

**Monday 14 October 2019**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Coalition of Peaks to hold three meetings on Closing the Gap in Victoria this week**

Bendigo will today host the first of three face-to-face meetings in Victoria this week on the development of a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The meetings provide an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tell the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peaks (Coalition of Peaks) and governments what changes are needed to improve their lives.

Aboriginal Executive Council Chair, Esme Bamblett said it was important that both metropolitan and regional communities are engaged in the development of a new agreement on Closing the Gap.

“The Coalition of Peaks will be leading face-to-face meetings on Closing the Gap in every state and territory during October, including three here in Victoria,” Bamblett said.

“We kick off our Victorian meetings today in Bendigo but will also be visiting Melbourne and Morwell during the week and are looking forward to hearing what our communities have to say.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people understand what works for us so it is critical that our voice is at the centre of decision-making.

“The Coalition of Peaks are negotiating with governments on the development of the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It is critical that we bring to the table the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from around the country.

Following today’s engagement in Bendigo, the Coalition of Peaks will hold meetings in Melbourne on October 15 and Morwell on October 16. The face-to-face discussions are part of a series of community engagements, which also include Peak organisations engaging with their own membership and an [online survey](#), open until October 25.

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**More on the Coalition of Peaks:**

The Coalition of Peaks is a representative body comprised of around forty 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 refresh the Closing the Gap framework for the next ten years.

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/>