

JOINT COUNCIL ON CLOSING THE GAP

Seventh Meeting of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap

3 December 2021, Communiqué

The Joint Council acknowledged the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the many lands and waters that members joined from and paid respects to Elders past and present. The previous meeting was held on 6 August 2021 via Videoconference.

Joint Council welcomed progress on a number of high priority actions under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Joint Council agreed in principle the **Sector Strengthening Plans** for the early childhood care and development, and health sectors, outlining high level priorities to guide joint national strengthening effort under Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement. These Sector Strengthening Plans can now be found on the Closing the Gap website. Any specific actions taken by each jurisdiction to further the Plans will be included in their annual updates to Closing the Gap Implementation Plans.

Reporting and increased transparency are key to implementation of the National Agreement. To that end, the Joint Council agreed its advice on the **Terms of Reference for the Productivity Commission's Three-Yearly Report** which will be further considered by the Commonwealth Treasurer. Government parties will table their annual reports in their respective Parliaments, and Joint Council will consider key implementation issues at the last meeting of the calendar year.

Joint Council also considered its response to the **2021 Partnership Health Check**, an independent assessment of progress in implementing the formal partnership elements outlined in the Partnership Agreement. Joint Council noted that the trajectory of change is generally positive, and agreed to take action to strengthen the quality and maturity of engagement, build shared understandings of partnership and improve the data and evidence base for decision-making. Joint Council considered measures to mitigate risks highlighted by the health check and noted implementation challenges, as well as successes. The health check report and Joint Council's response are now available on the Closing the Gap website.

Joint Council agreed to a **new target on Community Infrastructure**, to be recommended to First Ministers, the Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks and the President of the Australian Local Government Association for inclusion in the National Agreement. Joint Council agreed to defer consideration of the **Inland Waters target** to the next Joint Council meeting where it will consider the finalised statistical baselining exercise to improve understanding of existing levels of Indigenous corporations' water ownership.

Joint Council heard an update from the co-chairs of the **Justice Policy Partnership**, which held its first meeting in September.

Finally Joint Council is pleased to announce it has agreed upon a new **Closing the Gap logo**, designed by Wiradjuri artist Lani Balzan. The logo features elements that symbolise the four Priority Reforms of the National Agreement, seventeen socio-economic targets, and the coming together of governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in partnership to close the gap. The final logo can be seen below.

Joint Council agreed its forward work-plan for 2022 and will meet again in July and December to progress further actions under the National Agreement.



Members attending

Member	Representing
The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP (Co-Chair)	Commonwealth
Pat Turner AM (Co-Chair)	Coalition of Peaks
Robert Skeen	Coalition of Peaks
Esme Bamblett	Coalition of Peaks
Jamie Lowe	Coalition of Peaks
Wynetta Dewis	Coalition of Peaks
Donnella Mills	Coalition of Peaks
Vicki O'Donnell	Coalition of Peaks
Scott Wilson	Coalition of Peaks
David Warrener	Coalition of Peaks
Lynnice Church	Coalition of Peaks
Priscilla Atkins	Coalition of Peaks
John Paterson	Coalition of Peaks
Gabrielle Williams MP	Victoria
The Hon Craig Crawford MP	Queensland
The Hon Stephen Dawson MLC	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
Cr Linda Scott	Australian Local Government Association