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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Circuit breaker needed as the cycle of failure continues in 2020 Closing the Gap report**

The release of the 2020 Closing the Gap report today confirms the need for a fundamentally new approach, according to the Coalition of Peaks.

The report reveals that progress against the majority of Closing the Gap targets is still not on track. The gap in mortality rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians increased last year and there are very worrying signs on infant mortality. Only the targets for early childhood education and year 12 equivalence can be considered on track, but only in some states.

Pat Turner, CEO of NACCHO and Co-Chair of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, said that governments need to learn from these failures, not continue to repeat them.

“These Closing the Gap reports tell the same story of failure every year,” Turner said.

“The danger of this seemingly endless cycle of failure is that it breeds complacency and cynicism, while excusing those in power. People begin to believe that meaningful progress is impossible and there is nothing governments can do to improve the lives of our people.”

“The truth is that the existing Closing the Gap framework was doomed to fail when it was designed without the input of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We know what will work best for our communities and the Prime Minister even acknowledges in this report that our voice was the missing ingredient from original framework.”

“The Coalition of Peaks has signed a formal partnership agreement with every Australian government, where decision-making on design, implementation and evaluation of a new Closing the Gap framework will be shared. Through this partnership, the Coalition of Peaks has put forward structural priority reforms to the way governments work with and deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

“Governments say they are listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, the true test in listening is translating the priority reforms into real, tangible and funded actions that make a difference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people right across our country.”

‘This historic partnership could be the circuit-breaker that is needed. However, if they view this process as little more than window dressing for the status quo, the cycle of failure evident in today’s report is doomed to continue.’

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### **About the Coalition of Peaks**

The Coalition of Peaks is a representative body comprised of nearly fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations that have come together to have their collective voice heard. The Coalition of Peaks is working with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to develop a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap to replace the National Indigenous Reform Agreement.

For more information on The Coalition of Peaks, The Joint Council, The Partnership Agreement and to sign up for our mailing list, go to: <https://www.naccho.org.au/programmes/coalition-of-peaks/>