

NINTH MEETING OF THE JOINT COUNCIL ON CLOSING THE GAP

COMMUNIQUE

Joint Council members were welcomed to Gadigal Country by Brendan Kerin of the Sydney Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Joint Council members shared updates on Closing the Gap and outlined strategies for embedding the Priority Reforms in 2023 within their respective jurisdictions, with a particular focus on Priority Reform Three – *Transforming Government Organisations*.

Members considered and approved the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership and a Housing Policy Partnership. Policy partnerships identify opportunities to work more effectively across governments, reduce gaps and duplication, and improve outcomes under Closing the Gap.

Justice Policy Partnership co-chairs submitted their first Annual Report reflecting on the lessons learned. The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership co-chairs provided an update on its first meeting.

A high level analysis of all Parties' Annual Reports was considered by Joint Council, highlighting where Parties could work better together to achieve outcomes under the National Agreement. It was agreed that ownership of the National Agreement must be built across all areas of government, particularly through the development of Implementation Plans and Annual Reports.

Members agreed urgent action is required to accelerate progress in relation to:

- identifying an independent mechanism(s) with oversight of the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions
- progressing data and information sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at a regional level
- addressing Closing the Gap targets that are currently identified as *not on track*, through developing and embedding jointed up approaches between Parties.

Joint Council was updated on the progress of government parties reviewing spending on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services to inform reprioritisation opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, particularly to community-controlled organisations.



Government Parties updated Joint Council of their progress working with jurisdictional Peaks to confirm the scope, treatment, allocation and partnership actions towards achieving the inland waters target in their jurisdiction, as well as treatment of Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserves.

Government Parties agreed to make genuine efforts to look for opportunities to promote and embrace shared decision-making through structural and process changes.

Government Parties agreed to work closely with, and regularly reviewing opportunities to ensure resourcing and capacity constraints faced by their respective jurisdictional Peak are alleviated in an effort to encourage genuine partnership and promote effective decision-making.

Joint Council were provided an update from the Productivity Commission on the three-yearly review of Closing the Gap.

Joint Council agreed to provide an update to First Ministers on the work of the Council, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Priority Reforms, and calling on First Ministers to embed partnership and shared-decision making approaches, as well as embedding changes to the way governments collect and share data at the regional level with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Parties agreed to hold next year's Joint Council meetings in Darwin in June and Melbourne in November.

ATTENDEES – COALITION OF PEAKS REPRESENTATIVES

Name	Representing	Organisation
Pat Turner AM	Joint Council Co-Chair	Coalition of Peaks Lead Convenor
Robert Skeen	NSW	Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council New South Wales
Nerita Waight	VIC	Victorian Aboriginal Executive Council (AEC)
Wynetta Dewis	QLD	Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
Vicki O'Donnell OAM	WA	Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA)
Scott Wilson	SA	South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON)
Graeme Gardner	TAS	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC)
Paula McGrady	ACT	ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ACT ATSIEB)
Dr John Paterson	NT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Council Northern Territory (APONT)
Muriel Bamblett AO	Education and Families	SNAICC – National Voice for our Children
Donnella Mills	Health and Wellbeing	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
Jamie Lowe	Economic Development	National Native Title Council (NNTC)

ATTENDEES – GOVERNMENT PARTIES

Name	Jurisdiction	Title
Hon Linda Burney MP	Commonwealth	Minister for Indigenous Australians
Hon Ben Franklin MLC	NSW	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Ms Christine Couzens MLA	VIC	Parliamentary Secretary, First Peoples
Hon Craig Crawford MP	QLD	Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA	WA	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Hon Kyam Maher MLC	SA	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
<i>Apology from Hon Roger Jaensch MP</i>	TAS	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
<i>Apology from Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA</i>	ACT	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Hon Selena Uibo MLA	NT	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Cr Linda Scott	Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)	President, Australian Local Government Association