



THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE JOINT COUNCIL ON CLOSING THE GAP

COMMUNIQUE

Joint Council members were welcomed on 15 November 2024 to Boorloo (Perth), by Whadjuk and Ballardong Traditional Owner and Elder Kerry-Ann Winmar. Joint Council paid respects to Noongar Elders, acknowledging their continuing custodianship of the land.

Joint Council welcomed new members, including Commonwealth Co-Chair Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, the Honourable Jacqui Petrusma MP (Tasmania), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (ACT), the Honourable Steve Edginton MLA (NT) and Mayor Matt Burnett (ALGA) and reaffirmed their commitment to working together to progress actions under the National Agreement.

Joint Council discussed critical matters regarding youth justice and agreed that Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) is an urgent priority that requires collective action across multiple government portfolios and jurisdictions to deliver on the ground results. Target 11, to reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10 – 17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent by 2031 is not on track to be met. Joint Council agreed to escalate this urgent priority and progress work that will achieve improved accountability, coordinated jurisdictional actions and outcomes. It was agreed that Joint Council Co-Chairs write to First Ministers to seek details of how their governments are currently taking steps to meet Target 11, including consideration of remand, alternative accommodation and health and disability care and education in youth justice facilities.

Parties acknowledged the benefit of bilateral agreements to harness mainstream funding and support sector specific service delivery and performance mechanisms. Joint Council agreed to progress work to apply Priority Reforms in the areas of Skills, Health, Education and Housing into National intergovernmental agreements (National Agreements) to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and deliver Closing the Gap outcomes. The Baseline Commitments for all National Agreements relevant to Closing the Gap were also noted by Parties.

All parties committed to the delivery of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Review (the Review) and Assembly to capture and report on the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities that have been engaged in the implementation of the National Agreement. Joint Council agreed to the revised Terms of Reference for the Review and Assembly.

Parties discussed the importance of a strategic approach to enable drivers of action to support delivery on the ground and in communities. Joint Council welcomed a collaborative approach to prioritise actions and agreed to a forward work plan to realise the National Agreement commitments.



Joint Council reflected on policy partnership and place-based partnership updates.

Further information on Closing the Gap can be found here: [Home | Closing the Gap](#)



ATTENDEES – COALITION OF PEAKS REPRESENTATIVES

Name	Representing	Organisation
Ms Pat Turner AM	Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations	Joint Council Co-Chair; Lead Convenor, Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations
Mr Michael Graham	VIC	Co-Chair, Ngaweeyan Maar-oo
Ms Wynetta Dewis	QLD	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
Ms Vicki O'Donnell OAM	WA	Chair, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia
Dr Scott Wilson	SA	Lead Convenor, South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network
Mr Graeme Gardner	TAS	Chairperson, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
Mr Maurice Walker	ACT	Chairperson, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
Dr John Paterson	NT	Lead Convenor, Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory
Ms Muriel Bamblett AO	Education and Families	Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Ms Donnella Mills	Health and Wellbeing	Chair, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
Mr Jamie Lowe	Economic Development	Chief Executive Officer, National Native Title Council
Ms Karly Warner	Justice	Chair, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services

ATTENDEES – GOVERNMENT PARTIES

Name	Jurisdiction	Title
Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy	Commonwealth	Joint Council Co-Chair, Minister for Indigenous Australians
Hon David Harris MP	NSW	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
Ms Christine Couzens MP (Proxy for Minister Hutchins)	VIC	Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples
Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA	WA	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Hon Kyam Maher MLC	SA	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP (virtual)	TAS	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (virtual)	ACT	Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Hon Steve Edgington MLA	NT	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Mayor Matt Burnett	Australian Local Government Association	President, Australian Local Government Association

APOLOGIES

Name	Representing	Organisation
Hon Fiona Simpson MP	Qld	Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships



GUESTS AND PRESENTERS

Name	Representing	Organisation
Professor Pat Dudgeon	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership Update	First Nations Co-Chair
Zachariah Matysek	Housing Policy Partnership Update	First Nations Co-Chair
Matt Flavel	Housing Policy Partnership Update	Commonwealth Co-Chair