



## Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

# **The National Agreement in context and our approach to the review**

Information paper 1

Draft report



**The Productivity Commission acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first storytellers of this land and Traditional Owners of Country on which we now live and work. We recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, communities and cultures. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this report may contain the names of people who have since passed away.**

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### **The Productivity Commission**

The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed most simply, is to help governments make better policies, in the long term interest of the Australian community.

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## Key points

-  **The National Agreement on Closing the Gap was agreed in 2020 but it builds on a long history – of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s ongoing sovereignty and self-determination and previous government policies, actions and agreements.**
-  **The Agreement is unlike other national agreements. It is the first that includes a non-government party as a signatory – the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. It is ambitious in the scale of change required, calling for an unprecedented, structural shift in the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**
-  **The Agreement contains four Priority Reforms. These reforms set the Agreement apart from the previous National Indigenous Reform Agreement, which largely focused on setting targets for socio-economic outcomes. The Priority Reforms are designed to support an accelerated achievement of the Agreement’s 17 socio-economic outcomes and 19 targets. The Commission has focused this first review on progress against the Priority Reforms.**
-  **The Commission has engaged widely, particularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations from across the country and across a wide range of sectors, including:**
  - 186 meetings, of which 121 were with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
  - four virtual roundtables with organisations in priority policy areas identified in the Agreement**Thirty-two people and organisations made submissions, including 15 from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.**
-  **The Commission has assessed progress towards the Priority Reforms in two ways. We have:**
  - assessed progress against the specific commitments in the Agreement, and whether proposed actions will lead to change
  - assessed the broad range of actions governments are taking, as set out in their implementation plans.
-  **The Commission has made observations about where progress can be observed and where more work is needed. As well as extensive engagement, the Commission has also analysed implementation plans and annual reports in detail to get a sense of what governments are doing against each of the Priority Reforms (and their specific commitments).**
-  **The draft report and accompanying information papers are not our final views. The Commission would like to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, governments and the broader community on the content of the draft report and information papers, which will be taken into account before we finalise them. Submissions and brief comments are welcome by 6 October 2023.**

## 1 Closing the Gap: the historical context

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Agreement) was signed in 2020 but it builds on a long history – of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s ongoing sovereignty and drive for self-determination in the face of previous government policies, actions and agreements. The Closing the Gap agenda has been an instrumental part of wider recognition by governments that self-determination is key to changing life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

For thousands of years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived and prospered on Country across this continent and surrounding islands. Despite the effects of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have continued to maintain their cultures, knowledges and lore, and assert sovereignty and self-determination (box 1). In recent times, this has included calls for government to engage in stronger partnerships, Treaty, a Voice to State Parliaments and the proposed Voice that would give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The denial of the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since colonisation has impeded Indigenous self-determination as government policies have continually sought to control the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The negative impacts of this have been acknowledged by various governments over time, with commitments to improve. For the most part, these efforts have not led to substantial or enduring improvement to how governments work.



### **Box 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have continued to assert their self-determination and sovereignty**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have thrived for tens of thousands of years with strong cultures, knowledges and lore (AIATSIS 2008; VPSC 2023, pp. 35–41). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have: complex kinship structures; rules for community interactions; defined roles relating to law, education, spiritual development and resource management; languages, ceremonies, customs and traditions; and extensive knowledge of their environment (AIATSIS 2008, pp. 5–23; VPSC 2023, pp. 35–41).

After 1788, the colonial legal system denied that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had sovereignty or property rights over their land. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were dispossessed of their traditional lands, although not without resistance. From the late 1800s, colonial authorities required many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live on reserves with limited freedoms. In the 1900s, governments took a more assimilationist approach, which included the forcible removal of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities between 1910 and 1970 — the Stolen Generations (HREOC 1997, p. 31). The impact of the removals continues for the Stolen Generations and their descendants (AIHW 2018).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not passive in the face of these experiences. Some petitioned governments in the 1930s seeking representation in Parliament, the establishment of a national department of native affairs, and the creation of state advisory councils. In 1963, the Yolŋu people presented the Yirrkala Bark Petitions written in English and Gumatj. Continued activism resulted in the successful 1967 referendum to amend the Australian constitution – to allow the Australian Government to legislate with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Census.



**Box 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have continued to assert their self-determination and sovereignty**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continued to campaign for land rights and through the 1970s governments passed various forms of land rights legislation. During the 1970s and 1980s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people established many community-controlled organisations (particularly organisations providing primary health care and legal services).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was established in 1990 to advise the Australian Government and to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It comprised 35 regional councils elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and a national board of commissioners elected by regional councillors. ATSIC was abolished in 2004 and its functions and services transferred to mainstream agencies.

Following the abolition of ATSIC in 2004, there was no national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body until the establishment in 2010 of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples. Made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations, it provided independent advocacy on behalf of First Nations people in Australia. It was originally funded by the Australian Government, but funding was withdrawn in the 2014 budget. The National Congress entered voluntary administration in 2019.

Structures such as ATSIC demonstrated strong precedent in what can be achieved at both the national and regional levels, when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies and community-controlled organisations are given an equal place at the table. The strength of this precedent was reiterated in the Commission's engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people around the country.

While self-determination means different things to different people, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS 2019) explained the principle of self-determination as requiring that 'Indigenous peoples be involved in decisions that affect them, including the design, delivery and evaluation of government policies and programs'. These principles are also contained within the Priority Reforms in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Self-determination is a central feature of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 and sets out a framework for states to take actions to 'truly recognise Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, participation in decision-making, respect for and promotion of culture, and equality and non-discrimination', including control over cultural traditions, customs and expressions (United Nations 2007). The Australian Government initially voted against UNDRIP in 2007, but reversed its decision and endorsed UNDRIP in 2009. There has been some criticism about the extent to which its obligations have translated to Australia's domestic policies (for example, ANTA 2022; Law Council of Australia 2022).

## The beginnings of Closing the Gap

In 2002, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)<sup>1</sup> – the Prime Minister, each of the State and Territory Government Premiers or Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association – initiated trials of coordinated government approaches to service delivery in eight communities or regions across Australia. The Australian Government and the relevant state or territory government for each trial nominated lead agencies to coordinate their approaches to community engagement and service delivery. The trials were evaluated, which showed that while there were some successes, such as improved relationships and intergovernmental effort and improved partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the extent of improvement varied across sites. However, many things could have been done better in approaches to partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, improving the capability of government agencies to work with and provide services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and coordination across government agencies (Morgan Disney and Associates 2006, pp. 5–8).

Also in 2002, COAG commissioned the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (with the Productivity Commission as the secretariat) to prepare a regular report on indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. COAG agreed a framework of indicators and a first report was published in 2003. A further seven editions were published, with the most recent in 2020 (SCRGSP 2020). The Steering Committee and the Commission engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the development and ongoing evolution of the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* reports, however, decision-making rested with the governments who comprised the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was guided by the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Working Group. For the 2020 report, the working group had three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members representing the Coalition of Peaks and an Aboriginal chair for the first time. As well as reporting against the indicators, the report identified:

Common characteristics of approaches that appear to be successful in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include:

- addressing racism and discrimination in the Australian community, through structural changes, and building knowledge and providing education
- enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share in decision-making about things that affect them
- addressing laws, policies, and practices that operate to the detriment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ongoing government investment, collaboration and coordination
- ensuring access to effective culturally safe services, at the right time and suited to the local context. (SCRGSP 2020, p. xxiii)

In 2007, COAG commissioned a regular report on expenditure on services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Four editions were published between 2010 and 2017 (SCRGSP 2017).

The Close the Gap Campaign was launched in 2007 to close the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health gap by implementing a human rights-based approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The campaign steering committee comprises Australia's peak Indigenous and non-Indigenous health bodies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and human rights organisations. The campaign has published annual

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<sup>1</sup> COAG was replaced with National Cabinet in March 2020. National Cabinet comprises the Prime Minister and each of the State and Territory Government Premiers or Chief Ministers. A representative of local government is invited to meet with National Cabinet once each year.

reports since then, including a review in 2018 examining why Australian governments had not succeeded in closing the health gap (Close the Gap Campaign 2022).

In 2008, COAG agreed the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), which included six Closing the Gap targets (a seventh was added later) supported by performance indicators grouped within seven building blocks (COAG 2008). The NIRA largely focused on setting targets for socio-economic outcomes. The COAG Reform Council assessed progress against the agreement in annual reports until it was abolished in 2014. Some targets showed improvement but progress on others was slow or unclear. A key lesson from the NIRA was that when presented in isolation, socio-economic targets can problematise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, rather than the structures and systems that are driving these outcomes (information paper 6). It is these structures and systems which need to change to achieve improvements in life outcomes.

The NIRA was accompanied by a series of National Partnership Agreements between governments focusing on specific aspects of improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Like the NIRA itself, the National Partnership Agreements were developed by governments with little input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people outside government or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Former prime minister, Scott Morrison, acknowledged that governments had failed to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in developing the NIRA.

Despite the best of intentions; investments in new programs; and bi-partisan goodwill, Closing the Gap has never really been a partnership with Indigenous people. We perpetuated an ingrained way of thinking, passed down over two centuries and more, and it was the belief that we knew better than our Indigenous peoples. We don't. (Morrison 2020)

## **A new approach – the 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap**

In 2018, COAG agreed to a formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to finalise a refresh of Closing the Gap and provide a forum for ongoing engagement while the new agenda was being implemented (Coalition of Peaks and COAG 2019). The Coalition of Peaks, a representative body of over 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations and members, formed in 2019 to partner with Australian governments on Closing the Gap. At the same time, the formal Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap between the Coalition of Peaks and COAG commenced (Coalition of Peaks 2020) (box 2).



### **Box 2 – Setting the scene for shared decision-making in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap**

#### **The Partnership Agreement**

The Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019–2029 (Partnership Agreement) was signed in March 2019. It was a result of advocacy from prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait people and the National Coalition of Peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations (Coalition of Peaks), which called for the next phase of Closing the Gap to be done in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (COAG 2018) (Coalition of Peaks 2018a, 2018b).

The Partnership Agreement is between the Australian, state and territory governments, the Coalition of Peaks and the Australian Local Government Association. It is a 'commitment to fundamentally change





## **Box 2 – Setting the scene for shared decision-making in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap**

the way that governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people work together' (p. 2). The objectives are to:

- Enhance outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of the Closing the Gap framework by ensuring their full involvement in its development and implementation;
- Share ownership of, and responsibility for, a jointly agreed framework and targets and ongoing implementation and monitoring of efforts to close the gap in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in line with each Party's responsibilities;
- Enhance the credibility and public support of Closing the Gap over the next ten years by ensuring full participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives in its development and implementation; and
- Advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement, engagement and autonomy through equitable participation, shared authority and decision making in relation to Closing the Gap. (clause 13)
  - » The Partnership Agreement is seen as a pivotal turning point – for the first time, Australian governments shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak representatives to develop a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Coalition of Peaks and COAG 2019).

### **The National Agreement**

The National Agreement builds upon the historic Partnership Agreement and acknowledges this changed approach under section 4, titled *A New Approach*.

This Agreement is a commitment from all Parties to set out a future where policy making that impacts on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is done in full and genuine partnership. (clause 18)

The Parties will listen to the voices and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and change the way we work in response. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying for a long time that:

- they need to have a much greater say in how programs and services are delivered to their people, in their own places and on their own country
- community-controlled organisations deliver the best services and outcomes for Closing the Gap
- government agencies and institutions need to address systemic, daily racism, and promote cultural safety and transfer power and resources to communities
- they need to have access to the same information and data as governments to drive their development. (clause 19)

## 2 The National Agreement on Closing the Gap

In 2020, all Australian governments and the Coalition of Peaks signed the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The objective of the Agreement is ‘to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians’ (clause 15).

The Agreement is unlike other national agreements. It is the first that includes a non-government party as a signatory – the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. It is ambitious in the scale of change required, calling for an unprecedented, structural shift in the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Unlike the NIRA, it is overseen by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap (established under the Partnership on Closing the Gap (box 2)) and is now separate from the Council on Federal Financial Relations and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, which form the architecture supporting other national agreements, including in the areas of health and education. Box 3 sets out the governance arrangements for the Agreement.



### Box 3 – Governance structures for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

#### Joint Council on Closing the Gap

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council) oversees the implementation of the Agreement. It comprises one minister from each jurisdiction, a representative of the Australian Local Government Association, the Coalition of Peaks Chair and 12 representatives nominated by the Coalition of Peaks. Joint Council meets two to three times a year. It is co-chaired by the Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Australians and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative nominated by the Coalition of Peaks.

The Joint Council provides national leadership and coordination on Closing the Gap. It monitors implementation of the Agreement including progress by governments and the Coalition of Peaks against their implementation plans and specific commitments specified in the Agreement (such as policy partnerships and place-based partnerships). It provides advice to governments and cooperates with other intergovernmental ministers’ meetings.

#### Partnership Working Group

Joint Council is supported by the Partnership Working Group (PWG), which comprises senior officials from each government, the Australian Local Government Association and representatives of the Coalition of Peaks. It is co-chaired by a senior government official and the lead convenor or a representative of the Coalition of Peaks. PWG meets every six to eight weeks, and supports Joint Council by:

- developing policy positions, papers and providing advice for Council members
- assisting Joint Council to implement its work plan
- resolving issues and responding to requests from Joint Council.

The PWG is supported by a drafting group, comprising government officials and representatives of the Coalition of Peaks. The drafting group prepares and agrees to papers for consideration by PWG. The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) provides the secretariat for the Joint Council and PWG.



### Box 3 – Governance structures for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Joint Council and PWG are able to form additional working groups to support their work and for specific tasks. For example, the Data and Reporting Working Group (DRWG) provides advice and technical support to the PWG on data development and reporting, and includes representatives from major Australian Government data custodians (such as the ABS and AIHW). More detail on the role of the DRWG is provided in information paper 6.

Sources: Joint Council (2023); PWG (2023).

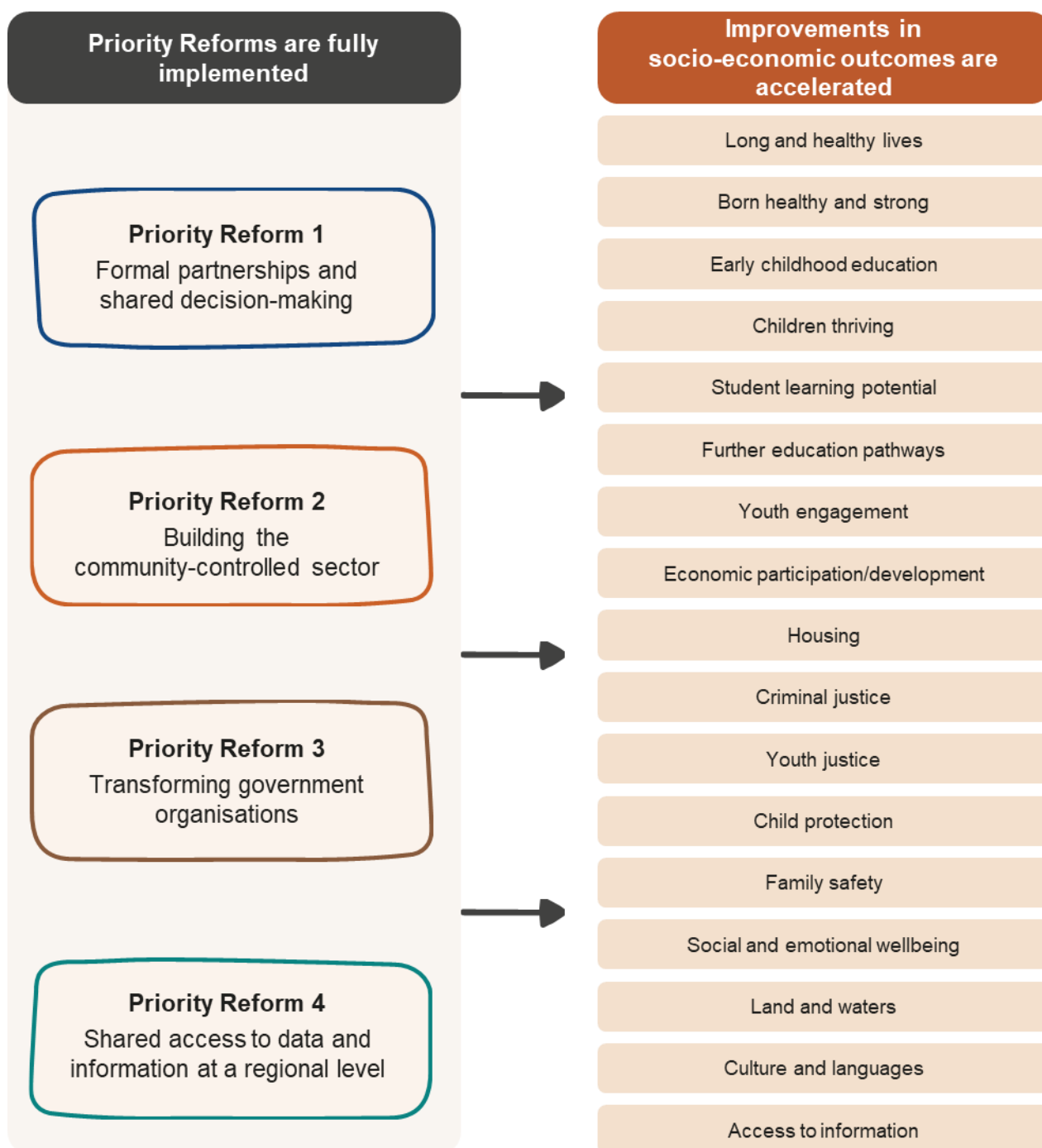
In signing the Agreement, governments made a commitment – to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to the Coalition of Peaks, to each other and to the nation – to ‘a fundamentally new way of developing and implementing policies and programs that impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’ and to do so 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’ (clause 4).

The previous iteration of Closing the Gap, the NIRA, had a primarily deficit-based approach. The focus was on assessing whether targets had been achieved, and there was little attention on how government systems and the relationships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needed to change. In contrast, the central pillars of the new Agreement are its four Priority Reforms, which focus on changing the way governments work (figure 1).

- **Priority Reform One – Formal partnerships and shared decision-making.** ‘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 agreements’ (clause 17a)
- **Priority Reform Two – Building the community-controlled sector.** ‘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’ (clause 17b)
- **Priority Reform Three – Transforming government organisations.** ‘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’ (clause 17c)
- **Priority Reform Four – Shared access to data and information at a regional level.** ‘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’ (clause 17d).

Implementation of these Priority Reforms is intended to accelerate improvements in socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – the Agreement currently contains 17 socio-economic outcome areas and associated targets (figure 1).

**Figure 1 – The Priority reforms and socio-economic outcomes in the Agreement<sup>a</sup>**



a. Socio-economic outcome labels are shortened in this diagram. The full wording is shown in information paper 6.

Although the Priority Reforms are described as a new approach in the way governments work, they are not new ideas – most of what the parties have committed to reflect what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying for a long time. Further, some aspects of the reforms have been committed to by governments in the past, but only partially implemented or abandoned following changes in governments and shifts in policy. For example:

- as noted above, the Australian Government established ATSIC in 1990 to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people greater opportunities to influence policy and funding of services but abolished ATSIC in 2004

- over recent decades, governments have decided to allocate money specifically for service delivery by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, but sometimes later changed policies and funded non-Indigenous organisations to provide these services, or indeed decided to deliver those services directly through their own departments. When governments have provided grants to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to provide services they have often specified how services are to be delivered without input from the organisation or community
- in preparing its Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, the Commission found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often have limited input into evaluation and governments do not rely heavily on evidence or past experience when formulating policies and programs (PC 2020, p. 4). Effective programs may be cancelled while ineffective ones may continue to be funded.

Experiences like these have contributed to a level of distrust in government as well as a sense of fatigue and burden on already-stretched resources of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and peak groups. These groups are continually called on by governments to provide advice and perspectives on a broad range of policy issues but are often not given sufficient time or resources to do so meaningfully.

### **The priority reforms are aimed at accelerating changes in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

The Agreement aims to improve life outcomes through changes in the relationship between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that enable greater self-determination. The Priority Reforms describe how the Agreement will bring about these changes. Although the Agreement does not explicitly set out a logic describing how the Priority Reforms will drive changes in outcomes, a partial logic can be derived from its elements.

In short, the Priority Reforms are expected to improve the socio-economic outcomes through the centring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges in policies and programs. The Priority Reforms will promote greater recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This recognition will reinforce efforts to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in the design and delivery of policies and programs through shared decision-making, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control and access to data. This will lead to more culturally safe and responsive policies and programs. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be able to access better quality and more culturally relevant services. This will reduce barriers to participation in social and economic activities and lead to improved socio-economic outcomes. Note that this represents the Commission's understanding of the logic and should be tested and further developed by parties to the Agreement.

While the Agreement outlines the key building blocks of the reforms and their objectives, it has not explicitly linked them in a way that would support a shared understanding of the intended change. This risks contributing to a siloed policy response and insufficient investment in the government transformation necessary to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (box 1).

## **3 The Agreement sits within an evolving landscape**

Much has changed since the Agreement was signed in 2020, and the Agreement is just one part of a broader set of commitments made by governments to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (box 4).



#### **Box 4 – Broader government commitments to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Since 2018, governments have stepped up their efforts to improve how they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to design policies that affect their lives. In addition to signing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, several jurisdictions (Victoria, Queensland, the ACT and the Northern Territory) have commenced processes to facilitate Treaty negotiations and the SA Government has passed legislation to establish a First Nations Voice. The Australian Government has also committed to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, including progress holding a referendum on a Voice in its first term. The Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body. It would give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Australian Government 2023a).

These initiatives may establish new decision-making and accountability structures that could provide a further catalyst for changes to the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. But regardless of the outcomes of these processes, governments will still be responsible for adopting a fundamentally new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as they have committed to do in the Agreement.

In light of these changes, it may be necessary for the Agreement to be amended over time to reflect the evolving landscape and to reinforce governments' commitments to implement the Priority Reforms. These reforms reflect long-standing objectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to shape the actions of governments, and our engagements in this review have shown that there is strong support for the Priority Reforms.

## **4 Three-yearly reviews of the Agreement**

The parties to the Agreement have committed to independent oversight and accountability of progress under the Agreement. This includes the Productivity Commission undertaking a comprehensive review of progress every three years; this is the first such review. It is an opportunity to highlight where governments are changing the way they operate, where outcomes are improving for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and where additional effort is needed.

The Commission's task involves assessing progress against the Agreement's four Priority Reforms and 17 socio-economic outcomes and to examine the factors affecting progress (the draft report contains the review's terms of reference). Our final report will be delivered to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap in December 2023 and will be followed within 12 months by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led review (clause 125).

The Commission also has a separate role in developing and maintaining the Closing the Gap information repository, which includes a dashboard of the most up-to-date information on the targets and indicators in the Agreement and an annual data compilation report (the most recent edition of which was released in July 2023) (PC 2023b).

## 5 The Commission's approach to the review

In reviewing the Agreement, the Commission has engaged widely, particularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, received written submissions, sought specific information from governments and the Coalition of Peaks and reviewed plans, reports and other documents prepared under the Agreement.

### Our approach to engagement

The Commission has actively encouraged public participation in the review and continues to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, government agencies and non-Indigenous NGOs involved in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In line with the Commission's Indigenous Evaluation Strategy (PC 2020, p. 6), centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives, priorities and knowledges has been the overarching principle of our engagement strategy. Centring involves recognising the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have different experiences of government policies and programs. The Commission has engaged widely to hear multiple perspectives, knowledges, and experiences.

On 6 July 2022, the Commission published its planned engagement approach (PC 2022a). The approach outlines four guiding principles for how the Commission planned to undertake engagement in a culturally safe way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their representatives.

- *Fair and inclusive* – a diversity of perspectives is supported and enabled, and all wanting to contribute and be heard have the opportunity to do so.
- *Transparent and open* – information is provided and decisions are made in a transparent and open manner, and it is possible to assess this has occurred.
- *Ongoing* – every stage of the review is informed by engagement.
- *Reciprocal* – at a minimum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their representatives are provided feedback on how their input has been understood and informed decisions.

The Commission received rich and valuable information from its engagement and submissions and wishes to express appreciation to all who gave their time to this review. As the Commission analysed what it heard and arrived at findings for this draft report, it acknowledges there are significant gaps in information for the review in some areas. To fill these gaps, the Commission has included information requests in the draft report and is calling for submissions in response to these requests and to our draft recommendations.

### Meetings and visits

In line with the commitment to be transparent and engage at every stage of the review, the Commission published *Review paper 2: Proposed approach and invitation to engage with the review* on 27 October 2022 (PC 2022b). This paper outlined how the Commission intended to assess progress on the Agreement and invited feedback on the proposed approach, as well as sought views on the progress on each of the Priority Reforms.

Due to the number of people and organisations affected by the Agreement, engagement occurred in phases. The first phase of engagement commenced in 2022 and involved engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and government agencies. On 9 February 2023, the Commission published *Review paper 3: What we have heard to date – first phase of engagement* (PC 2023c).

In the second phase of engagement, the Commission prioritised meeting with people and organisations that we were not able to visit in 2022. We also prioritised hearing from communities, organisations and people who may not ordinarily have a voice in consultation processes, and those with a mix of life experiences.

Meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations were part of in-person visits by the Commission across all states and territories. The Commission met with people and organisations across a wide range of sectors and located in a range of metropolitan, regional and remote areas. Prior to the publication of the draft report, the Commission visited:

- New South Wales – Bourke, Brewarrina, Penrith, Redfern, Sydney
- Victoria – Melbourne
- Queensland – Brisbane, Cairns, Stradbroke Island, Thursday Island, Yarrabah
- South Australia – Adelaide, Ceduna, Yalata
- Western Australia – Broome, Geraldton, Kununurra, Perth
- Tasmania – Hobart, Launceston
- Australian Capital Territory – Canberra
- Northern Territory – Alice Springs, Darwin, Groote Eylandt, Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala.

Although the Commission has engaged widely, it has only been possible to meet with a small proportion of the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. The current review is the first of a series of three-yearly reviews set out in the Agreement. Engagement will continue for the remainder of this review, and but there will be an ongoing engagement process for subsequent reviews.

Meetings with government agencies, not-for-profit organisations and peak organisations were mostly conducted online. Of all the meetings:

- 121 were with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (including community-controlled organisations, peak bodies, councils, and regional authorities)
- 48 were with government departments and agencies (national, states and territories)
- 10 were with non-Indigenous NGOs involved in the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- four were with local government organisations
- three were with research and consulting organisations.

The third phase of engagement for this review will include a mix of follow-up discussions with people and organisations we met during earlier phases, meetings with some people and organisations we were not able to meet earlier, and meetings to discuss feedback we received on the draft report.

## **Roundtables**

The Commission convened four virtual roundtable meetings. Roundtables provided an opportunity to hear the voices of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities working in sectors that were identified as priority policy areas in the Agreement. The objective of each roundtable was to understand sector-specific priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, progress against Priority Reforms, and how Priority Reforms are (or are not yet) impacting socio-economic outcomes related to each sector.

- 22 November 2022 – The Commission heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations working in justice, family violence prevention, legal support, youth justice and justice reinvestment programs.
- 10 February 2023 – The Commission heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations working in the health sector.
- 16 February 2023 – The Commission heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations working in child health services, family services, education, out-of-home care, disability and early childhood care and development.



- 3 April 2023 – The Commission heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations working in the housing sector.

In line with the engagement principles of transparent and reciprocal information sharing, the Commission made a public commitment to provide feedback to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on what we heard. The key messages and themes from the discussions were shared by email, and an opportunity was provided for meeting participants to confirm the Commission’s understanding of what was discussed or contribute additional insights. This approach provides an important accountability measure to ensure that key messages accurately reflect the voices of people the Commission engaged with.

### **Submissions and brief comments**

The Commission received 32 submissions following the release of *Review paper 2: Proposed approach and invitation to engage with the review*. The submissions received reflected a diversity of knowledge and experiences across a range of sectors and were a valuable source of information in shaping the review’s draft findings. Of the 32 submissions:

- 15 were from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations
- seven were from governments or government agencies
- four were from peak bodies or people working in the public health and mental health sectors
- three were from academics
- three were from peak bodies or people working in the community and education sectors.

The Commission also received two brief comments which were published on the Commission’s website along with the submissions received.

Submissions and meetings with participants have formed an important part of the Commission’s overall assessment of progress and we thank the people and organisations who have met with us and/or made a submission.

### **Information requests**

In February 2023, the Commission made written information requests to the Australian Government and each state and territory government, the Australian Local Government Association, the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, the Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group and the Coalition of Peaks. The information requests sought access to documents and further details relating to measures identified in annual reports and implementation plans.

The Commission acknowledges the considerable breadth and depth of questions that were asked and thanks all of the jurisdictions that provided responses. The Commission received full responses from the:

- Australian Government
- Australian Local Government Association
- Coalition of Peaks
- NSW Government
- Queensland Government
- SA Government
- NT Government
- Joint Council on Closing the Gap
- Partnership Working Group on Closing the Gap.

The Commission received partial responses from the ACT and Victorian Governments before this draft report was finalised. The information provided has assisted the Commission in understanding how governments are responding to the Agreement and has formed an important part of the Commission's overall assessment of progress.

We did not get responses from the Tasmanian or WA Governments before this draft report was finalised.

Many governments provided the Commission with information, but did not consent to publication of that information. In keeping with its principles of transparency and openness, the Commission was unable to rely on information that could not be published. This means that there are significant gaps in information for the review.

The Commission will continue to engage with parties to the Agreement in the next phase of engagement. In particular, the Commission will seek information that some jurisdictions did not supply publicly, or were unable to supply in time for the draft report. The Commission has a strong preference that this information be provided by individual government organisations as public submissions to this review.

## **Our approach to assessing progress**

### **Focusing on the Priority Reforms**

The Commission has focused this first review on progress towards the Priority Reforms and the factors affecting progress – an approach generally supported in submissions and meetings during the review. The decision to focus on the Priority Reforms was in large part driven by the fact that the Priority Reforms represent a new way of working for governments and are what set the Agreement apart from its predecessor.

The Commission has assessed progress towards the Priority Reforms in two ways. We have:

- assessed progress against the specific commitments in the Agreement, and whether proposed actions will lead to change
- assessed the broad range of actions governments are taking, as set out in their implementation plans.

In assessing progress on the commitments in the Agreement and the range of actions governments are taking, the Commission has sought to understand whether they will collectively lead to the structural changes envisaged by the Priority Reforms. The Agreement recognises that 'structural change in the way Governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is needed to close the gap' (clause 6). Such change can be interpreted as deep and enduring changes to systems, processes, people and institutions. It is these sorts of changes that the Commission has paid particular attention to in the review, including through case studies.

### **How we assessed progress towards each Priority Reform**

In essence, the assessment of progress involves answering two questions:

- Have parties to the Agreement done what they have said they will do?
- Have they done this in line with the spirit and intent of the Agreement? (That is, does it meet the objectives of the Agreement and the relevant Priority Reform?).

The first question is relatively straightforward as it relates to the delivery of specific outputs; the second question is much more difficult.

Our starting point was to look at what the Agreement and each Priority Reform involves – in practice this required us to look at a complex mix of jurisdictional actions, partnership actions, transformation elements, partnership elements, strong community-controlled sector elements, data and information sharing elements,

Priority Reform targets and socio-economic targets. Some of these involve specific commitments to processes or outputs, that is to produce expenditure stocktakes, develop policy- and place-based partnerships, data projects, sector strengthening plans, annual reports and implementation plans by set dates. Other commitments (the core commitments that go to the heart of the Agreement and its Priority Reforms) are more principles-based, such as ‘building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making authority with governments’ (clause 28).

We have assessed whether parties to the Agreement have met or are in the process of meeting all of the commitments in the Agreement. Some aspects of this assessment (such as whether governments have produced annual reports or stocktakes) involved a simple yes or no exercise – these assessments are provided in the attachment of the draft report. The harder part of the assessment was determining the ‘quality’ of these products and actions, and whether they meet the objectives and principles of each Priority Reform. That is, to evaluate whether the actions that governments listed in their implementation plans will lead to the changes they committed to, and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To inform this aspect of the assessment, the Commission has drawn heavily on submissions from participants and the many visits, meetings and roundtables that have formed part of the review so far. We focused on barriers to progress and things that have enabled improvement and drew on what we heard, as well as our own research, analysis and judgement. We sought to determine whether governments were implementing the principles of the agreement and whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and communities have seen any changes on the ground – hence engagement was a key part of this analysis.

We also analysed implementation plans and annual reports in detail to understand what governments are doing against each of the Priority Reforms (and their specific commitments), and the theory of change or conceptual logic governments had used in formulating their actions.

The Commission’s assessment is not a program-by-program assessment of individual policies or initiatives. Rather, the Commission has used its research on individual actions to make broad observations about where progress can be observed across government, and where more work is needed. Examples are highlighted as case studies in the draft report and the accompanying information papers.

The choice to make broad observations rather than policy- or program-specific judgements was influenced by several factors.

- This review is not an audit. The large number of individual policies and actions meant it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to conduct sufficient research on each one.
- Information about individual actions, to the level required to make a sound judgement on progress, was generally scarce or not available in the public domain. This meant it was necessary to draw on knowledge from government officials and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. The Commission was mindful of its time and resources, as well as the burden on other parties – especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations – to provide this detail. As such, meetings to discuss individual programs or actions were sought only where the Commission judged they would be of high value in informing general observations and conclusions.
- It was unclear how a detailed analysis of individual policies and programs would be useful in providing parties to the Agreement with an overall view of progress against the Agreement. Given the diverse nature of actions, ‘deep dives’ into individual actions would not necessarily aggregate into useful findings about overall progress against the Priority Reforms.

### **Using case studies to better understand progress**

The Agreement makes it clear that to accelerate progress on closing the gap, there will need to be structural change in the way governments engage and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This cannot be assessed from quantitative analysis alone. In particular, implementation of the Priority Reforms can only be measured by accounts of what is happening in practice. Australian governments have committed to a large number of actions to give effect to the Priority Reforms and to achieve the socio-economic outcomes. Preliminary analysis by the Commission indicates there are over 2,000 individual actions listed in jurisdictions' implementation plans.

As noted above, the large number of actions under the Agreement meant that it was not feasible to assess each of the actions in detail, so the Commission has drawn on case studies as part of the evidence base to understand what governments are doing, whether what they are doing is effective, and the factors contributing to success.

The Commission published its proposed approach to assessing progress, including the use of case studies, in October 2022 (review paper 2), and invited feedback. This included the selection criteria for identifying and shortlisting case studies to use as examples of where progress has or has not been made. In response, participants urged the Commission to be cautious in the use of case studies, given the potential for subjectivity in their selection and the lack of information and data on impacts (box 5).

The Commission acknowledges that case studies have limitations as evidence in a review as broad as this one, and that case studies alone are not enough to make an overall assessment of progress against each of the Priority Reforms and socio-economic outcomes.



### **Box 5 – Participants urged caution in the use of case studies**

#### **National Health Leadership Forum**

Relying on the case study approach to review the National Agreement provides a snapshot on progress (good or bad) on specific activities but does not necessarily provide an overall assessment of performance particularly of agencies. As with the Close the Gap Campaign submission, we would like 'a more systematic, data informed review that provides more detailed analysis' of what is actually happening within government. (sub. 19, p. 7)

#### **Lowitja Institute**

Case studies are an inadequate mechanism for assessing whether states and territories are meeting their commitments under the Priority Reforms. They do not provide the necessary level of detail, nor are they timely to ensure that whole of government is changing the way they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. (sub. 15, pp. 8–9)

#### **ANTAR**

We think case studies should be used to example and highlight the progress, or otherwise, of the transformation of governments' ways of work across the board. Questions remain such as how will selection bias be avoided in case study selection and narrative building? (sub. 14, p. 7)

#### **Close the Gap Campaign**

The Campaign appreciates that there are strengths and limitations to [a case study] approach. Key strengths are that case studies can provide a richness of context, detailed insights into causality, and for new areas of focus to emerge. However, while very useful for developing



### **Box 5 – Participants urged caution in the use of case studies**

and/or showcasing practice, without clear evaluation criteria and supporting data on impacts, the case studies approach does not lend itself well to assessing performance.

In the context of assessing the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, this poor fit is further pronounced. Under the current proposal, case studies would be used to approximate the general state of play on the transformation of governments' ways of work across the board. Unless case studies are selected using a random sample technique and are assessed using consistent evaluation criteria, selection bias will play a major role in the ultimate narrative that is put forward. (sub. 17, p. 5)

Case studies have been used to complement and enrich the Commission's analysis while also ensuring the centring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives and knowledges. The benefit of using case studies in this way is that they allow for in-depth exploration of issues in real-life settings. They have helped the Commission to explore beyond just a compliance check of actions and progress against specific commitments in the Agreement or implementation plans, to understanding the experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with programs and policies more generally.

The case studies the Commission has used reflect the limited information available on many topics, who we were able to speak to, our own desktop research and what we received permission to cite. Because we could not be as systematic as we would have liked, we have used case studies as examples and illustrations but they do not form the core of our assessment of progress.

### **Assessing performance reporting and accountability**

The Commission has assessed the Agreement's approach to monitoring progress against the Priority Reforms and socio-economic outcomes. The Commission regularly publishes data on how the socio-economic outcomes are tracking against the targets in the Agreement. The most recent data was published in the Closing the Gap annual data compilation report in July 2023 (PC 2023a). This is a requirement of the Agreement and is an important accountability mechanism. The review has not replicated that work but has instead gone beyond the data and explored the factors affecting progress, especially how government policies and actions are influencing socio-economic outcomes.

The Commission has considered the mechanisms for accountability within the Agreement including the usefulness of some indicators for the Priority Reforms and socio-economic outcomes, and the availability and collection of data. We have also identified limitations in the implementation plans and annual reports produced under the Agreement and suggested how they could be improved.

More broadly, the Commission has observed that despite the range of accountability mechanisms in the Agreement, they are not sufficient to influence the type of change envisaged. The Commission is proposing, and is seeking feedback on, additional ways of embedding responsibility for driving action.

### **A guide to the draft report and accompanying information papers**

This information paper is one of seven supporting the draft report (which includes an assessment of progress against the key commitments in the Agreement on the attachment to the draft report).

The information papers provide further detail on each of the main topics covered in the report. The information papers cover:

- the context and origins of the Agreement and the approach the Commission has taken to conduct the review, including who we engaged with (this paper – information paper 1)
- an assessment of progress against each of the four Priority Reforms in the Agreement (information papers 2–5)
- an assessment of the Agreement’s performance monitoring approach (information paper 6)
- the Commission’s suggestions for embedding and strengthening accountability for implementing the Agreement (information paper 7).

These papers are complementary to the draft report. They explore in more detail the key aspects examined by the report. The Commission has structured its approach in this way so that readers have the option of reading an overall summary, and diving into detail on particular topics of interest or relevance to them.

Factsheets are available on the website setting out the key points for the main topics covered in the report and the information papers.

## **6 Moving from the draft to the final report**

The Commission is seeking feedback on the draft report and information papers including through:

- written and oral submissions
- brief comments
- a range of further engagement meetings and webinars.

The Commission will provide a final report to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap by the end of 2023. The final report will be published by the Commission.

The Commission is flexible in how you can engage with us. You can:

- make a submission (which can include text, images and audio-visual files)
- send us a brief comment
- meet with us virtually (which could become an oral submission if that is your preference)
- meet with us in person.

To make a submission or brief comment visit [www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/closing-the-gap-review](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/closing-the-gap-review).

If you want to speak with us, including to arrange a meeting or make an oral submission, you can call us on 02 6240 3252. You can also email us at [CTG.Review@pc.gov.au](mailto:CTG.Review@pc.gov.au).

Submissions to feed into the Commission’s draft report are due by 6 October 2023.

The timeline for the review is available at [www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/closing-the-gap-review](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/closing-the-gap-review).

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## Appendix A – Meetings, visits and submissions

The Commission has actively encouraged public participation in this review. This appendix outlines the engagement process undertaken and lists the organisations and individuals that have participated in this review.

- Following the receipt of the terms of reference on 7 April 2022, a circular was sent to identified interested parties.
- The Commission released its engagement approach (review paper 1) on 6 July 2022. Review paper 2 was released on 27 October 2022 and set out our proposed approach and invited participants to engage with us and to make a submission to the review. Review paper 3 was published on 9 February 2023 setting out what we had heard so far in meetings during 2022.
- The Commission received 32 submissions prior to the release of the draft report (table 1). The Commission also received a total of 2 brief comments. The submissions and brief comments are available online at: [www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/closing-the-gap-review](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/closing-the-gap-review).
- A large number of meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations were part of in person visits by the Commission across all states and territories. Meetings with government agencies, not for profit organisations and some peak organisations were mostly conducted online (tables 2 and 3).

The Commission would like to thank everyone who has participated in this review so far.

**Table 1 – Submissions**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Submission number</b>
Aboriginal Family Legal Service WA	007
Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) and AHCWA Social Services Committee	022
Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory (APO NT)	010
ANTAR	014
Arthur, William	026
Australian Bureau of Statistics	001
Australian Council of TESOL Associations	011
Australian Education Union Federal Office	003
Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation	013
Close the Gap Campaign	017
Coalition of Peaks	025, 031
Community First Development	009
David, Annika	027
Dillon, Michael	005
Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations	024
Government of South Australia	028
Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation	018
Indigenous Business Australia	029
Kimberley Aboriginal Law & Cultural Centre (KALACC)	023
Kinaway Chamber of Commerce	021
Lowitja Institute	015
National Health Leadership Forum	019
National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)	030
New South Wales Government	032
Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)	016
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Limited	012
Queensland Family and Child Commission	008
Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU)	004
Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists	002
Torres Shire Council	006
TRILEC (Translational Research in Indigenous Language Ecologies Collective) at the Australian National University	020



**Table 2 – Meetings and visits****Participants**

54 reasons

Aarnja

Aboriginal Affairs NSW

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (QLD) Ltd (ATSILS)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice

Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (ADAC)

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

Aboriginal Family Legal Services WA

Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS)

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&amp;MRC)

Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Ltd (AHCSA)

Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA)

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV)

Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)

Aboriginal Medical Services Redfern

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)

Anglicare

Anindilyakwa Land Council

Attorney General's Department

Attorney General's Department (SA)

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Australian Capital Territory Government Partnership Working Group Representative

Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)

Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA)

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

Benevolent Society

Binarri-binyja yarawoo Aboriginal Corporation

BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation

Bourke Tribal Council and Maranguka

Brewarrina Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

## Participants

---

Brewarrina Shire Council

Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (BRAMS)

Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community

BushMob

Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation

Ceduna Drug and Alcohol Day Centre – Stepping Stones

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC)

Coalition of Peaks

Coffey, Norman

Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHC)

Curtis, Julia

Danila Dilba Health Service

Deadly Connections Community & Justice

Defence South Australia

Department of Communities and Justice (NSW)

Department of Education

Department of Environment and Water (SA)

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Health (SA)

Department of Human Services (SA)

Department of Infrastructure and Water (SA)

Department of Justice (WA)

Department of Premier and Cabinet (TAS)

Department of Premier and Cabinet (VIC)

Department of Premier and Cabinet (WA)

Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (QLD)

Department of Social Services

Department of Treasury and Finance (SA)

Djirra

Far West Community Partnerships Ceduna

Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC)

First Nations Media Australia (FNMA)

First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN)

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## Participants

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First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Frail, Janelle

Garnduwa Amboorny Wiran Aboriginal Corporation

Gayaa Dhuwi Proud Spirit Australia (GDPSA)

Gelganyem Limited

Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Services

Gill, Neeraj

Goonawoona Jungai

Government of South Australia

Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service

Groote Eylandt Bickerton Island Primary College Aboriginal Corporation (GEBIPCAC)

Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation Ltd

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Healing Foundation

Indigenous Allied Health Australia

Indigenous Education Consultative Meeting (IECM)

Institute of Urban Indigenous Health (UIIH)

Justice Policy Partnership Secretariat (NT)

Kimberley Land Council

Koorie Youth Council (KYC)

Kurbingui Youth and Family Development

Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation

Lena Passi Women's Shelter Association

Life Without Barriers

Literacy for Life Foundation

Lowitja Institute

Minjerribah Moorgumpin Elders in Council Aboriginal Corporation

Mission Australia

Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation

Mura Kosker Sorority

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (NATSILS)

National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP)

## Participants

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review

National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF)

National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)

National Native Title Council

New South Wales Government

New South Wales Government Partnership Working Group Representative

New South Wales Police Force

New Zealand Government

Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

North Queensland Land Council

Northern Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Alliance (NATSIHA)

Northern Territory Government

Northern Territory Government Partnership Working Group Representative

Northern Territory Government Regional Network Group

NSW Aboriginal Land Council

NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec)

NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO)

NSW Treasury

Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA Inc.

Nyamba Buru Yawuru Limited

Nyoongar Outreach Services

Office of Data and Analytics (SA)

Office of the Children's Commissioner Northern Territory

Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (SA)

Office of the National Data Commissioner

PwC's Indigenous Consulting

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition (QATSIC)

Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)

Queensland Government

Queensland Government Partnership Working Group Representative

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## Participants

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Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS)

Red Cross Men's meeting group Ceduna

Relationships Australia

Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care - Advisory Association Inc (RAATSICC)

SA Housing Authority

Salvation Army

SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation

Sisters Inside Inc

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children

South Australia Government Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (SA)

South Australia Government Partnership Working Group Representative

South Australia Police

South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACON)

South Australian Tourism Commission

South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation

South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC)

Stradbroke Island Community Forums

Straddie Adventures

Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation

Tasmania Government Partnership Working Group Representative

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC)

Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service (TALS)

Tauondi Aboriginal College

Telethon Kids Institute

The Murri School

Toombs, Maree

Torres Shire Council

Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

Tullawon Health

Victoria Government Partnership Working Group Representative

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services

Victorian Government

## Participants

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Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (WACHS)

West Kimberley Futures Empowered Communities

Western Australia Government Partnership Working Group Representative

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga)

Wunan Foundation

Wunan Health

Wungening Aboriginal Corporation

Yadu Health Aboriginal Corporation

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC)

Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgab Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation

Yilli Rreung Housing Aboriginal Corporation

Yoorrook Justice Commission

Yorganop Association

Yorgum Healing Services

Yothu Yindi Foundation

Yulu-Burri-Ba

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### Table 3 – Roundtables

#### Participants

#### 22 November 2022 – Justice, family violence prevention, legal support, youth justice, and justice reinvestment

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement

Change the Record

Curtin University

First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN)

Just Reinvest NSW

Lena Passi Women's Shelter

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS)

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

Red Cross

Sisters Inside

Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service (TALS)

Wurringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre

#### 10 February 2023 – Health

Aboriginal Health Council Western Australia (AHCWA)

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA)

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP)

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)

Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

#### 16 February 2023 – Child health services, family services, education, out of home care, disability, early childhood care and development

Coolabaroo

Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH)

Nikinpa Aboriginal Child & Family Centre

Queensland, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

#### 3 April 2023 – Housing

Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory

Aboriginal Housing Victoria

Community Housing Central Australia

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Authority (NATSIHA)

## Participants

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Nganampa Health Council

Noongar Mia Mia

South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON)

Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC)

Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

Yilli Rreung Housing Aboriginal Corporation

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