



# Joint Council on Closing the Gap

26 August 2022

## EIGHTH MEETING OF THE JOINT COUNCIL ON CLOSING THE GAP

### COMMUNIQUE

The meeting opened with a Welcome to Country from Karl Telfer, Senior Kurna Custodian. 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 of Joint Council was held on 3 December 2021 via videoconference.

Joint Council welcomed new members, including the new Commonwealth Co-Chair Minister Burney. Members acknowledged the considerable effort since the Agreement commenced and reaffirmed their commitment to working together to progress actions under the National Agreement.

Joint Council considered and approved the details of the new **Policy Partnerships for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB)** to be established by the end of the year. The Policy Partnerships identify opportunities to work more effectively across governments, reduce gaps and duplication, and improve outcomes under Closing the Gap. The Commonwealth committed to fund \$10.2 million in establishment costs for the ECCD Policy Partnership over three years for partnership, governance and meeting support and activities. This is in addition to the \$8.6 million previously committed to the SEWB Policy Partnership.

Joint Council also heard an update on progress of the **Justice Policy Partnership**, established in 2021. Joint Council members affirmed their collective commitment to matters subject to the Justice Policy Partnership, including a discussion on the minimum age of criminal responsibility. More information on the Justice Policy Partnership can be found on the [Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department website](#).

Joint Council agreed to the **Disability and Housing Sector Strengthening Plans** which outline high level priorities to guide joint, national efforts to build community-controlled organisational capacity to continue and expand delivery of culturally safe and responsive services under Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement. The Sector Strengthening Plans can now be found on the [Closing the Gap website](#).

Jurisdictions also provided updates to Joint Council on their progress against the **Strategic Plan for Developing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Sector**. Specific actions taken by each jurisdiction to implement the Plans will be included in their annual updates to Closing the Gap Implementation Plans. For instance, the Commonwealth announced it is progressing a \$52.9 million commitment to train 500 new First Nations health workers. The health workers will help to fill critical workforce shortages in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services across the country.

The National Agreement identifies a number of areas for data development within two years of the Agreement commencing. Joint Council endorsed the **Data Development Plan** which aims to ensure that each socio-economic target in the National Agreement has high-quality, disaggregated data sources to effectively monitor progress. All jurisdictions will incorporate the Data Development Plan in their Closing the Gap Implementation Plan as part of the annual reporting process.

Joint Council welcomed the three newest locations for place-based partnerships of Tamworth (NSW), Doomadgee (QLD) and East Kimberley (WA), and welcomed the western suburbs of Adelaide as a new community data project location. The localised partnerships allow for place-based decision-making, and for equitable access for First Nations communities and organisations to locally relevant disaggregated data, respectively.

Ensuring a joined-up approach to partnership work is integral, and to that end Joint Council agreed to establish a shared resourcing arrangement for training, capability and research that will benefit all Parties to the National Agreement over an initial three years. The preliminary funding pool co- contributions will be around \$1 million, with projects to include Priority Reform Three research, Priority Reform indicators, and actions to develop a shared understanding of partnership going forward.

Joint Council heard from all jurisdictions on their progress in preparing Closing the Gap annual reports and updating Implementation Plans, as well as their progress undertaking expenditure reviews for current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services which will inform reprioritisation of efforts and opportunities to be considered by Joint Council in December 2022.

Joint Council agreed to recommend a new Inland Waters Target to First Ministers, the President of the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Peaks for agreement. This new target will measure progress on First Nations interests in water bodies inland from the coastal zone under state and territory water rights regimes. The new target framework confirms that entitlements for the purposes of drinking water supplies and household power generation are excluded from the target.

Finally, the Joint Council noted the Prime Minister, all Premiers, Chief Ministers, the President of the Australian Local Government Association, and the Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks have now confirmed an amendment to the National Agreement to reflect the new Community Infrastructure Target. The target is as follows, and will be incorporated into the National Agreement on the Closing the Gap website:

- Target 9b: By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households:
  - Within discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard
  - In or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town based reserve”).

Joint Council will meet again in December 2022 to continue to progress further actions under the National Agreement.

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Name	Representing
Hon. Linda Burney MP	Commonwealth
Pat Turner AM	Coalition of Peaks
Robert Skeen	Coalition of Peaks
Nerita Waight	Coalition of Peaks
Wynetta Dewis	Coalition of Peaks
Vicki O'Donnell	Coalition of Peaks
Scott Wilson	Coalition of Peaks
Graeme Gardner	Coalition of Peaks
Paula McGrady	Coalition of Peaks
John Paterson	Coalition of Peaks
Muriel Bamblett	Coalition of Peaks
Donnella Mills	Coalition of Peaks
Jamie Lowe	Coalition of Peaks
Paul Paton for Priscilla Atkins	Coalition of Peaks
Hon. Ben Franklin MLC	NSW
Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP	VIC
Hon. Craig Crawford MP	QLD
Hon. Dr Tony Buti MLA	WA
Hon. Kyam Maher MLC	SA
Hon. Roger Jaensch MP	TAS
Rachel-Stephen-Smith	ACT
Hon. Selena Uiibo MLA	NT
Cr Linda Scott	Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)