





Acknowledgement of Country

The Coalition of Peaks acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live, where we work, and across Australia. We recognise and pay respect to Elders past and present.

Always was, Always will be.



This document may contain images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

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Lead Convenor's foreword



The Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks) has started 2024 with a renewed sense of determination to hold governments to account for the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) and to deliver the change that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want for our lives.

The year of 2023 was not the year that many of our people hoped for. We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people overwhelmingly voted for a Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution; and implementation of the National Agreement by governments has not been as fulsome as intended.

In the referendum, our people voted for change. In the coming together of the Coalition of Peaks and signing on to the National Agreement, we also sought change. Change that would see improvements to the life outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whilst we strengthen our identities and cultures as First Peoples.

The Coalition of Peaks remain resolute in our commitment to full implementation of the National Agreement as we believe its four Priority Reforms continue to reflect the change so many of our people want. First, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must have a full say and share in decisions with governments about policies and programs that have a significant impact

on us; second, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services should be properly funded and supported so we can deliver the services many of our people prefer and need; third, mainstream organisations and institutions, like police, hospitals and schools, need to be safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and contribute much more to Closing the Gap; and fourth, our people and organisations should have access and control over the data about us and our communities so we can make more informed decisions about our development priorities and better hold government to account.

Bringing about change to the way governments work is hard going. The Coalition of Peaks are looking forward to convening an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly this year to bring our people – old and young – together from across the country. The Assembly will consider lessons from the National Agreement to date and agree national policy priorities and actions for the coming three years for consideration by governments.

Whilst we are hurting, we are not diminished by the referendum outcome and the year that was. Our people deserve more; and our collective voice remains as loud as it has always been on this continent, for over 60,000 years. We honour our ancestors and leaders before us who rose to meet the challenges of their times, on their terms. We seek to do the same for our next generation of leaders.

Pat Turner

Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

Introduction

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is based on the shared belief of Australian governments and the Coalition of Peaks that the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are better when:

- our authority of our people and representatives is respected, and we have the lead role in the design and delivery of services intended for our benefit or we interact with.
- when our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors are properly resourced and are sustainable.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at the centre of Closing the Gap policy: our genuine involvement is key to success.
- governments lead systemic and societal reforms to combat racism.

This is the third Implementation Plan of the Coalition of Peaks under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, covering the period February 2024–January 2025.

Knowing we are making a difference

The Coalition of Peaks are squarely focussed on ensuring the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is fully implemented, and all governments fulfil the commitments they have already made.

This includes making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives are at the table with governments and share in the decisions that impact on our communities' lives. It means adequately funding our Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver the services our people need; holding mainstream services and institutions accountable so they are safe for our people to access and doing more for closing the gap; and supporting our communities to collect and manage the data we need to make informed decisions about our development objectives.

Purpose of the Implementation Plan

Our 2024 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan reflects our role and responsibilities.

This Implementation Plan is designed with the purpose of progressing outcomes in these areas. It has been developed in line with Clause 110 of the National Agreement, which states that the Coalition of Peaks Implementation Plan will:

- **a** be developed and delivered by all Coalition of Peaks Members.
- **b** set out actions to communicate this Agreement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations.
- c set out actions to build Closing the Gap policy and program delivery expertise amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, community, and organisations.
- **d** set out actions to build understanding and ownership of this Agreement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.
- e include timeframes for action.

Implementation actions

In signing the National Agreement, all Parties committed to tangible partnership actions to give effect to the Priority Reforms (Clause 27). The Coalition of Peaks Implementation Plan 2024 includes actions to give effect to the Priority Reforms.

Our Implementation Plan is a living document, and, some of the deliverables in this Implementation Plan build on the successes of our previous Implementation Plans, while some are intended to accelerate lagging progress.

PR 1

Formal
Partnerships
& Shared
Decision
Making

PR 2

Building the community-controlled sector

PR 3

Transforming government organisations

PR 4

Shared access to data and information at a regional level



Partnership and capacity building

Our people have been saying for a long time that we need to have a greater say in how programs and services are delivered, and that community-controlled organisations deliver the best services and outcomes for Closing the Gap.

The table below outlines the actions we will take to sustain our efforts to work with governments to build strong and sustainable community control sector for our people.

Partnership and capacity building actions

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
		RESPONSIBILITY	
Connect policy approaches through	 Monitor and strengthen existing policy partnerships 	Secretariat Peaks Members	2024
policy partnerships (Clause 30a)	 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties to continue engagement over the life of the partnership 		
	 Provide opportunities to share lessons and promising practice across policy partnerships, through regular meetings 		
	• Support a Policy Partnership Forum in 2024		
	 Work with governments to strengthen processes and practices to accelerate action in the work of the policy partnerships 		
Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled sectors through sector strengthening plans (Clause 53)	 Support our Members to work with governments to develop additional sector strengthening plans across 2024/25 	Secretariat Peaks Members	2024
	 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties in the monitoring and evaluation of existing sector strengthening plans 		
	 Progress and report on the implementation of existing sector strengthening plans 		
Funding to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled sector (Clauses 55a and 55b)	 Identify barriers to direct sourcing by governments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Continued in 2024
	 Explore options on clauses in funding agreements to enable the transition of funding and services from non-Indigenous control to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations that also consider succession planning, resourcing for skills transfer and strengthening capacity 		

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Embedding Priority Reforms in future National Agreements	 Support current negotiations on social housing investments, education reform, health reform, and skills and training investments Commence negotiations on National Agreements like national water reforms and initiatives 	Secretariat Peaks Members	2024/ ongoing
Strengthening and sustaining our coalition	 Continue to improve processes to support our senior leaders to sustain efforts Identify emerging leaders for development and mentoring Develop mentorship and succession plans Share good practice to support connections and learning Develop a process to share talent across Members' organisations and aligned external organisations via internship opportunities 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Ongoing
Capability and capacity building	 Identify shared development areas and develop ways to deliver learning opportunities (i.e., policy development and inquiry submission, effective negotiation with governments, Indigenous Data Sovereignty) Maintain quarterly group welcome sessions for new Peaks Members and their new staff Support Jurisdictional peaks to more effectively liaise with their jurisdictional membership Respond to relevant recommendations from reviews required by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 	Secretariat	Continued in 2024 then ongoing
Working with Government partners	 Develop relevant policy positions to support negotiations with governments Respond to annual Partnership Health Checks and model best practice approaches for partnerships Share best practice when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and representatives Identify efficiencies in Secretariat operations 	Secretariat	Ongoing

Community-Led Outcomes on Closing the Gap

In response to the National Agreement, the Coalition of Peaks, representing the views of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership, are at the table with all Australian Governments as partners in the delivery of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Coalition of Peaks are working in partnership on a range of key projects to embed the Priority Reforms at the local and regional level. The table below sets out the key focus areas and actions to enable shared-decision making, and access to data so community organisations can make informed decisions.

Priority Reform actions

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Place-based partnerships (Clause 30b)	 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties in the partnership establishment phase, parallel to community data projects Finalise Peaks place-based partnership induction guide in line with current expectations and aspirations Monitor and strengthen place-based partnerships through regular meetings with Peaks members 	Secretariat Peaks Members	2024
Community data projects (Clause 74)	 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties in the project establishment phase Monitor and strengthen existing community data partnerships 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Continued in 2024
Inland waters target (Clause 87ii)	 Continue to liaise with jurisdictions to agree the inland waters target Support an accurate understanding and application of the inland waters target 	Secretariat National Native Title Council Relevant Peaks Members	Continued in 2024
Implement the Data Development Plan (DDP)	 Contribute to Data and Reporting Working Group Monitor implementation and support as required Identify additional opportunities to strengthen implementation 	Secretariat Peaks Members on the Data and Reporting Working Group	Ongoing

Monitoring and influencing progress

The Coalition of Peaks has a key role in monitoring and influencing the progress of systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government organisations – as with all actions across the partnership. This Implementation Plan has strong accountability mechanisms both to our people and between Parties to the National Agreement.

Parties agreed to regularly review the level of ambition of the targets and committed to stretching beyond a business-as-usual approach, to accelerate improvements in life outcomes for our people (Clause 84). The below table outlines the actions we will take to monitor and influence progress across the partnership.

Monitoring and influencing progress actions

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Systemic and structural transformation (Clauses 59 and 60)	 Develop National Standards for cultural safety in frontline service delivery with government parties Seek Joint Council agreement of the National Standards 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Continued in 2024
Independent mechanism or mechanisms that will support, monitor, and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions (Clause 67)	 Accelerate work on the independent mechanism with government parties Work with government parties to support Joint Council's agreement for a consistent approach to the independent mechanism 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Continued in 2024
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander review of the National Agreement - Peoples Assembly (Clauses 125-128)	 Undertake planning and establishment processes for Review and Assembly delivery 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Within 12 months of Productivity Commission's review
Data to make informed decisions to negotiate and partner with governments	Identify our data needs and repositoriesDevelop a strategy to access data	Secretariat Peaks Members	Continued in 2024

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Government accountability on implementation of the National Agreement	• Explore best practice in relation to partnerships	Secretariat	Continued in 2024
	 Develop recommendations for Peaks Members' agreement 		
	 Engage government parties on plan to implement recommendations 		
	 Work with government and Peaks parties to deliver a Policy Partnership Evaluation Framework 		
	 Communicate and adhere to core Partnership Principles 		
	 Critical analysis of jurisdictional partnership stocktakes/reviews from 2023 to promote accountability with active adherence to strong partnership elements 		

Communication

The Coalition of Peaks are working hard to create fundamental change in the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, representatives and people. We listened when our people said they wanted to see change for their families and communities and we negotiated strongly with governments resulting in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

We would like to share our knowledge and experience of the National Agreement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations. The table below outlines the actions we will take to promote what we do under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Communication actions

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Joint Communications Strategy (Clause 134)	• Implement Joint Communications Strategy through the communications working group (co-chaired by Peaks)	Secretariat First Nations Media Australia (FNMA)	2024/ ongoing
Accessible communications (Clause 146)	 Continue seeking opportunities to publish more accessible content - particularly for social media and radio 	Secretariat FNMA	Ongoing

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Build social media audience and reach	• Ensure all platforms are active, content is relevant and planned, and Peaks Members can access resources for their own social media channels	Secretariat	Ongoing
Community engagement	 Identify key events and engagement opportunities to attend 	Secretariat Peaks Members	Ongoing
Easy access to communications messages and collateral	 Maintain information on the website 	Secretariat	Ongoing
Member and non- member engagement	 Draft and distribute quarterly eNewsletters 	Secretariat	Quarterly
Increase awareness of Coalition of Peaks and National Agreement	 Proactive and reactive media releases and opportunities 	Secretariat	Ongoing
Coalition of Peaks' role and mandate	 Develop a statement on our role and mandate as the principal representative of the community- controlled sector and on Closing the Gap Develop a communication strategy 	Secretariat Peaks Members Joint Council Peaks Members	Annually
	to publicly deliver the message as widely as possible		
	 Deliver annual strategic planning sessions with Joint Council Peaks Members to agree priorities and strategies 		
	 Deliver bi-annual workshops with all Peaks Members to connect, share lessons and maintain momentum on priorities 		

Public accountability

Appropriate governance mechanisms are vital to ensure the Coalition of Peaks is a reliable, trusted, and functional organisation. The table below outlines the actions we will take to ensure we work in an open and transparent manner, putting the consensus views of our Peaks at the centre of all we do.

In 2024, the Coalition of Peaks continue to actively participate in the Closing the Gap governance structures established in the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap:

- Joint Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council) - an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministerial and Coalition of Peaks Council on Closing the Gap.
- Partnership Working Group (PWG) the Joint Council is supported by the PWG which is made up of senior officials of each government member and members of the Coalition of Peaks.

- Drafting Group (DG) the Drafting Group is made up of government and Coalition of Peaks representatives and is responsible for drafting papers and proposals on a without prejudice basis, for consideration by the PWG.
- Joint Working Group (JWG) the Joint Working Group provides strategic oversight of the development and delivery of the Commonwealth's Implementation Plan, with a focus on ensuring alignment with the National Agreement.

In addition, working groups on other important areas have been established, agreed by all Members, to take action on the development of policy, programs, and partnerships for consideration by each National Agreement governance tier. The table on page 14 outlines the actions we will take to support working in an open and transparent manner.



Public accountability actions

KEY FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Support for Peaks Members	 Hold regular meetings in person and virtually 	Secretariat	Ongoing
	 Provide papers and reports to Peaks Members to support consensus decision making 		
	• Prepare an Annual Report		
	 Implement relevant Partnership Health Check recommendations 		
Partnership	• Adhere to PWG ToRs	Secretariat	Ongoing
Working Group	 Co-Chair Drafting Group with the Commonwealth 		
	 Prepare members to actively participate in discussion and informed decision- making with senior government officials 		
Commonwealth	• Adhere to JWG ToRs	Secretariat	Ongoing
Joint Working Group	 Prepare members to actively participate in discussion and informed decision- making with Commonwealth senior government officials 		
Joint Council	Adhere to Joint Council ToRs	Secretariat	Ongoing
	 Prepare members to actively participate in discussion and informed decision- making with Ministers 		
Progress tracker	 Provide information to our Members and key stakeholders by relevant deadlines Assess progress of Agreement partners at regular intervals 	Secretariat	Ongoing

Coalition of Peaks Members

This Implementation Plan has been developed and will be delivered by members of the Coalition of Peaks, assisted by its Policy and Secretariat Team.

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023, COALITION OF PEAKS MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF:

National Members

- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association
- Alliance of First Nations' Independent Education & Training Providers
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
- First Languages Australia
- First Nations Media Australia
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia Limited
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia
- Lowitja Institute
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAACC)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council (NATSIEC)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners
- National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum
- National Native Title Council
- SNAICC National Voice for Our Children
- The Healing Foundation

Members in the Northern Territory

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)

- Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory
- Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT
- Anindilyakwa Land Council
- Central Land Council
- North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
- Northern Land Council
- Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network
- Tiwi Land Council

Member in Tasmania

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

Members in New South Wales

- NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peaks (NSW CAPO)
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- NSW / ACT Aboriginal Legal Services
- LinkUp NSW
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- NSW Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council
- NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec)
- BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation

Members in Victoria

- Ngaweeyan Maar-oo
- Aboriginal Community Elders Service
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria
- Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporations
- Koorie Youth Council
- Loddon Mallee Aboriginal Reference Group
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd
- Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Victorian Aborigines Advancement League

Members in **Queensland**

- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition (QATSIC)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld) Ltd
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Limited
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services

Members in South Australia

- South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON)
- Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council
- Aboriginal Family Support Services
- Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia
- Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement
- Aboriginal Sobriety Group
- Family Violence Legal Services Aboriginal Corporation
- First Nations of South Australia Aboriginal Corporation
- InComPro
- KWY Aboriginal Corporation
- Kura Yerlo
- Mobile Language Team University of Adelaide
- Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Ngarrindjeri Ruwe Empowered Communities
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
- Nunga Mi:Minar
- Nunkuwarrin Yunti
- Nunyara Aboriginal Health Service
- Pangula Mannamurna Aboriginal Corporation
- Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service
- South Australian Native Title Services
- South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council
- South Australian Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation
- Tauondi Aboriginal College

Member in Western Australia

- Aboriginal Health Council Western Australia
- Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia (CASWA)

Member in the Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

Join our Coalition

We are a representative body of more than 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations and members.

Our authority is derived from our extensive membership base of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations with their generations of commitment to advancing the interests of, and delivering services to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Membership of the Coalition of Peaks provides an opportunity to:

- join a unified basis through which to engage with governments.
- contribute the voice, expertise, and experiences of your members to provide legitimate community-controlled representation to the partnership with Australian governments on Closing the Gap to improve the life outcomes for our people.
- share in decision making with governments on policies and programs impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

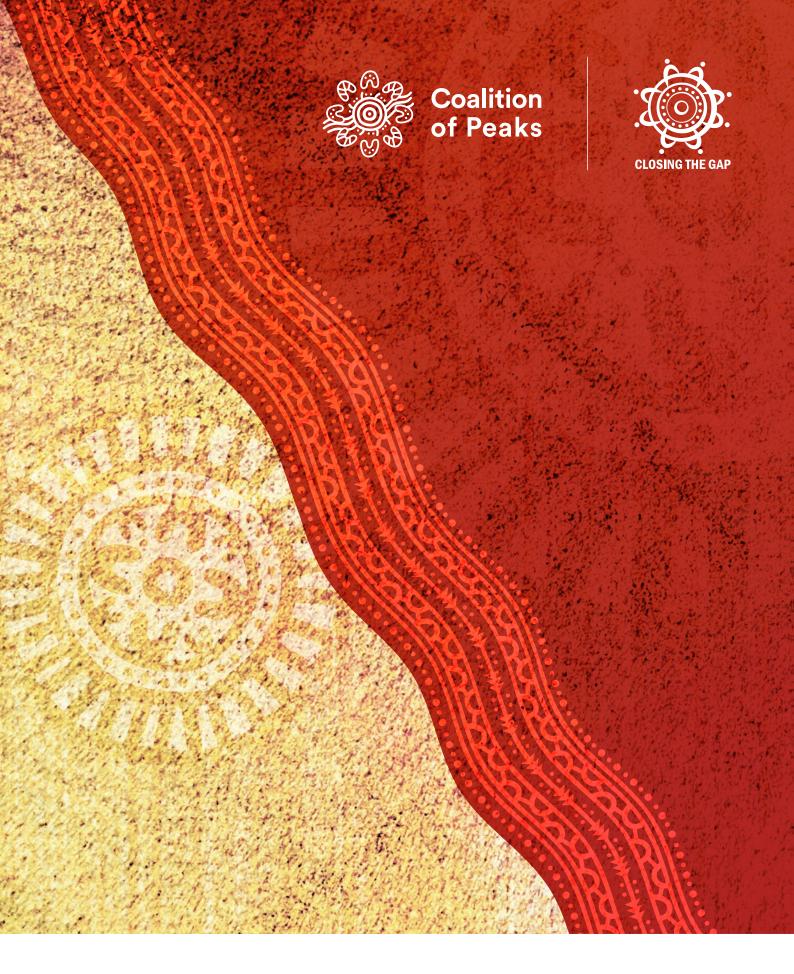
- ensure that the shared decisions with governments are informed by the needs and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, communitycontrolled organisations, and peoples.
- drive increased accountability of all governments.
- have a say in the policy, strategy, and governance of the Coalition of Peaks.
- advertise jobs and significant events and activities through Coalition of Peaks' channels.

Membership criteria are available on our website. If you think your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisation meets the membership criteria, submit a membership application to get the ball rolling!

If you have any questions about membership, or anything to do with the Coalition of Peaks, get in touch with us via secretariat@coalitionofpeaks.org.au.

We are stronger when we work together to achieve common outcomes, including the full realisation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.





www.coalitionofpeaks.org.au







