child health future policies. The Connected Beginnings Program supports Priority Reform Four and the transition to data sovereignty

Outcome 4 continued

by further enhancing tools and resources for data collection to inform local decision making, measure progress and evaluate the Program. The Connected Beginnings Program mid-term evaluation is currently underway and due for completion in June 2023.

Providing child care in remote communities

The Commonwealth is committed to expanding the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCF-R) program to fund additional and primarily Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-run child care services in remote and very remote communities. New child care services, based on findings from community consultations in 2022, are expected to be announced in early 2023, once new funding agreements are in place.

The Commonwealth will continue to work with SNAICC as the community partner for these new CCCF-R expansion sites to support their establishment and the ongoing implementation of community-led and culturally safe projects. The CCCF-R grant funding arrangements will be reviewed in 2023, and include consultation with providers, services, SNAICC, and other First Nations stakeholders.

Intensive early childhood education and care model trial

The Commonwealth is supporting a trial led by the Parkville Institute for an intensive early childhood education and care model at four new sites. A First Nations specific site will be informed by a co development process led by SNAICC and overseen by a steering committee to provide a strong cultural lens for the project. Co-development of this model is currently underway with SNAICC and a selected Aboriginal community-controlled early learning centre in New South Wales. Engagement with families for the First Nations site will commence in 2023.

New early learning teaching model

The Commonwealth committed to trial the design, implementation and evaluation of a new early learning teaching model that strengthens children's literacy and numeracy learning through explicit instruction, with a focus on improving First Nations children's school readiness outcomes. The initiative is delivered by the University of Melbourne, in partnership with First Nations stakeholders, relevant local communities and other experts throughout the trial's design and delivery to ensure that it is culturally safe

and tailored to community need. Full implementation of the 12-month trial will commence in early 2023 in sites across Northern Territory and Victoria.

First Nations playgroups

The Commonwealth is resourcing \$12.4 million over four years to provide increased support for playgroups and toy libraries across Australia. Playgroups and toy libraries provide accessible and affordable spaces, resources and opportunities for children to play together, and for parents and carers to seek social and parenting support, particularly in regional and remote communities. The measure will allocate dedicated funding to deliver a pilot program to test approaches to First Nations playgroups at 10 new locations. This pilot will be delivered in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Connected Beginnings	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	Ongoing
Providing child care in remote communities through the Community Child Care Fund Restricted	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	Ongoing
Early Years Strategy	Minister for Social Services with Minister for Early Childhood Education	Over 18 months until 2024
Intensive early childhood education and care model trial	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2025-26
New early learning teaching model	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2024-25
First Nations Playgroups	Minister for Social Services	2022-23 to 2025-26

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 5

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential

TARGET 5

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Education,
Minister for Skills and Training,
Minister for Youth**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2016)	Latest	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	63.2%	N/A	N/A

*The most recent data for this target is from 2016.
This target remains a focus for data development under the Data Development Plan.*

The path forward

Education is key to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pathways to success and is associated with increased wellbeing across all other aspects of life. Evidence shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people can thrive in education and reach their potential when supported by strength-based, high-expectation approaches.

Supporting schools to take holistic approaches, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in whole school approaches and utilising data to inform teaching and learning efforts will enable this. The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring school environments are culturally safe and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued, respected and visibly present.

The Commonwealth will continue to work with states and territories, and strengthen engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners, to achieve the objectives of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA).

The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that all Australians have equitable access to a quality education, no matter where you live, how much your parents earn or your cultural background.

The Commonwealth's focus on Priority Reform One will extend to the joint establishment of a co-designed Indigenous engagement mechanism to the Education Ministers Meetings.



Priority actions

Partnering on education initiatives

The Commonwealth will continue to strengthen the partnership with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council (NATSIEC), including supporting NATSIEC's full establishment, and to work closely with the Department of Education's Indigenous Education Consultative Meeting (IECM). The Commonwealth will explore opportunities through the NSRA to address concerns raised by IECM members regarding a lack of transparency and accountability within the current NSRA.

The Commonwealth's focus on Priority Reform One will extend to the joint establishment of a co-designed Indigenous engagement mechanism to the Education Ministers Meetings (EMM). This will complement each jurisdiction's partnership efforts, embedding Indigenous perspectives in EMM's considerations. The co-design has occurred throughout 2022 and will be finalised in the first half of 2023.

These partnerships will support the Commonwealth's work with states and territories to achieve the objectives of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration and the NSRA.

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, agreed by all Education Ministers in December 2022, includes a commitment to co-design actions to attract and retain more First Nations teachers. The Commonwealth has also committed to provide up to 5,000 bursaries worth up to \$40,000 each, to help attract quality candidates to the profession, including First Nations candidates.

First Nations languages in schools

The Commonwealth is prioritising First Nations perspectives in schools through the Commonwealth's plan to teach First Nations languages in primary schools across Australia, implemented in partnership with First Nations languages stakeholders, interested communities and relevant Commonwealth agencies.

Addressing barriers to education

In prioritising equitable access to education, the Commonwealth understands remote Australia faces distinct barriers. The Commonwealth will work with states and territories to improve access to education, with a view to ensuring all Australians, no matter where they live, can access a quality education.

For remote Australia, the Commonwealth recognises support to improve quality boarding is one element, alongside diversifying local schooling options.

The Commonwealth is committing \$21.6 million to extend the Indigenous Boarding Providers grants program for an additional one year and deliver a design review to identify sustainable, systemic reform options. The Commonwealth is also committing \$38.4 million to expand junior ranger activities to 25 additional sites and support a distance education pilot in five remote sites and review of existing models.

The Commonwealth also recognises First Nations peoples are more likely to experience disability and face intersectional disadvantage, leading to poorer outcomes. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively to implement recommendations of the 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Up to 5,000 bursaries under National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (First Nations teachers are one of the eligible co-horts)	Minister for Education	Ongoing
Indigenous Boarding Providers grants program	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for Education	2023 to 2024
Expansion of junior ranger activities to 25 additional sites	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for Education	Ongoing

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.



Outcome 6

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways

TARGET 6

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Skills and Training,
Minister for Education**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2016)	Latest	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	42.3%	N/A	N/A

The most recent data for this target is from 2016.

This target remains a focus for data development under the Data Development Plan.

The path forward

Providing more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve higher level qualifications is a vital step in significantly improving employment prospects, and other social and life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

To achieve this target, the Commonwealth will focus on enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vocational education and training (VET) and university students from commencement through to completion, to support a lift in attainment of Certificate III and above qualifications.

The Commonwealth recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities are best placed to inform how we can achieve this target.

The importance of self-determination, partnerships and shared decision-making and the positive impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be key.

Priority will be given to:

- Establishing formal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, strengthening existing partnerships and building opportunities in the higher education and VET sectors, and working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student bodies and the Coalition of Peaks
- Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to culturally safe and appropriate education and training, and the tailored support that may be needed to gain the skills and education they need to participate in well-paid and secure jobs
- Addressing barriers to access, participation, retention, attendance and completion through appropriate policy settings and initiatives
- Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the design and delivery of services that affect them, and embedding meaningful cultural safety in learning environments
- Strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled sector by ensuring a key role in the delivery of training and education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Outcome 6 continued

Through these priorities, the Commonwealth will exchange ideas, identify new opportunities and initiatives to inform immediate actions, and create the right policy settings to meet Target 6. These priorities will also support Targets 7 and 8, in recognition that post-training employment rates are generally higher for those with higher-level qualifications. Similarly, the efforts to achieve better outcomes in early childhood, primary and high school education (Targets 3, 4 and 5) will lay the foundation for success for this target into the future.

Initiatives such as Fee-Free TAFE and the Universities Accord will drive change through the VET and higher education sectors to improve access and make tertiary studies a more attractive option for First Nations peoples.

Reforms in the VET sector will better support First Nations students, make training delivery more culturally safe and appropriate for students, and improve student access to wrap-around supports while they are in training.

A strong and thriving Aboriginal community-controlled training sector will be key to delivering on the targets, as well as working collaboratively across all Australian governments on longer-term skills reforms that will improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander VET students.

Better use of the world-class Australian universities to increase the number of First Nations students succeeding in higher education is required. The Commonwealth will build on opportunities through the Universities Accord and investment through the Indigenous Student Success Program to help drive cultural changes within each university, addressing issues of racism and making each campus a place where First Nations students can thrive.



The Commonwealth recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities are best placed to inform how we can achieve this target.



Priority actions

Strengthening foundation skills

The Commonwealth will lift its focus on the provision of foundational English language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a key enabler for educational, social and economic participation. The new National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy will include working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders on a feasibility study into how best to assess the skill level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including those in regional and remote communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations will be part of the membership of the Foundation Skills Advisory Group to guide the design of the new National Study.

Upskilling First Nations Australians

The Commonwealth is partnering with state and territory governments to deliver 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational educational places from 1 January 2023 until 31 December 2023. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have priority access, and there is flexibility for states and territories to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled registered training organisations to deliver this training.

Skills ministers are working to finalise a new National Skills Agreement to start in early 2024, a key principle of which will be support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access training and culturally safe and appropriate wrap-around supports. During 2023, specific priorities for action under the new agreement will be developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and stakeholders. The Commonwealth will continue to strengthen existing programs and services to ensure culturally appropriate support is provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices.

Skills in the context of the workforce

A key function of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) will be extensive consultation with stakeholders to better understand Australia's skills, labour market and workforce needs and to provide advice to government on opportunities to improve employment, VET and higher education outcomes for individuals from disadvantaged cohorts. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who have historically experienced labour market disadvantage and exclusion, will be a focus for JSA and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders will underpin how JSA undertakes that key function.

Supporting university education

The Commonwealth is providing \$2.7 million to deliver the Australian Universities Accord (the Accord), to be led by a panel of eminent Australians, including Professor Larissa Behrendt AO. The Accord will consist of a 12-month review of Australia's higher education system to consider new targets and reforms to support greater access and participation for students from underrepresented cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Outcome 6 continued

The Commonwealth has provided \$20.5 million over four years to expand the work of the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) at Curtin University to connect research, policy and practice to improve higher education access, participation, success and completion for under-represented cohorts, including First Nations peoples. The refreshed NCSEHE also delivers a new First Nations Fellowship program which assists in improving higher education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Commonwealth continues to invest in the Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP), which provides flexibility to allow universities to support First Nations students into and through university. Through the ISSP, universities offer scholarships, tutorial assistance, mentoring, safe cultural spaces and other personal support services to First Nations students. In 2023, over \$75 million has been allocated to 40 universities to help more than 21,000 First Nations students.

Higher education access for remote areas

The Commonwealth is supporting all Aboriginal and Torres Strait people living in regional and remote Australia with a guaranteed non-medical Commonwealth supported place at a 'Table A' university of their choice, when accepted into their chosen course of study. The Government's Research Training Program also includes financial incentives for higher education providers to enrol Indigenous Higher Degree by Research students and support them through completion.



Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
12-month Skills Agreement with states and territories	Minister for Skills and Training	2023
Jobs and Skills Councils	Minister for Skills and Training with Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	Ongoing
Jobs and Skills Australia Advice	Minister for Skills and Training with Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	TBC

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 7

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education

TARGET 7

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations,
Minister for Skills and Training,
Minister for Education**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2016)	Latest	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	57.2%	N/A	N/A

The most recent data for this target is from 2016.

This target remains a focus for data development under the [Data Development Plan](#).

The path forward

Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who are engaged in employment, education or training significantly improves outcomes over the life course, including long-term employment prospects and improved health and wellbeing. Achieving Outcome 7 contributes to the achievement of Outcomes 8, 11 and 14.

The Commonwealth's focus for Outcome 7 is on establishing and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share in decision-making on strategies that will boost the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in education, training and employment.

The Commonwealth is working to establish formal partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships with stakeholders in the higher education and vocational education and training sectors, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student bodies.

The Commonwealth has committed to work with the Coalition of the Peaks to examine options for an economic participation Policy Partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Commonwealth's focus for Outcome 7 is on establishing and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share in decision-making.



Priority actions

Youth engagement

The Commonwealth established a new Youth Engagement Model to give young people an engagement mechanism into government processes, policy and programs through the Office for Youth, and development and implementation of a new Youth Engagement Strategy.

The new Youth Engagement Model will prioritise government engagement with young people from minority cohorts, including First Nations young people. A new First Nations Youth Advisory Group will be established in 2023.

Employment opportunities for young First Nations Australians

The Employment White Paper will explore strategies to improve First Nations employment, including ideas raised during the Jobs and Skills Summit. The White Paper will be informed by the perspectives of First Nations peoples, including through the

public submissions process that closed in November 2022 and targeted stakeholder consultations in 2023.

The Government is examining the new Workforce Australia employment service (including the Transition to Work service) to ensure that it improves outcomes for all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, through the Select Committee of the House of Representatives. Further information on the scope of the Select Committee is outlined in Outcome 8.

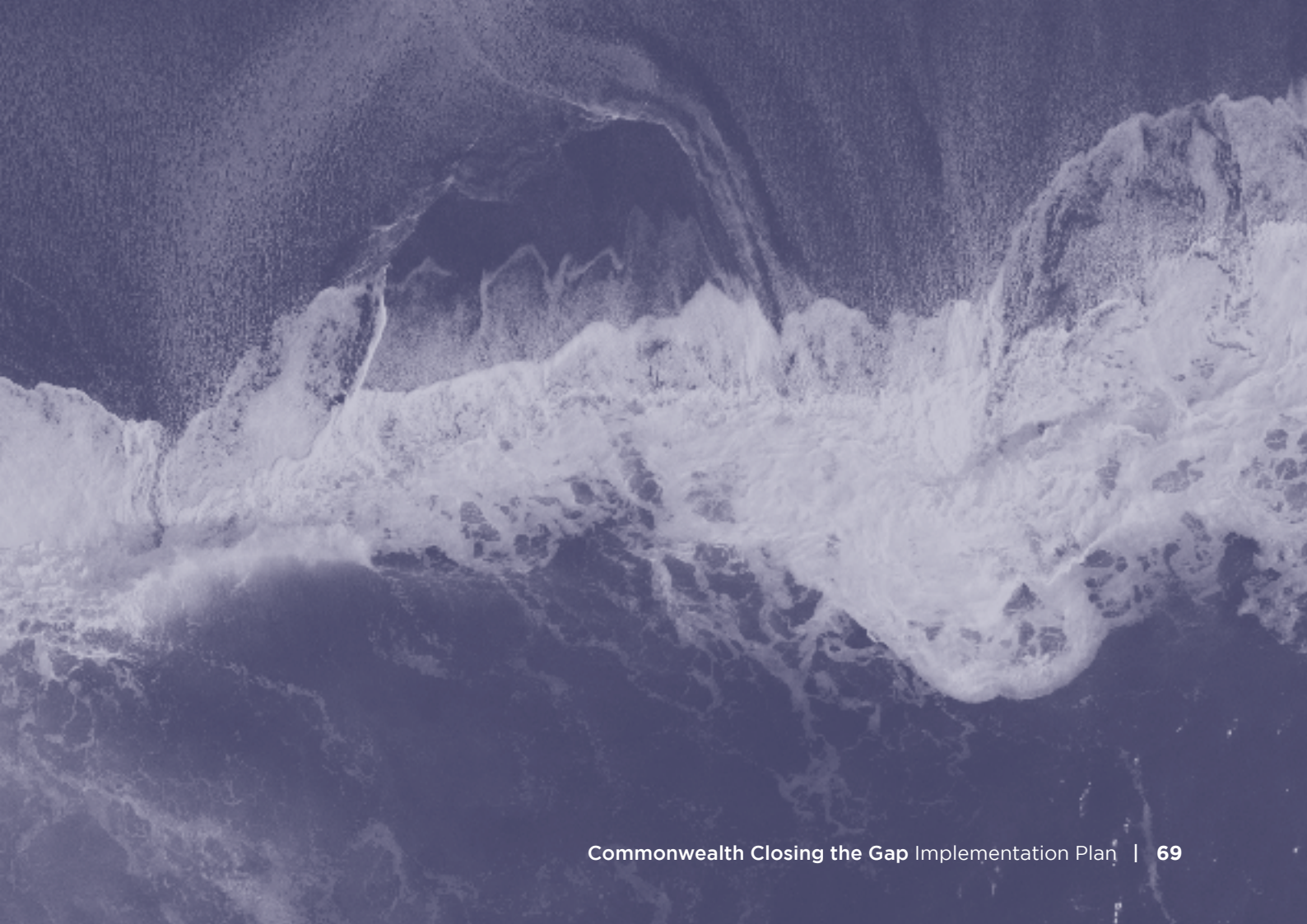
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in remote Australia will benefit from the Commonwealth's commitment to replace the Community Development Program, developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is further outlined in Outcome 8.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Employment White Paper Aligns with Outcome 8	Treasurer	Due for completion by September 2023
Youth Engagement Model	Minister for Youth	2023

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

The Commonwealth has committed to work with the Coalition of the Peaks to examine options for an economic participation Policy Partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Outcome 8

Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

TARGET 8

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations,
Minister for Indigenous Australians**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2016)	Latest	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	51.0%	N/A	N/A

*The most recent data for this target is from 2016.
This target remains a focus for data development under the Data Development Plan.*

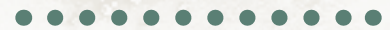
The path forward

Economic participation through employment in secure jobs is an enabler for a range of positive individual and societal outcomes, including physical and mental health and wellbeing, social connectedness, and increased economic independence. Achievement of Outcome 8 relies upon actions that increase educational attainment and health outcomes, as well as practical actions to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Employment is also one of the priority areas for the Commonwealth's gender impact assessment in the 2023–24 Budget, to include considerations of the needs of First Nations women.

Developing partnership arrangements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on economic participation is a priority for the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is also committed to ensuring that all employment programs are fit-for-purpose, culturally appropriate, and effective.

The Commonwealth will continue to improve services to help individuals become job ready and connect them to the right employment opportunities for their personal aspirations.

The Commonwealth will continue to improve services to help individuals become job ready and connect them to the right employment opportunities for their personal aspirations.



Priority actions

Potential partnership on economic participation

The recent Jobs and Skills Summit (the Summit) included the commitment to examine options for a Closing the Gap Policy Partnership on economic participation as a key outcome. The Summit brought together unions, employers, civil society and governments to address Australia's economic challenges, and discussions featured a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

The Commonwealth is working with the Coalition of Peaks and the community-controlled sector experts they represent, to develop governance, membership and initial policy priorities for a potential partnership on economic participation. The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring the community-controlled sector is empowered to achieve better economic participation outcomes for First Nations peoples, including through identifying opportunities to strengthen the relevant sectors.

Incorporating First Nations perspectives on employment

The Commonwealth is engaging with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders during the development of the Employment White Paper, with a focus on incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led perspectives on employment. The White Paper will be completed by September 2023.

Real jobs and real wages in remote Australia (New Jobs Program Trial)

The Commonwealth is committed to a new pathway for employment in remote communities and will replace the Community Development Program (CDP) with a new program with real jobs, proper wages and decent conditions – developed in partnership with First Nations peoples.

The Commonwealth is moving deliberately and in a staged way towards a new program. To support the real jobs agenda, a New Jobs Program Trial was announced as part of the 2022–23 October Budget. The New Jobs Program Trial will provide grant funding at the minimum wage rate, plus superannuation and other conditions, to subsidise wages for up to 200 CDP participants to work in community jobs.

A next step towards the Commonwealth's real jobs agenda is to vary and extend most current CDP provider agreements to October 2024,

based on providers' ability and willingness to trial innovative approaches, capture learnings and further strengthen community-led approaches. Providers will be given flexibility and expected to engage directly with remote communities to develop and trial new approaches to supporting participants into real jobs that are driven by local community priorities.

Developing the Australian workforce

The Commonwealth has established a Select Committee of the House of Representatives (the Committee) to examine implementation of the new Workforce Australia employment service, to ensure improved outcomes and services are delivered in a way that is fair, leaves no-one behind, respects individuals' diverse needs, and supports job seekers into secure work. The Committee will deliver an interim report in February 2023, and a final report by September 2023.

Workforce Australia commenced on 4 July 2022, replacing jobactive, and includes specific measures to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants into work. Workforce Australia (including Transition to Work and both online and provider services) is the main employment service accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. At 30 November 2022, Workforce Australia was

Outcome 8 continued

assisting over 87,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The CDP was supporting an additional 34,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (at 30 November 2022).

The Workforce Specialists initiative will have funding of \$12.5 million available each financial year to support the delivery of projects to meet the workforce needs of identified industries and occupations, connecting them to eligible individuals in Workforce Australia Services, Workforce Australia Online and Workforce Australia – Transition to Work. The co-design of projects will place a strong focus on supporting First Nations peoples into work for example by linking project milestones to placing First Nations participants into secure jobs.

The Commonwealth has also extended Disability Employment Services until 30 June 2025 to build an improved model for disability employment.

The Commonwealth is growing and strengthening the First Nations health workforce by implementing Workforce Plan actions and providing annual progress reports.

Connecting skills and employment

Organisations are developing projects that connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to jobs, career advancement opportunities, and to new training and job readiness activities through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (ISEP). Detailed activity proposals will be submitted by organisations in mid-April 2023 for funding consideration that have been

designed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders, reflecting regional priorities and local community needs.

Protecting First Nations Intellectual Property

A Productivity Commission inquiry into the market for First Nations arts and crafts was publicly released in December 2022 and included consideration of the prevalence of fraud and inauthentic art. Drawing from the findings of this inquiry, the Commonwealth will work with First Nations to establish standalone legislation to protect First Nations peoples traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, as well as reviewing the operation of the Indigenous Art Code.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Examine opportunities for a Closing the Gap Policy Partnership on economic participation Aligns with Outcome 7	To be confirmed	TBC
New jobs program trial (to replace CDP)	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Opening early 2023
Protecting First Nations Intellectual Property	Treasurer	Ongoing

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 9

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

TARGET 9A

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Housing,
Minister for Homelessness**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2016)	Latest (2021)	Assessment date
Improvements from baseline	78.9%	81.4%	N/A

The path forward

The Commonwealth has committed to a comprehensive housing agenda, bringing national leadership and a strong focus on stable and affordable housing for all, including First Nations peoples. The Commonwealth has committed to a number of strategic priorities including establishing a Housing Policy Partnership and a National Housing and Homelessness Plan which will also help accelerate progress towards achieving Target 9a. Housing is one of the priority areas for the Commonwealth's gender impact assessment in the 2023-24 Budget, to include considerations of the needs of First Nations women.

The Commonwealth recognises working with First Nations stakeholders will be a key component to the success of its commitments.

The Commonwealth recognises working with First Nations stakeholders will be a key component to the success of its commitments.



Priority actions

Working in partnership

The Housing Policy Partnership will bring together the Commonwealth, states and territories, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to identify opportunities to work more effectively across governments to achieve positive housing outcomes. Establishing a Housing Policy Partnership between all governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will provide a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a genuine say in the design and delivery of housing services, and is a key aspect of the Commonwealth commitment to achieving progress towards the housing target. Joint Council endorsed the establishment of the Housing Policy Partnership in December 2022.

Establishing the Housing Australia Future Fund

The Commonwealth's ambitious housing agenda includes establishing the Housing Australia Future Fund, which will help build around 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties in the first five years.

Other Commonwealth commitments to improve housing outcomes for First Nations peoples include:

- \$200 million of investment returns from the Housing Australia Future Fund to be used for the repair, maintenance and improvements of housing in remote Indigenous communities
- \$100 million for housing and essential infrastructure on Northern Territory homelands, delivered through a new Federal Funding Agreement with the Northern Territory Government.

Housing Accord

The Housing Accord brings together all levels of government, investors, and the residential development, building and construction sector to unlock quality, affordable housing supply over the medium term. The Accord lays the groundwork to improving affordability by addressing Australia's housing supply challenges and enabling the delivery of more social and affordable housing.

Remote housing agreement

The Commonwealth has committed to develop a new remote housing agreement with the Northern Territory Government when the current National Partnership expires on 30 June 2023. In accordance with Priority Reform One, the new

Outcome 9 continued

agreement will be developed in consultation with the current National Partnership's Joint Steering Committee (JSC). Membership of the JSC includes the four Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory, as the peak body for community-controlled housing organisations. The new remote housing agreement will continue to help address high levels of overcrowding in the Northern Territory, the greatest challenge to achieving Target 9a.

Key to facilitating the delivery of remote housing is the provision of essential services, and the further development of the Community Infrastructure Target 9b will address the complexity of the provision of essential services, where responsibilities rest with local, state and territory governments and the Commonwealth. Within the Commonwealth, responsibility is spread across a number of portfolios that will require a coordinated effort and alignment to co-design actions to impact the target. This will include detail on actionable and measurable steps, articulate responsibility across Commonwealth agencies and specify timeframes for delivery.

Northern Territory housing and essential infrastructure

The Commonwealth has also made a commitment to providing \$100 million to the Northern Territory Government to progress urgent work on housing and essential infrastructure on Northern Territory homelands. This will be comprised of \$25 million this financial year and \$75 million allocated next financial year. The funding will focus on addressing the most urgent needs, informed by findings of a homelands audit being undertaken by the Northern Territory Government. A Federation Funding Agreement between the Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth will be negotiated for the investment.

Housing Supply and Affordability Council

The Council's primary purpose is to provide independent advice to the Commonwealth on matters relating to housing supply and affordability, and to undertake research on housing supply and affordability and monitor conditions in the housing sector.

The Council will work collaboratively with other Commonwealth bodies, state, territory and local governments and other stakeholders in the housing sector or homelessness sector to support the collection and publication of nationally consistent data on housing supply and affordability, and on the demand for affordable housing.

Delivering a National Housing and Homelessness Plan

The Commonwealth will also develop a National Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan). The Plan will present a shared vision for housing in Australia and will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including First Nations peoples. In the development of the Plan, the Commonwealth will take into account the Productivity Commission's review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and its recommendations to improve housing and homelessness outcomes for First Nations peoples in line with the National Agreement. Development of the Plan will be informed by the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Establish Housing Policy Partnership	Minister for Housing with Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022-23 to 2024-25
National Housing and Homelessness Plan	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	This is a Government election commitment
Housing Supply and Affordability Council	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	An interim Council was established on 1 January 2023. The Government is introducing legislation to make the Council a statutory body in the next sitting of Parliament with the intention for it to commence 1 July 2023
Housing Australia Future Fund	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	Expected to be legislated in the next 12 months.
Housing Accord	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	Housing Accord delivery will be from 2024-2029 of the initial agreement, with work commencing immediately to ensure delivery of new housing supply.
Northern Territory Housing and Essential Infrastructure	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022-2024

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.



Outcome 9

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

TARGET 9B

By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households:

- **within discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard**
- **in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town based reserve”).**

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

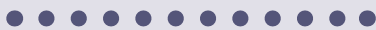
**Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government,
Assistant Minister for Regional Development.**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

As this target was agreed in 2022, there is no Productivity Commission data currently available.

The path forward

The Community Infrastructure Implementation plan will provide a unifying mechanism and detail actionable and measurable steps, articulate responsibility across Commonwealth agencies and specify timeframes for delivery.



The Commonwealth recognises that delivering on Target 9b will provide vital infrastructure to support liveable, safe, sustainable and healthy communities for all First Nations peoples.

First Ministers agreed to include the new Community Infrastructure target in the National Agreement on 24 August 2022. The initial focus for the target will be on the development of a new Community Infrastructure Implementation Plan, in collaboration with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and key stakeholders.

The Community Infrastructure Implementation Plan will address the complexity of the Community Infrastructure target with responsibilities resting with local, state and territory governments and the Commonwealth. Within the Commonwealth, responsibility and leverage is spread across a number of portfolios that will require a coordinated effort and alignment to co-design principles.

Priority actions

Target 9b Implementation Plan

The Commonwealth will work closely with NACCHO and other First Nations stakeholders on the design of the Community Infrastructure Implementation Plan. This will include the exploration of the Commonwealth's key leverage points with local, state and territory governments, and potential future partnerships between the Commonwealth and First Nations peoples.

National Water Grid Fund - safe and reliable water for remote and regional First Nations communities

The Commonwealth is committing \$150 million within the National Water Grid Fund to fund water infrastructure projects for regional and remote First Nations communities. This funding will help improve essential water services and water quality, which are often below Australian standards. The Commonwealth will work closely with stakeholders and state and territory governments to identify and deliver eligible projects.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Target 9b Implementation Plan	Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government with Assistant Minister for Regional Development	2023
National Water Grid Fund - safe and reliable water for remote and regional First Nations communities	Minister for the Environment and Water	2023 to 2026

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 10

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

TARGET 10

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Attorney-General,
Minister for Indigenous Australians**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2019)	Latest (2021)	Assessment date
Not on track	2142.9 per 100,000	2222.7 per 100,000	March 2022

The path forward

The Commonwealth's key role is to work with First Nations peoples and state and territory governments to drive change.



The Commonwealth is committed to working in full partnership with First Nations communities to achieve better justice outcomes, with a priority focus on turning the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody, in line with Outcomes 10 and 11 of the National Agreement.

Recognising that states and territories hold the levers to make direct changes to the systems and policies that disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, the Commonwealth's justice reinvestment commitment supports states and territories to shift their focus and redirect resources from responses to crime to supporting the prevention of crime, or early intervention.

Consistent with Priority Reform Two, the Commonwealth's key role is to work with First Nations peoples and state and territory governments to drive change, including through supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and communities to identify and implement solutions.

This is complemented by the Commonwealth's role in funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled legal services providers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS), as well as diversionary and early intervention programs through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Noting the complex socio-economic drivers that increases the risk for First Nations peoples contact with the criminal justice system, the Commonwealth will work closely across governments and across sectors to align our approaches.



Priority actions

Justice reinvestment enables Indigenous communities to identify and address the drivers of incarceration at a local level.



Partnering on justice outcomes

The Justice Policy Partnership, co chaired by the Attorney General's Department and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS), provides a strategic forum where First Nations peoples genuinely partner with governments to lead, accelerate and improve First Nations justice outcomes.

The Justice Policy Partnership brings together representatives from the Coalition of the Peaks, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and all Australian governments to take a joined-up approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice policy to accelerate progress towards achieving both Outcomes 10 and 11 under the National Agreement.

Building on its efforts under the inaugural Justice Policy Partnership Work Plan 2021-22, the Partnership will continue to strengthen strategic partnerships and consider First Nations policies and their potential impacts holistically. This includes understanding the complex socio-economic drivers that increase the risk for First Nations peoples contact with the criminal justice system.

First Nations justice reform

The Commonwealth's First Nations justice commitment, announced in the 2022-23 Federal Budget, is aimed at Closing the Gap and improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes \$81.5 million over four years, from 2022-23, in new and ongoing funding for community-led justice reinvestment projects and a national independent justice reinvestment unit to assist communities to develop and evaluate justice reinvestment initiatives, ensuring lessons learned are shared country-wide.

Justice reinvestment enables Indigenous communities to identify and address the drivers of incarceration at a local level, in cooperation with all levels of government and the broader community. It has proven successful at reducing crime and contact with the criminal justice system.

Outcome 10 continued

In 2023, the Commonwealth will design the justice reinvestment program and support establishment of an independent National Justice Reinvestment Unit in partnership with First Nations communities and justice reinvestment experts. It is anticipated that First Nations communities will be invited to apply for justice reinvestment funding in the second half of 2023. Justice reinvestment readiness support will also be provided to interested communities, ahead of the national grants program being established.

In line with the Government's 2022 election commitments, the Commonwealth has begun work to implement early investments in Alice Springs, Northern Territory and Halls Creek, Western Australia.

The Commonwealth will also explore options for consolidated national real-time reporting of First Nations deaths in custody, and the establishment of a qualitative research program that incorporates the voices of First Nations peoples.

Legal support for First Nations peoples

Consistent with Priority Reforms Two and Three, the Commonwealth will contribute an additional \$17.5 million to building the capability and leadership capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and improving culturally appropriate legal and non-legal support for First Nations peoples. This includes:

- \$13.5 million for ATSILS to ensure First Nations families who have lost a loved one in custody can access culturally appropriate, timely and fair legal assistance before, during and after all coronial processes
- \$1 million to build capacity and support the leadership of NATSILS
- \$3 million to support the work of the FVPLS Forum and all 16 FVPLS providers, who deliver culturally safe legal and critical non-legal wrap-around support to First Nations women and children subjected to family and domestic violence and sexual assault.

The Commonwealth is also funding the development of a National Bench Book for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the Legal System by the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, as a practical and culturally-sensitive resource to better inform judicial officers and legal professionals.

Enhancing responses to family, domestic and sexual violence

The Commonwealth will develop a training package for law enforcement to enhance responses to family, domestic and sexual violence, including content that addresses barriers to First Nations peoples reporting violence to police and early intervention strategies for family, domestic and sexual violence victim-survivors.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
<p>Establish justice reinvestment initiatives across the country with a focus on turning the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody</p> <p>Aligns with Outcome 11</p>	Attorney-General with Minister for Indigenous Australians	Ongoing measure with the first phase of delivery completed by June 2027
<p>Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) capacity to ensure First Nations families access to legal assistance around coronial processes</p> <p>Aligns with Outcome 11</p>	Attorney-General	Completion due by June 2025
<p>Build National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Legal Services (NATSILS) capacity</p> <p>Aligns with Outcome 11</p>	Attorney-General	Completion due by June 2025
<p>Explore options for consolidated national real-time reporting of deaths in custody</p> <p>Establish a qualitative research program incorporating voices of First Nations peoples</p> <p>Aligns with Outcome 11</p>	Attorney-General with Minister for Indigenous Australians	Completion due by June 2025
<p>Nationally coordinated approach to education and training for family, domestic and sexual violence frontline workers, family law practitioners, the judiciary and the justice sector more broadly</p> <p>Aligns with Outcome 11</p>	Attorney-General	Current funding for coercive control training ceases 30 June 2025

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 11

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

TARGET 11

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Attorney-General,
Minister for Indigenous Australians**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2018-19)	Latest (2020-21)	Assessment date
On track	31.9 per 10,000	23.2 per 10,000	June 2022

The path forward

The Commonwealth recognises that states and territories hold the levers to make direct changes to the systems and policies that disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Consistent with Priority Reform Two, the Commonwealth's key role is to work with First Nations peoples and state and territory governments to drive change, including through supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and communities to identify and implement solutions. This is complemented by the Commonwealth's role in funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled legal services providers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS), and diversionary and early intervention programs through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS).

Noting the complex socio-economic drivers that increases the risk for young people's contact with the criminal justice system, the Commonwealth will work closely across governments and across sectors to align our approaches.

The Commonwealth will work closely across governments and sectors to address the drivers that increase the risk for young people's contact with the criminal justice system.



Priority actions

Actions listed under Outcome 10 also apply to Outcome 11. Please refer to Outcome 10 for actions supporting the achievement of Outcome 11, in addition to those listed on this page.

Increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility

Through the Standing Council of Attorneys-General, the Commonwealth will work with states and territories to continue to develop a proposal to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility, paying particular attention to eliminating the overrepresentation of First Nations children in the criminal justice system.

Youth support and diversion

Through the IAS, the Commonwealth is administering funding for youth diversion and support activities (approximately \$12 million in 2022-23), which complement efforts by states and territories to improve justice and community safety outcomes. Activities are targeted at First Nations young people aged 10-24 years who are in contact, or at risk of coming into contact, with the justice system and support wellbeing and positive behaviour including diversionary activities, intensive case management and wrap-around supports and referrals.

For additional actions regarding First Nations Justice reform, refer to the actions outlined in Outcome 10.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Standing Council of Attorneys-General consideration of the minimum age of criminal responsibility Aligns with outcome 10	Attorney-General	Ongoing

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 12

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system

TARGET 12

By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

Minister for Social Services

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2019)	Latest (2021)	Assessment date
Not on track	54.2 per 1,000	57.6 per 1,000	March 2022

The path forward

The priorities proposed by First Nations partners build on reform opportunities identified through current national early childhood care and development strategies, plans and frameworks, including Safe and Supported.



The Commonwealth is committed to shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in implementing Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 (Safe and Supported). Governments are now working in partnership with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC) and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group (Leadership Group) convened and supported by SNAICC, in close collaboration with the non government sector through the National Coalition of Child Safety and Wellbeing, to finalise its first Action Plans. This includes Safe and Supported: First Action Plan 2023-2026 and Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026 (the Action Plans).

Community Services Ministers, the Minister for Indigenous Australians and the Leadership Group launched the Action Plans on 31 January 2023.

Safe and Supported has a strong focus on addressing the increasing rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in child protection systems.

Through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan, Safe and Supported is the key Commonwealth lever to achieving Target 12. This Action Plan will cover all aspects of Safe and Supported, but with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families, by recognising that they have unique strengths and needs.

Safe and Supported and the Action Plans will be accompanied by a formal Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the Leadership Group. The Partnership Agreement demonstrates a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. It affirms that the Leadership Group will share decision-making with governments on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families, in implementing Safe and Supported.

Outcome 12 continued

The Partnership Agreement expresses this formal partnership between governments and the Leadership Group, in line with Closing the Gap and Priority Reform One, and acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to determine the design and delivery of services that affect them, which enables better life outcomes.

The governance arrangements for Safe and Supported outlined in the Action Plans will also capture the continuing role for a representative Leadership Group to ensure alignment with Closing the Gap.

Safe and Supported aligns with related national initiatives, including (but not limited to) the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy Partnership and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy. The ECCD Policy Partnership had its first meeting on 14 November 2022, which included discussion led by First Nations partners on early childhood priorities and opportunities in relation to Priority Reforms and Closing the Gap Targets 2, 3, 4, 12 and 13.

The priorities proposed by First Nations partners build on reform opportunities identified through current national early childhood care and development strategies, plans and frameworks, including Safe and Supported. In 2023, the ECCD Policy Partnership will consider and further develop these priorities, which include key themes across:

- Reforming funding models for early years community-controlled services, to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- Improving transparency and accessibility of government procurement processes to support community-led service delivery
- Enhancing mainstream system accountability, coordination and integration across the sectors and government agencies that influence the health and wellbeing of children and families.

Priority actions

Implementing the Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan

In 2023, the Commonwealth and state and territory governments will work in partnership with the Leadership Group on implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan. Key actions are to:

- Delegate authority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including to document best practice and sharing learning of jurisdictions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and developing a set of critical elements or design principles
- Invest in the community-controlled sector, aligned with Priority Reform Two of Closing the Gap
- Build data sovereignty, including through the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Support

- Strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
- Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, including through the development of National Standards
- Improve quality and availability of legal supports
- Implement advocacy and accountability roles
- Address the social determinants of child safety and wellbeing.

This will require all governments, relevant sectors and First Nations representatives to work together in areas such as disability, early childhood education and care, health and mental health, alcohol and other drug treatment and prevention, domestic and family violence, adult and youth justice, and housing and employment, to provide a holistic approach to improving outcomes for First Nations children.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

All Australian governments recognise that urgent action is needed to fully implement all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP). Importantly, this includes developing national standards for active efforts to implement the ATSICPP

to increase consistency and accountability. The Action Plan also includes continued development of national reporting of the five elements of the ATSICPP. Genuine partnership between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be critical in delivering these actions, to centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's self-determination in implementation.

Actions to better embed the ATSICPP in mainstream organisations is also included in the Safe and Supported First Action Plan 2023–2026. This includes recognition that all service providers have a responsibility to respect and protect the rights of children and to provide culturally safe services that support First Nations peoples to maintain connections to family, community, Country and culture.

The Commonwealth will work with all governments and relevant sectors to support the implementation of actions, to ensure outcomes are achieved through collective efforts.

Outcome 12 continued

For example, the Commonwealth announced \$30 million in the 2022-23 Federal Budget for five new initiatives which will contribute towards the broader goals of Safe and Supported, including:

- Improving support for non-parent carers (\$7 million over five years)
- Supporting parents and non-parent carers with parenting practices (\$3 million over five years)
- Establishing a National Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (\$2 million over four years)
- Supporting a national child and family investment strategy and innovation fund (\$10 million over five years)
- Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Support (\$8 million over five years).

Increase the involvement of ACCOs delivering services in the child and family sector

In late 2022, SNAICC completed a research project, Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families, to identify the strengths, needs, barriers and opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in delivering Commonwealth-funded programs, particularly Family and Children (FaC) Activity programs. The report will be published in early 2023 and identifies six key areas for reform:

1. Embed community-led decision-making at every stage of funding development and allocation
2. Prioritise ACCOs as providers of children and family services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

3. Invest in the growth, development, and sustainability of ACCOs through core-functions funding
4. Reduce administrative burdens across the system
5. Increase investment in and support for ACCO-led research and evaluation
6. Build government capacity to work better with ACCOs.

The Commonwealth will work with SNAICC and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to respond to the recommendations of the review to increase the involvement of ACCOs in the child and family sector.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Formal partnership agreement Aligns with Priority Reform 1	Minister for Social Services with state and territory Community Services Ministers	The Partnership Agreement will be for the length of the first Action Plans (2023-2026) then reviewed prior to the next set of Action Plans (2027-2031) - expected to be launched in February 2023.
Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan	Minister for Social Services with state and territory Community Services Ministers	The first Action Plans will be implemented from 2023-2026.

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

**Safe and Supported
and the Action Plans
will be accompanied by
a formal Partnership
Agreement between the
Commonwealth, state
and territory governments
and the Leadership Group.**



Outcome 13

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe

TARGET 13

By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Social Services,
Minister for Women**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline	Latest (2020-21)	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	8.4%	N/A	N/A

The most recent data for this target is from 2016.

*This target remains a focus for data development under the **Data Development Plan**.*

The path forward

The Action Plan will address the immediate safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families.



The Commonwealth is committed to addressing the complex factors driving violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and communities, including the ongoing impacts of colonisation.

The Commonwealth, state and territory ministers for women's safety launched the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (National Plan) on 17 October 2022. The National Plan includes specific consideration of family violence in the context of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. Implementation of the National Plan is a shared commitment between Commonwealth and state and territory governments.

The voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been critical in informing the development of this National Plan, which embeds the National Agreement as one of the underpinning principles.

Under the National Plan, a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan (Action Plan) is being developed, led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence (Advisory Council) in partnership with the Department of Social Services. The Action Plan will address the immediate safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families as well as lay the foundation for longer-term structural change. The Advisory Council will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, Elders, communities, community-led organisations and governments to build effective pathways, services and responses for both victim-survivors and perpetrators of family violence.



Priority actions

Healing programs for First Nations families

From 2023, the Commonwealth will partner with local organisations in up to seven locations to design, deliver, and evaluate community-led, place-based, trauma-aware and culturally responsive healing programs for First Nations children and families who are impacted by family violence or at risk of engagement with the child protection systems. Through family-focused healing, the initiative will support First Nations families who have experienced violence to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and family separation.

This initiative will form part of the new dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan (Action Plan) supporting the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (National Plan).

Standalone First Nations National Plan

The National Plan commits to delivering a future standalone First Nations National Plan for family safety which will explore solutions linked to the principles of truth telling and self determination. The First

Nations National Plan will be a signature piece of policy that will guide a whole of society approach to addressing the unacceptable rates of violence against First Nations women and children. The development of the standalone First Nations National Plan will involve a consultative process that supports genuine partnership and shared decision-making as articulated in the National Agreement.

Building the evidence base

The Commonwealth has committed \$31.6 million over five years to develop a new approach to measure progress against Outcome 13 as well as addressing data requirements to support understanding of the scope of injustices experienced by lost, missing and murdered First Nations women and children, and their families. It will form a significant part of the evidence-base on violence against women and children, and address the gap in data on violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Reducing violence against women and girls with disability

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is investigating preventing and better protecting people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This has included a focus on systemic drivers in a wide variety of settings

for people experiencing intersectional discrimination, including the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children have a higher prevalence of disability and experience higher levels of violence than other Australians. The Commonwealth is investing \$9.3 million over three years (2021-22 to 2023-24) to develop resources that aim to reduce violence against women and girls with disability, and improve service responses when violence occurs.

Specialised Family Violence Services

A two-year place-based trial of the Escaping Violence Payment is being established in the Cairns region by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisation. The trial will provide specialised and culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of intimate partner violence. The trial objective is to provide financial assistance to support individuals to leave a violent intimate partner relationship and thereby reduce the barrier of financial insecurity that affects those experiencing family and domestic violence. The place-based trial will contribute to better understanding the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by intimate partner violence, attempting to establish a home

Outcome 13 continued

free from violence to inform future policy responses.

The Commonwealth will commit a further \$68.6 million over two years (2023–24 to 2024–25) for 16 Aboriginal community-controlled Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) providers to continue to deliver culturally safe legal and non-legal services to support First Nations victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and sexual assault.

The Specialised Family Violence Services (SFVS) program supports individuals, couples and families affected by family and domestic violence. Through the 2022–23 Budget, funding was extended for four Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that

provide culturally appropriate SFVS in the Northern Territory, with a total commitment of \$3.79 million from 2022–23 to 2026–27.

A National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse

The Commonwealth has now commenced implementation of First Nations-specific measures under the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030 (National Strategy), including place-based measures to support healing for First Nations victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and their families, and a program to improve disclosure experiences and referrals to specialist services. Under the Supporting Healing for

Families measure, work has begun to co-design and deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led, trauma-aware healing initiatives in five locations across Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a priority group under the National Strategy and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is embedded in the design, implementation and evaluation of National Strategy measures. Work is underway to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led consultation mechanism to share clinical and therapeutic expertise and knowledge from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts working with children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Healing program for First Nations families	Minister for Indigenous Australians	TBC
Dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan	Minister for Social Services	To commence from July 2023
Standalone First Nations National Plan	Minister for Social Services	TBC
Building the evidence base	Minister for Social Services	Up to 2027–28
Specialised Family Violence Services - Aboriginal Community Controlled Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) providers	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023–24 to 2024–25

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 14

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

TARGET 14

Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Minister for Health and Aged Care,
Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health**

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2018)	Latest (2020)	Assessment date
Not on track	25.0 per 100,000	27.9 per 100,000	March 2022

The path forward

The Commonwealth is prioritising social and emotional wellbeing approaches.



For First Nations peoples, good health and wellbeing encompasses connections to mind, body, family, culture, Country and spirituality for both individuals and communities. The Commonwealth is prioritising social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) approaches to address the historical, political, social, and cultural determinants of health for First Nations peoples.

Work has begun on partnering with First Nations communities, governments and peak bodies to improve SEWB and mental health outcomes and reduce suicides. A key focus is ensuring First Nations leaders, Elders and communities are empowered to determine what wellbeing and healing means to them, drive care delivery, and control their outcomes. This includes embedding the strengths of culture, and First Nations peoples having access to data and information to inform decision-making.

The Commonwealth is also working closely with First Nations partners to build the cultural capacity and capability of all SEWB, mental health and suicide prevention services and systems to ensure mainstream services are culturally safe and equipped to deliver trauma-aware and healing-informed responses. They are doing so with a focus on embedding the cultural significance of kinship, family and community within these services, as this builds strong relationships and a solid foundation for SEWB throughout the life course.

The Commonwealth will prioritise First Nations-led and community-driven responses, including the coordination and delivery of culturally safe and responsive mental health and suicide prevention services through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services for First Nations peoples.



Priority actions

First Nations Policy Partnerships

The Commonwealth is partnering with Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia, with actions focused on shared decision-making, and building the cultural capacity and capability of all SEWB, mental health and suicide prevention services and systems.

The Commonwealth is committed to working in partnership with Gayaa Dhuwi to enact the SEWB Policy Partnership. The SEWB Policy Partnership will drive development of policy relating to SEWB, mental health and suicide prevention, including:

- Implementation of the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia Declaration
- Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy
- The refresh of, and implementation plan for, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework 2013–2023.

Targeted regional initiatives for suicide prevention

The Commonwealth is investing in targeted regional initiatives for suicide prevention to support the transition and learnings from the National Suicide Prevention Trial environment towards building the capacity of all Primary Health Networks


to implement evidence-based, systems-oriented and community-led approaches to suicide prevention across Australia. Funding will support a dedicated Suicide Prevention Regional Response Coordinator in each Primary Health Network as well as additional investment in regional and community based suicide prevention interventions.

Taking the lead from First Nations experts

The Commonwealth is prioritising leadership and self-determination of First Nations organisations by:

- Working with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) on the Culture Care Connect Program – a First Nations community-led suicide prevention and aftercare service network and training program. This work with NACCHO integrates suicide prevention planning and responses to build a sustainable and supported workforce.
- Elevating the voices of First Nations peoples and sharing their stories by investing in the Black Dog Institute’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre. This Centre co-designs, informs, and delivers culturally safe mental health and suicide prevention initiatives.

The Commonwealth will prioritise First Nations-led and community-driven responses, including the coordination and delivery of culturally safe and responsive mental health and suicide prevention services through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services for First Nations peoples.



Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Targeted Regional Initiatives for Suicide Prevention	Minister for Health and Aged Care with Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	Completion by 30 June 2024
Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership Aligns with Priority Reform 1	Minister for Health and Aged Care	2021-2024

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 15

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters

TARGET 15A

By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.

TARGET 15B

By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

**Attorney-General,
Minister for Indigenous Australians**

The path forward

Focusing on the quality, richness and autonomy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationships with their land and waters drives the Commonwealth’s strategic priorities for Outcome 15.

Actions in this plan are directed toward removing barriers for First Nations peoples to exercise their valuable traditional knowledge and cultural practices in managing Country, to enjoy their rights to land and sea, and in doing so, to contribute to social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes.

With Target 15a on track to be achieved by 2030 and Target 15b likely to be achieved early following the Northern Cape and Torres Strait consent determination, the priority will be to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations on the broader intent of Outcome 15 and developing actions to support First Nations peoples’ connections to Country.

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

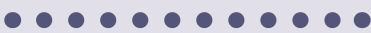
Target	Status	Latest data	Assessment date
Land mass	On track	2021	March 2022
Sea country	Not on track*	2021	March 2022

* The sea country target was not on track as at March 2022. This assessment does not include the Northern Cape and Torres Strait consent determination made on 30 November 2022.

Target	Baseline (2020)	Latest (2021)	Increase since base-line
Land mass	3,911,679 km ²	4,027,232 km ²	3.0%
Sea country	90,252 km ²	90,555 km ²	0.3%

Priority actions

Focusing on the quality, richness and autonomy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationships with their land and waters drives the Commonwealth's strategic priorities for Outcome 15.



First Nations management of land and sea country according to aspirations of Traditional Owners and community

The Commonwealth will double the number of Indigenous Rangers to 3,800 by the end of the decade (with a focus on gender equality) and expand the Indigenous Protected Areas Programs. These actions will contribute to cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes through supporting First Nations peoples' access to Country, capacity to care for Country, practice of culture on Country, work on Country and learning on Country.

Consistent with Priority Reform Two, the Commonwealth will continue to provide basic and capacity building support to the Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) sector to help PBCs realise social, cultural and economic benefits through the effective and sustainable management of their land.

Co-designing reform options for heritage protection and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs)

Consistent with Priority Reform One, the Commonwealth is working in partnership with the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance to co design options for heritage protection reform. Stage two consultations are running until March 2023.

The Commonwealth is receiving advice on PBC reform options from a recently established PBC Steering Group, with members nominated from a number of PBCs across the country.

Increased recognition of legal rights and interests in land and sea

The Commonwealth will continue to fund and support the native title system to facilitate the legal recognition of land and sea native title rights and interests under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth), and land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. This includes administering funding for Northern Territory Land Councils and the Aboriginal Land Commissioner to progress formal land claim inquiries and Native Title representative bodies/service providers to assist native title claimants and holders.

Ensuring First Nations people are at the forefront of land and sea management and conservation, the Commonwealth is providing new funding to support 10 new Indigenous Protected Areas - adding around 4.8 million hectares to the National Reserve System and contributing to the Government's commitment to protect and conserve 30 per cent of our landmass by 2030. Consultations are also underway to include a further 10.9 million hectares of sea.

Outcome 15 continued

Addressing barriers to resolving native title compensation

In 2023, the Commonwealth, in partnership with states and territories and the National Native Title Council, will work on developing options to promote the most efficient settlement of native title compensation. A national approach provides an opportunity for governments to consistently negotiate fair and just settlements that build enduring relationships and partnerships with First Nations peoples. This will foster self-determination, develop capacity to achieve greater social, cultural, environmental, and economic outcomes, as well as support First Nations peoples to maintain and strengthen their distinctive relationship with their land and waters.

Establish new Inland Waters Target 15c

A new inland waters target will accelerate progress towards securing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal rights and interests in inland water bodies under state and territory water rights regimes.



Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Double the number of Indigenous Rangers	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Delivery by 2030
10 new Indigenous Protected Areas	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for Environment	June 2028

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 16

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing

TARGET 16

By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

Minister for the Arts

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline	Latest (2021)	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	123	N/A	N/A

The most recent data for this target is from 2018-19.

This target remains a focus for data development under the Data Development Plan.

The path forward

The Commonwealth is committed to partnering with First Nations peoples and communities to listen and support them to strengthen languages.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are in a critical and precarious state and Australia has one of the highest rates of language loss in the world. The impact of colonial policies deliberately broke the connection to language and, therefore, cultural and spiritual identity. The impacts are still felt today.

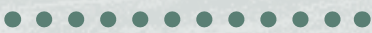
There are approximately 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages still spoken in Australia, with only 14 languages considered strong. Immediate action is essential to reverse this rate of loss. As one of the most culturally rich and innovative countries on Earth, we have a responsibility to support First Nations communities to stop the loss of languages. Maintenance, revitalisation, renewal and reawakening activities are vitally important to support the continuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

It is critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central to decisions on how languages are revived, protected and strengthened. The Commonwealth is committed to partnering with First Nations peoples and communities to listen and support them to strengthen languages, including through its existing partnership with First Languages Australia and establishing a new partnership to develop legislation to protect First Nations traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Addressing the erosion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and advancing solutions will require elevating First Nations voices.



Priority actions

The Commonwealth is working with First Languages Australia, as the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, to establish three new language centres by 2024.



Working in partnership to support First Nations languages

The Commonwealth's investment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership (Languages Policy Partnership) is a critical first step to bring together community members, peak organisations, and all Australian governments to discuss policy options for delivery against Target 16.

The Languages Policy Partnership, established in December 2022, will identify opportunities to work more effectively across governments with First Nations peoples to support the shared commitment to progress action on Target 16. First Nations peoples are equal parties with government in the Languages Policy Partnership and will work together to improve outcomes and accelerate action on Target 16. The first meeting of the Languages Policy Partnership will be held in March 2023. The Office for the Arts is working with First Languages Australia to develop an evaluation strategy that can be implemented for the Languages Policy Partnership.

The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that all language activities will be done in partnership with First Nations peoples and to fully embedding the principle of 'nothing about us, without us' for all First Nations language work.

International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032

The Commonwealth is partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the development of initiatives for the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), including the development of Australia's Action Plan for the International Decade. This work ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central to the development of Australia's priorities and activities for the Decade.

Establishing language centres through shared decision-making

On 23 December 2022, the Commonwealth announced the successful candidates for the Closing the Gap pilot program, which establishes partnerships between Indigenous language centres and local service delivery partners. The recommendations were made in partnership with a panel made up of First Languages Australia, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

Outcome 16 continued

The panel established the selection criteria, evaluated applications and recommended 11 partnerships to the Minister.

The Commonwealth is working with First Languages Australia, as the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, to establish three new language centres by 2024.

Maintenance and renewal of First Nations languages

The Commonwealth is supporting the Indigenous Languages and Arts program to undertake maintenance, revitalisation, renewal and reawakening activities. These activities are vitally important to support the continuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, including established or strong languages.

The publication of languages dictionaries is vitally important for communities undertaking language maintenance

and renewal activities and the Commonwealth has committed to continue its investment in the Indigenous Languages Dictionaries Project to support communities to record and translate their languages in a printed resource.

Equitable access to interpreting services

Ensuring equitable access to services will require continued support for interpreting services, including through the Commonwealth's commitment to Indigenous interpreting services and through the incorporation of language across a broad range of sectors, including health and early childhood.

Protection of First Nations Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions

The Commonwealth has committed to work with First Nations peoples to establish stand-alone legislation to

protect traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Indigenous Knowledge is a term used to cover a range of knowledge held and continually developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It can include such things as language, song, dance, stories, songlines, art, and knowledge of plants, science, medicines and agriculture.

National Cultural Policy

The Commonwealth's new National Cultural Policy is also ensuring culture and languages are strong, supported and flourishing. The National Cultural Policy elevates First Nations voices, positioning their importance as the country's first creative practitioners and integral contributors to the canon of Australian cultural works and practices in the First Nations First Pillar, and embeds First Nations perspectives across all remaining Pillars of the Policy.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
The National Indigenous Languages Survey	Minister for the Arts	Completed in June 2024
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership Aligns with Priority Reform 1	Minister for the Arts	Endorsed by Joint Council in December 2022. First meeting to be held in March 2023

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Outcome 17

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

TARGET 17

By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

Minister for Communications

Productivity Commission national progress against the target

Status	Baseline (2014-15)	Latest	Assessment date
No new data to assess progress	73.5%	N/A	N/A

*The most recent data for this target is from 2014-15.
This target remains a focus for data development under the [Data Development Plan](#).*

The path forward

The Commonwealth has established the First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group.



Closing the Gap on digital inclusion is critical to First Nations peoples enjoying the economic and social opportunities of being online and using digital technologies. Target 17 will enable a range of benefits for First Nations peoples and communities, including access to services such as telehealth and online learning.

The work under Target 17 recognises that improving digital inclusion for First Nations people is an important enabler for broader social and economic benefits, including access to services and transforming the delivery of Government services consistent with Priority Reform Three in the National Agreement.



Priority actions

Digital inclusion

The Commonwealth is developing the First Nations Digital Inclusion Plan (FNDIP) to support improved digital inclusion for First Nations peoples. The FNDIP is based on three policy pillars: improving access, affordability and digital ability. The Commonwealth is working with First Nations communities and stakeholders, including the Coalition of Peaks and First Nations Media Australia, to develop the FNDIP which will be based on community priorities and needs.

The Commonwealth has established the First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group (the Advisory Group). The Advisory Group, chaired by notable media industry representative, Ms Dorothy West OAM – joined by a number of eminent First Nations Australians, will work together with First Nations peoples and communities to provide advice to the Commonwealth on digital inclusion issues for First Nations peoples and how they can be addressed at the national and community level.

This will include options to improve access to content and information through online and broadcast platforms, as well as options to reduce the barriers to inclusion by focusing on access, affordability and digital skills in remote communities as an initial focus. Going forward, the Advisory Group will consider options to inform a longer-term roadmap to support First Nations digital inclusion.

Connectivity in regional and rural Australia

The Commonwealth is continuing to invest in improving connectivity and bridging the digital divide through its Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia, which will improve mobile coverage and provide targeted place-based connectivity solutions, including for remote communities.

Improving national data collection

Importantly, the Commonwealth is exploring options to improve the national collection of data on First Nations digital inclusion, aligning with Priority Reform Four in the National Agreement. The Commonwealth will work closely with First Nations peoples to consider how data collection on digital inclusion can best meet this aim.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia	Minister for Communications	2022–2025
First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group	Minister for Communications	Funding provided up until 2026–27

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

The work under Target 17 recognises that improving digital inclusion for First Nations people is an important enabler for broader social and economic benefits.



Cross-cutting outcome areas

In recognising the high level of diversity across the First Nations population, the Commonwealth affirms its effort to directly meet the needs of all First Nations peoples through implementation of the National Agreement. With a strong focus on disability, gender and sexuality, ageing populations, and the new cross-cutting outcome area of remote Australia, this Implementation Plan addresses the intersecting layers of individual and structural considerations required to mitigate the compounding effects that often further exacerbate the acute social, economic, wellbeing and health inequalities across all socio-economic indicators for First Nations peoples with diverse needs.

While specific priority actions that link directly with these cross-cutting outcome areas are woven through the Priority Reforms and socio-economic chapters, an additional section of the plan highlights strategies and actions that lay across all of the outcomes and targets.



Disability

The path forward

First Nations communities are inclusive of people with all capabilities, supporting participation in community and cultural life for millennia. Understanding the way disability is conceptualised and experienced by First Nations peoples is critical to understanding the strengths within existing community support systems, identifying barriers to accessing resources and ultimately understanding how to improve outcomes for First Nations peoples with disability, their families and communities.

The Department of Social Services is leading the Commonwealth obligations to embed disability as a cross-cutting outcome under the National Agreement as well as the implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031, which holds all Ministers responsible for improving outcomes for all Australians with disability, ensuring no-one is left behind.

First Nations peoples with disability experience intersecting layers of individual and structural discrimination (ableism and racism) which have a compounding effect, driving further acute social, economic, wellbeing and health inequalities across all socio-economic indicators. It has been estimated that the prevalence of disability among First Nations peoples is up to twice the rate experienced by other Australians.

The identification of disability as a cross-cutting outcome recognises the need to incorporate dedicated actions and initiatives across all aspects of the National Agreement. Disability is also one of the priority areas for the Commonwealth's gender impact assessment in the 2023–24 Budget, another cross-cutting area of the Implementation Plan, to include considerations of the needs of First Nations women. Action is required by all Commonwealth agencies to ensure that the needs, values and aspirations of First Nations peoples with disability, including culturally inclusive concepts of disability, are embedded into the design and implementation of all policies, programs and services to guarantee inclusive, accessible, and equitable outcomes.

The identification of disability as a cross-cutting outcome recognises the need to incorporate dedicated actions and initiatives across all aspects of the National Agreement.



Priority actions

Disability Sector Strengthening Plan

The Disability Sector Strengthening Plan, finalised in 2022–23, was developed in partnership with First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN) and all Australian governments. The Disability Sector Strengthening Plan (the Plan) will improve understanding, support for, and representation of First Nations peoples with disability across all Commonwealth policy, programs and services consistent with Priority Reforms One, Three and Four. The Plan sets an ambitious agenda to build the community-controlled sector, including:

- Growing the First Nations disability workforce and establishing First Nations Disability Workforce Sector Principles
- Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health organisations to deliver disability services
- Ensuring community-controlled organisations and buildings meet accessibility and inclusions standards
- Ensuring information and communications systems used by the community-controlled sector are accessible
- Supporting innovation in the community-controlled sector to increase, maximise and improve the current disability services and support capacity
- Developing disability and First Nations engagement principles and protocols.

First Nations Strategy

The Commonwealth, through the National Disability Insurance Agency, commits to co-designing a new First Nations Strategy with the First Nations disability community. The National Disability Insurance Agency has entered a partnership agreement with FPDN to develop the First Nations Strategy. Subject to further discussions with FPDN and selected members of the Independent Advisory Council, the National Disability Insurance Agency will establish a First Nations Advisory Council and recruit a First Nations Strategic Advisor to ensure that the Strategy will be guided by First Nations peoples and sector representatives at the highest level. In 2023, the National Disability Insurance Agency will be undertaking extensive public engagement, consultation and co-design with First Nations peoples with disability, participants, communities, representative organisations and service providers, to co-design the new First Nations Strategy.

NDIS market interventions

At the Disability Reform Ministers' meeting (DRMM) held in October 2022, Ministers discussed the need to address barriers to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) access and service delivery in thin markets, including for particular support types, First Nations and culturally diverse communities, and regional and remote Australia. Ministers agreed that the National Disability Insurance Agency needs to work with communities and state and territory governments to use more flexible approaches to address thin markets. This commitment will drive the National Disability Insurance Agency's implementation of thin market intervention projects which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NDIS participants to use the funding allocated in their plans in circumstances where poor market connection, low demand, or other barriers to service provision exist. The projects do this by working extensively with the community, providers and other intermediaries to resolve identified barriers and issues.

Disability continued

In 2023, locations of focus for NDIS market interventions include the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, the Kimberley, and Longreach. The National Disability Insurance Agency has been working with communities, local NDIS providers, state governments and other stakeholders in the APY Lands and the Kimberley to develop these NDIS markets since 2020. This work will continue in 2023, taking a whole-of-community approach, listening and responding to community priorities, and seeking opportunities to integrate across other service systems to build a strong and culturally-relevant NDIS.

Sport4All pilot project

The Sport4All pilot project is being expanded into a nationwide program which includes a specific focus on increasing participation of First Nations peoples with disability in sport and physical activity through local schools and sporting clubs.

The program expansion will see an additional 80 Inclusion Coaches employed in identified Local Government Areas that will engage approximately 53,000 First Nations peoples with a disability.

Over the next 12 months the Commonwealth will continue to build the capability of all Departments to reach the needs and expectations of First Nations peoples with disability exemplified through the minimum standard set forth by the Guiding Principles of Disability SSP. This includes partnering with FPDN and Worimi scholar, Dr Scott Avery at Western Sydney University, who is also profoundly deaf, to develop a Cultural Model of Inclusion Framework and Organisational Tool (Priority Reform Three), and the development of a First Nations Disability Data Scoping Study (Priority Reform Four), in collaboration with the Department of Social Services and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Develop and implement a national First Nations - Disability Data Strategy (National Disability Footprint)	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022-2025
The Sport4All pilot project	Minister for Aged Care and Sport	30 June 2026

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Gender and sexuality

The path forward

When gender and sexuality, as intersectional considerations, are meaningfully incorporated into policy and program design, it ensures that the diverse experiences of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are included, supported and empowered. This enables greater access to appropriate services and improved outcomes for those accessing them, as well as elevating the voices of women and gender diverse peoples in advocacy and decision-making.

Gender responsive budgeting and gender impact assessments are practical ways of embedding gender equality into the design of policy and government decision-making.



Priority actions

National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

The Commonwealth is developing a National Strategy to guide whole-of-government actions to achieve the goal of Australia being one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. The National Strategy will demonstrate how the Commonwealth will prioritise gender equality, and set out concrete actions that focus on: women's economic equality and independence; leadership, representation and rights; balancing family and care responsibilities; and health and wellbeing. Focusing on these areas recognises the current gender inequalities experienced by people in Australia, including First Nations women.

The Commonwealth has also established the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce to provide independent advice to the Commonwealth on a range of issues facing women in Australia, and inform the development of the National Strategy.

Gender responsive budgeting

The Commonwealth has committed to implement gender responsive budgeting. Gender responsive budgeting and gender impact assessments are practical ways of embedding gender equality into the design of policy and government decision-making. As a first step, the Commonwealth conducted a pilot to conduct gender impact assessments on select policy proposals during the 2022-23 October Budget process. The insights from this pilot will inform next steps and the evolution of the approach over future Budgets, and consideration of the most appropriate model for the Australian context.

Gender and sexuality continued

Gender responsive budgeting creates better and fairer outcomes for all Australians, and ensures women including First Nations women, as well as men and gender diverse people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) project

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report (Women's Voices Report), delivered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO on 9 December 2020, is a landmark document that elevates the voices of First Nations women and girls and is informing all governments with a better understanding of their strengths, challenges and aspirations for change.

The Commonwealth is supporting the delivery of the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) First Nations Women and Girls National Summit in May 2023, which will bring First Nations women and girls from across Australia together to empower women's leadership at a national level. The Commonwealth is also supporting the development of a Framework for Action to guide stakeholders to effectively identify and invest in First Nations-led strengths-based initiatives and Action Coalitions to identify systemic change initiatives at the community level, which will be showcased during the Summit.

Mandatory Australian Public Service culturally sensitive gender training

Work has begun on developing an Australian Public Service-wide culturally sensitive gender training program to inform decision-makers in policy and program design. The training will deliver an online resource that will focus on improving the capability of the Australian Public Service to understand gender constructs and its impacts on public policy and policy development, in relation to First Nations peoples. The training enables the Australian Public Service to identify and challenge unconscious biases that result in decisions based on stereotypes. This initiative supports Priority Reform Three.

Improving gender representation on boards

Having diverse women in visible, influential and decision-making positions across all levels and sectors of society is vital to driving cultural change and ensuring diverse views and experiences are represented at decision-making tables. The Commonwealth is exploring options to improve gender representation on the boards of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations registered under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.

Summary of new actions

Women's Safety measures are covered in Outcome 13 – Families and Households are Safe*.

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Ageing populations

The path forward

Older First Nations peoples are knowledge holders, role models, caregivers, Elders, leaders and teachers. They are central members of families and communities who pass culture and traditions on to the next generation.

Like all ageing populations, older First Nations peoples want to age well. While First Nations peoples are living longer, the persisting gap in life expectancy between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians means a stronger focus must be given to older First Nations peoples at later stages of life.

A cross-cutting, culturally safe and responsive focus on ageing will ensure First Nations populations can continue to participate in family, community and cultural life for as long as possible.

Priority actions

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council Limited

The Commonwealth has committed additional funding of \$2.5 million for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council Limited (NATSIAACC) to lead reform priorities for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, embedding the Closing the Gap targets on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care. NATSIAACC will also implement the five-year plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care 2021–2026.

Considering First Nations Elders

All targets and outcomes of the National Agreement must embed a focus on the health and social, economic and cultural wellbeing of older First Nations peoples. This includes a particular focus on the needs and experiences of the Stolen Generations.

For more information on the Commonwealth's commitment to ageing populations, see content included in Outcome 1.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council Limited (NATSIAACC) Aligns with Priority Reform One	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022–2025

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

Remote Australia

The path forward

To achieve better outcomes for First Nations peoples living in remote Australia and equitable achievement of the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, Commonwealth agencies have identified the need to pursue strategies tailored to the specific needs of remote Australia. The Remote Australia Working Group, comprised of members from all relevant agencies, has been formed to progress this work.

Remote communities experience unique, additional barriers to food security by nature of their geographic isolation and lower-on-average incomes compared to urban or regional centres. Cross-portfolio collaboration and placed-based approaches are essential to improve remote food systems. Food secure remote communities will see progress against all Closing the Gap Outcomes, particularly education, health and wellbeing outcomes (Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 13, 14).

Structural changes in line with Priority Reform Three, improving accountability of government organisations and responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote Australia, are the focus of the Remote Australia Working Group.

However, it is noted that the Remote Australia Working Group's actions will also encompass other Priority Reforms, resulting in cross-cutting outcomes in remote Australia in future years.

Priority actions

Remote food security

The Commonwealth is working in partnership with jurisdictions and First Nations Health Peaks to develop a National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities (the Strategy). Consultation in 2023 will refine Strategy detail and identify areas for immediate implementation.

The Strategy responds directly to Recommendation 10 of the 2020 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Inquiry Report on food pricing and food security in remote Indigenous communities (HORSCIA Report). Development will shape actions in response to other HORSCIA Report recommendations as well as provide a coordinated national approach to address emerging and priority issues.

Remote Australia Framework

The priority of the Remote Australia Working Group is to develop a Remote Australia Framework to embed the Priority Reforms, comprised of interconnected actions that will lay the foundations for deeper engagement, partnership and shared decision-making in remote Australia.

Summary of new actions

Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023-2025

* A full appendix of new and existing measures being undertaken by the Commonwealth to support Closing the Gap efforts is on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website, at www.niaa.gov.au/ctg-actions.

In recognising the high level of diversity across the First Nations population, the Commonwealth affirms its effort to directly meet the needs of all First Nations peoples through implementation of the National Agreement.



Appendix A: Summary of new actions

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Priority Reform 1	Commonwealth Engagement and Partnership Framework	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 1	Partnership Stocktake – critical value assessment of Partnerships	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 1	Policy Partnership evaluation methodology	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 1	Gap Analysis to identify future Policy Partnerships	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Sectors to be decided over 2023 and 2024
Priority Reform 1	Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in the APS Reforms Charter of Partnerships and Engagement	Partnership Priorities Committee	TBC
Priority Reform 1	First Nations Foreign Policy	Minister for Foreign Affairs	Completed within 2022-23 Financial Year
Priority Reform 2	Agree additional sectors for Sector Strengthening Plans	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 2	Sector Strengthening Plan evaluation methodology	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 2	Clause 55(b) ‘meaningful proportion’ guidance for agencies	Prime Minister with Minister for Finance	2023
Priority Reform 3	Legislative amendments to the Public Service Act	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for the Public Service	2023
Priority Reform 3	Monitoring and Accountability Framework	The Prime Minister with the Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 3	Identify, develop or strengthen an independent mechanism(s) to support, monitor, and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions	The Prime Minister with the Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 3	First Nations Impact Assessments Framework	The Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 3	Additions to the Australian Public Service Survey of Trust	Minister for the Public Service	Expected in 2023
Priority Reform 3	Communication and learning strategy	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023

Appendix A: Summary of new actions continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Priority Reform 3	Boosting First Nations Employment	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for the Public Service	By 2030
Priority Reform 3	First Nations-led research into transformation elements	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023
Priority Reform 3	National Anti-Racism Strategy	Attorney-General with Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	Ongoing
Priority Reform 4	Six community data portal sites	Minister for Indigenous Australians	End 2023
Priority Reform 4	Fully established measurement frameworks and data development timeline for socio-economic outcomes	Minister for Indigenous Australians	End 2023
Priority Reform 4	Fully established measurement frameworks and data development timeline for Priority Reforms	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Completion by mid-2024
Priority Reform 4	APS-wide Framework for Indigenous Data and Governance (Deputy Secretaries Sub-Committee and Working Group)	Minister for Finance Minister for Indigenous Australians	End 2023
Priority Reform 4	Connected Beginnings development of approach to data sharing in communities with overlap of programs	Minister for Early Childhood Education Minister for Indigenous Australians Minister for Health and Ageing	Commence early 2023
Priority Reform 4	First Nations Disability Data Scoping Study	Treasurer Minister for Social Services Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022 to 2024
Outcome 1	Additional Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Service sector funding for improved infrastructure	Minister for Health and Aged Care with Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health	Funding expended by June 2026

Appendix 1 continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Outcome 1	Implementation of the Department of Health and Aged Care's Closing the Gap Action Plan to lead structural change required under Priority Reforms	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Ongoing
Outcome 1	Funding 500 First Nations health workers	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Anticipated start date for traineeships is 1 July 2023 and completion due by 30 June 2027
Outcome 1	Dialysis Treatment Buses in Far West NSW	Minister for Health and Aged Care	This one-off funding is scheduled for the 2nd half of 2022-23
Outcome 1	Better Renal Services for First Nations peoples (Dialysis Units)	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Delivered over 2022-23 to 2025-26. Funding for the first 6 sites anticipated for early 2023.
Outcome 1	Improving Renal and Cardiac care for First Nations peoples (Upgrades and purchase of medical equipment)	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Funding to be provided within the 2022-23 financial year
Outcome 1	Provision of rapid point-of-care (POC) cervical screening tests and follow up in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	Minister for Health	Completion due by June 2025
Outcome 1	Indigenous media strategy and outreach program to increase uptake of digital health technologies	N/A	Audit and Strategy to be delivered by June 2023 Delivery to commence July 2023
Outcome 1	AFL boosting physical activity in First Nations communities in Northern Territory	Minister for Aged Care and Sport	31 December 2024
Outcome 2	Birthing on Country Centre of Excellence	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Construction will commence in 2022-23 and the Birth Centre will be operational in 2025-26. A workforce transition plan will commence to ensure a ready maternal workforce when the Birth Centre opens (see below).
Outcome 2	Closing the Gap Healthy Mums, Healthy Bubs measure	Minister for Health and Aged Care	2021-22 to 2024-25

Appendix A: Summary of new actions continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Outcome 3	Preschool Reform Agreement funding	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2022 to 2025
Outcome 3	Plan for Cheaper Childcare	Minister for Education	Commencing July 2023
Outcome 3	Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership	Minister for Early Childhood Education with Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022 to 2025
Outcome 3	National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy 'Shaping Our Future'	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2022 to 2031
Outcome 3	ACCC childcare inquiry	Treasurer	Completion by 31 December 2023
Outcome 4	Connected Beginnings	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	Ongoing
Outcome 4	Providing child care in remote communities through the Community Child Care Fund Restricted	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	Ongoing
Outcome 4	Early Years Strategy	Minister for Social Services with Minister for Early Childhood Education	Over 18 months until 2024
Outcome 4	Intensive early childhood education and care model trial	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2025-26
Outcome 4	New early learning teaching model	Minister for Education with Minister for Early Childhood Education	2024-25
Outcome 4	First Nations Playgroups	Minister for Social Services	2022-23 to 2025-26
Outcome 5	Up to 5,000 bursaries under National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (First Nations teachers are one of the eligible cohorts)	Minister for Education	Ongoing
Outcome 5	Indigenous Boarding Providers grants program	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for Education	2023 to 2024
Outcome 5	Expansion of junior ranger activities to 25 additional sites	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for Education	Ongoing

Appendix 1 continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Outcome 6	12-month Skills Agreement with states and territories	Minister for Skills and Training	2023
Outcome 6	Jobs and Skills Councils	Minister for Skills and Training with Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	Ongoing
Outcome 6	Jobs and Skills Australia Advice	Minister for Skills and Training with Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	TBC
Outcome 7	Employment White Paper Aligns with Outcome 8	Treasurer	Due for completion by September 2023
Outcome 7	Youth Engagement Model	Minister for Youth	2023
Outcome 8	Examine opportunities for a Closing the Gap Policy Partnership on economic participation Aligns with Outcome 7	To be confirmed	TBC
Outcome 8	New jobs program trial (to replace CDP)	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Opening early 2023
Outcome 8	Protecting First Nations Intellectual Property	Treasurer	Ongoing
Outcome 9 (Target 9a)	Establish Housing Policy Partnership	Minister for Housing Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022-23 to 2024-25
Outcome 9 (Target 9a)	National Housing and Homelessness Plan	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	This is a Government election commitment
Outcome 9 (Target 9a)	Housing Supply and Affordability Council	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	An interim Council was established on 1 January 2023, The Government is introducing legislation to make the Council a statutory body in the next sitting of Parliament with the intention for it to commence 1 July 2023
Outcome 9 (Target 9a)	Housing Australia Future Fund	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	Expected to be legislated in the next 12 months.

Appendix A: Summary of new actions continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Outcome 9 (Target 9a)	Housing Accord	Minister for Housing with Minister for Homelessness	Housing Accord delivery will be from 2024 to 2029 of the initial agreement, with work commencing immediately to ensure delivery of new housing supply.
Outcome 9 (Target 9a)	Northern Territory Housing and Essential Infrastructure	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022 to 2024
Outcome 9 (Target 9b)	Target 9b Implementation Plan	Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government with Assistant Minister for Regional Development	2023
Outcome 9 (Target 9b)	National Water Grid Fund – safe and reliable water for remote and regional First Nations communities	Minister for the Environment and Water	2023 to 2026
Outcome 10	Establish justice reinvestment initiatives across the country with a focus on turning the tide on incarceration and deaths in custody Aligns with Outcome 11	Attorney-General with Minister for Indigenous Australians	Ongoing measure with the first phase of delivery completed by June 2027
Outcome 10	Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) capacity to ensure First Nations families access to legal assistance around coronial processes Aligns with Outcome 11	Attorney-General	Completion due by June 2025
Outcome 10	Build National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Legal Services (NATSILS) capacity Aligns with Outcome 11	Attorney-General	Completion due by June 2025
Outcome 10	Explore options for consolidated national real-time reporting of deaths in custody Establish a qualitative research program incorporating voices of First Nations peoples Aligns with Outcome 11	Attorney-General with Minister for Indigenous Australians	Completion due by June 2025

Appendix 1 continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Outcome 10	Nationally coordinated approach to education and training for family, domestic and sexual violence frontline workers, family law practitioners, the judiciary and the justice sector more broadly Aligns with Outcome 11	Attorney-General	Current funding for coercive control training ceases 30 June 2025
Outcome 11	Standing Council of Attorneys-General consideration of the minimum age of criminal responsibility Aligns with Outcome 10	Attorney-General	Ongoing
Outcome 12	Formal partnership agreement Aligns with Priority Reform 1	Minister for Social Services with state and territory Community Services Ministers	The Partnership Agreement will be for the length of the first Action Plans (2023 to 2026) then reviewed prior to the next set of Action Plans (2027 to 2031) - expected to be launched in February 2023.
Outcome 12	Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan	Minister for Social Services with state and territory Community Services Ministers	The first Action Plans will be implemented from 2023 to 2026.
Outcome 13	Building the evidence base	Minister for Social Services	Up to 2027-28
Outcome 13	Specialised Family Violence Services - Aboriginal Community Controlled Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) providers	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023-24 to 2024-25
Outcome 13	Healing program for First Nations families	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023-24 to 2027-28
Outcome 13	Dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan	Minister for Social Services	To commence from July 2023
Outcome 13	Standalone First Nations National Plan	Minister for Social Services	TBC

Appendix A: Summary of new actions continued

Outcome	Action	Minister Responsible	Delivery Timeframe
Outcome 14	Targeted Regional Initiatives for Suicide Prevention	Minister for Health and Aged Care with Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	Completion by 30 June 2024
Outcome 14	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership *This aligns with Priority Reform 1	Minister for Health and Aged Care	2021 to 2024
Outcome 15	Double the number of Indigenous Rangers	Minister for Indigenous Australians	Delivery by 2030
Outcome 15	10 new Indigenous Protected Areas	Minister for Indigenous Australians with Minister for Environment	June 2028
Outcome 16	The National Indigenous Languages Survey	Minister for the Arts	Completed in June 2024
Outcome 16	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership Aligns with Priority Reform 1	Minister for the Arts	Endorsed by Joint Council in December 2022. First meeting to be held in March 2023
Outcome 17	Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia	Minister for Communications	2022 to 2025
Outcome 17	First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group	Minister for Communications	Funding provided up until 2026-27.
Cross-cutting area: Disability	Develop and implement a national First Nations - Disability Data Strategy (National Disability Footprint)	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2022 to 2025
Cross-cutting area: Disability	The Sport4All pilot project	Minister for Aged Care and Sport	30 June 2026
Cross-cutting area: Ageing Populations	The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council Limited (NATSIAACC) Aligns with Priority Reform One	Minister for Health and Aged Care	2022-23 to 2024-25
Cross-cutting area: Remote Australia	National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities	Minister for Indigenous Australians	2023-2025

Meeting our commitments

2023 Commitments in the National Agreement

This Implementation Plan meets all the requirements set out in the National Agreement. See checklist below.

As per the National Agreement, jurisdictional Implementation Plans will:	Check
Be fully aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and state that their purpose is to implement the National Agreement (Clause 96)	Yes
Respond to the differing needs, priorities and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia (Clause 96)	Yes
Demonstrate a commitment to undertake all actions in a way that takes full account of, promotes, and does not diminish in any way, the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Clauses 21 and 107)	Yes
Be whole-of-government plans, covering government agencies and statutory bodies (Clause 108)	Yes
Be developed and delivered in partnership between governments, the Coalition of Peaks, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners (Clause 108)	Yes
Set out how existing policies and programs will be aligned to the National Agreement (Clauses 104 and 108)	Yes
Set out actions to achieve the Priority Reforms and partnership actions (Clause 108)	Yes
Set out actions to achieve the agreed outcomes and targets (Clause 108)	Yes
For transparency, include information on funding and timeframes for actions (Clause 108)	Yes
Include the approach to annual reporting, including when they will release their public report (Clause 108)	Yes

This Implementation Plan identifies commitments due in 2023 under the National Agreement, as listed below.

Commitments in the National Agreement due December 2023:	Priority Reform
Review and strengthen existing partnerships (Clause 36b)	1
Report on review of partnerships to Joint Council (Clause 36c)	1
Identify sectors for joint national strengthening effort every three years through Sector Strengthening Plans (Clause 49)	2
Agree additional sectors for Sector Strengthening Plans (Clause 53)	2
Identify, develop or strengthen independent mechanism(s) to support, monitor and report on transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions (Clause 67)	3
Report publicly on transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions (Clause 67d)	3
Establish data projects in up to six locations across Australia (Clause 74)	4

Glossary of terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation (other than an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation) – There is no one definition of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation in Australia. For the purposes of this plan, it can be a business, charity, not-for-profit organisation, incorporated under Commonwealth, state or territory legislation, that, as a minimum requirement, is at least 50 per cent owned, controlled and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review – Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led reviews will be carried out within 12 months of each three-yearly independent review by the Productivity Commission. They are an opportunity to capture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities experience of Closing the Gap implementation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – The Commonwealth acknowledges that there is no single Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture or group and that there are many diverse communities, language groups and kinships throughout Australia. For the purposes of this Implementation Plan, the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, First Nations peoples and Indigenous Australians are interchangeably and respectfully used.

All governments – consisting of the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments, and the Australian Local Government Association.

Coalition of Peaks – the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Peak Organisations. The Coalition of Peaks is a representative body consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national and state and territory community-controlled peak organisations that work to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Commonwealth – The legal entity of the Commonwealth of Australia, created by the Australian Constitution. The term may also be used to differentiate the Australian Government from state and territory governments.

Cultural safety – Cultural safety refers to overcoming the power imbalances of places, people and policies that occur between the majority non-Indigenous position and the minority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person so that there is no assault, challenge or denial of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's identity, of who they are and what they need. Cultural safety is met through actions from the majority position that recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is a recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally safe.

Glossary of terms continued

Joint Council – The Joint Council on Closing the Gap. This is the Ministerial Council on Closing the Gap, with representation from all levels of government and the Coalition of Peaks. Further details on the Joint Council can be found in the Partnership Agreement.

Mainstream organisations – These are government agencies, institutions, organisations and services that fund and develop policies or deliver services to all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

National Agreement – The National Agreement on Closing the Gap was signed by all Australian governments and the Coalition of Peaks in July 2020. It sets out commitments for all Australian governments to work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.

NIAA – The National Indigenous Australians Agency responsible for leading and coordinating the development and implementation of Australia’s Closing the Gap targets in partnership with Indigenous Australians.

Partnership Agreement – The Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019–2029, signed by COAG and the Coalition of Peaks, setting out shared decision-making arrangements on the next phase of Closing the Gap.

Productivity Commission – Commonwealth Government’s independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. It will develop and maintain a publicly accessible dashboard comprising data and associated supporting materials to inform the reporting on progress of Closing the Gap. The dashboard will be updated on a regular basis (at a minimum, annually) and will be maintained for the full term of the National Agreement. It will also undertake a comprehensive review of progress every three years.

Significant and sustained – A year-on-year improvement relative to the baseline data that is equal to or greater than the historic rate of change.





Australian Government