

Fourth Meeting of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap

17 November 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 held on 3 July 2020 by Telepresence.

The Joint Council noted the significance of this meeting being the first held since the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) came into effect on 27 July 2020.

The Joint Council considered the parties collective responsibilities for the **implementation of the National Agreement** and heard updates from each jurisdiction about the establishment and strengthening of partnership arrangements between individual governments, the Coalition of Peaks and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners. The Joint Council agreed to develop an online, public tracker of the commitments in the National Agreement and that Jurisdictional Implementation Plans will be developed in a consistent format to ensure that all Australians can monitor implementation across the country.

The Joint Council agreed to a **Strategic Plan for Funding the Development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Sector** (Strategic Plan). The Strategic Plan will guide investment from the joint virtual funding pool committed to by governments to support Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement. Funding from the joint virtual funding pool initially will be invested to support the development of the priority community-controlled sectors nominated in the National Agreement: early childhood care and development, housing, health and disability. Maximising jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be a vital outcome of these investment priorities. The Strategic Plan is available on the Closing the Gap website.

In line with the Strategic Plan and Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement, the Joint Council agreed the follow areas for investment in the early childhood care and development and housing sectors:

- enabling sector peak bodies to build the capacity and capability of the sectors to deliver services and provide policy development leadership in partnership with governments,
- establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood care and development workforce, and
- engaging across the housing sector on how best to build the sustainability and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-housing providers.

Investment priorities for the health and disability sectors will be considered by Joint Council in March 2021.

The Joint Council agreed to recommend a revised **Family Violence target** and a new **Access to Information target** to First Ministers, the President of the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Peaks for agreement and updating of the National Agreement. These targets reflect a commitment in the National Agreement to develop these two targets within three months of the Agreement coming into operation.

The Joint Council also endorsed **indicators for each of the four Priority Reforms**. In addition to the Priority Reform targets, the indicators will help to show the changes governments are making to the way they are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These will allow reporting against the Priority Reforms on an annual basis, similar to that for the socio-economic targets included in the National Agreement. The Priority Reform indicators will be available online and also be incorporated in the National Agreement.

The Joint Council reviewed a report from an independent Aboriginal consultant on the first annual **Partnership Health Check** of the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (Partnership Agreement). The Partnership Health Check reflects the commitment of all Parties to put in place actions and formal checks over the life of the 10-year Partnership Agreement to ensure an effective partnership. The report includes recommendations related to strengthening shared decision-making arrangements between the Coalition of Peaks and government parties through improved partnership processes; embedding cultural change through the partnership arrangements; additional resourcing for Coalition of Peaks members to increase their ability to participate in the partnership; and sharing good practice. A draft partnership risk register was also proposed. The report will be published on the Closing the Gap website with Joint Council’s response following the first Joint Council meeting in 2021.

Members attending

Member	Representing
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
Donnella 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
Scott Wilson	Coalition of Peaks
Kate Foy	New South Wales
Gabrielle Williams MP	Victoria
The Hon Craig Crawford MP	Queensland
The Hon Ben Wyatt MLA	Western Australia
Ms Ruth Ambler	South Australia
Kate Kent	Tasmania

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA	Australian Capital Territory
The Hon Selena Uibo MLA	Northern Territory