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## **Third Meeting of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap**

**3 July 2020, Communiqué**

The Joint Council acknowledged the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the many lands, waters and rivers that members joined from, and paid their respects to Elders past and present. The previous meeting was on 23 August 2019 in Adelaide.

### *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*

The Joint Council acknowledged the work between Australian governments, the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Peaks to negotiate the draft National Agreement on Closing the Gap which was considered in detail today.

The Joint Council is proud to recommend the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to First Ministers, the President of the Australia Local Government Association and the Coalition of the Peaks for agreement and signature.

This is an historic National Agreement. It was developed in genuine partnership between the Commonwealth, the Coalition of Peaks, State and Territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association. It is the first time a National Agreement designed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been developed and negotiated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The National Agreement is based on, and underpinned by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' priorities. It is built around four new Priority Reforms that will change the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

All governments have committed to tangible actions to change the way they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and give effect to the four Priority Reforms. All four Priority Reforms will have a target to measure government action in these areas.

The Priority Reforms are:

1. Developing and strengthening structures to ensure the full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in shared decision making at the national, state and local or regional level and embedding their ownership, responsibility and expertise to close the gap
2. Building the formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services sector to deliver closing the gap services and programs in agreed focus areas
3. Ensuring all mainstream government agencies and institutions undertake systemic and structural transformation to contribute to Closing the Gap, improve accountability and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
4. Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information to monitor the

implementation of the Priority Reforms, the closing the gap targets and drive local priorities.

The draft National Agreement also establishes 16 national socio-economic targets in areas including education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters, and languages. These build upon the draft targets of 2018. The targets will help to monitor progress in improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is our collective ambition to reach parity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. The ambition of the targets take all governments beyond a business as usual approach and will require an increased effort by all parties. Expected parity dates are not fixed dates. With the full implementation of the Priority Reforms and a significant joint focus on the outcome areas, parity will be achieved earlier.

The National Agreement includes new engagement and accountability mechanisms that mean jurisdictions will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to implement the Agreement. All parties to the National Agreement are fully committed to the outcomes of the Agreement and share ownership of those outcomes.

#### *Engagement report*

Joint Council welcomed the recently released '*Report on engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to inform a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap*', published by the Coalition of Peaks on 24 June 2020. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes of the historic engagements which took place between September and December 2019.

To support the full involvement and ownership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in closing the gap, the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap is based on what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have said is needed to improve outcomes. The Joint Council has reviewed the report on the engagements and is satisfied that the key outcomes are included in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

## Members attending

| <b>Member</b>                   | <b>Representing</b>                     |
|---------------------------------|---|
| The Hon Ken Wyatt MP (Co-chair) | Commonwealth                            |
| Pat Turner AM (Co-chair)        | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Muriel Bamblett AO              | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Jamie Lowe                      | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Cindy Berwick                   | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Jill Gallagher                  | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Donella Mills                   | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Vicki O'Donnell                 | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| David Warrener                  | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Katrina Fanning PSM             | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| John Paterson                   | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Ruth Miller                     | Coalition of Peaks                      |
| Gabrielle Upton MP              | New South Wales                         |
| Gabrielle Williams MP           | Victoria                                |
| The Hon Craig Crawford MP       | Queensland                              |
| The Hon Ben Wyatt MLA           | Western Australia                       |
| The Hon Steven Marshall MP      | South Australia                         |
| The Hon Roger Jaensch MP        | Tasmania                                |
| Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA        | Australian Capital Territory            |
| The Hon Selena Uibo MLA         | Northern Territory                      |
| Mayor David O'Loughlin          | Australian Local Government Association |