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Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is built around four new Priority Reforms that will change the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Priority Reform One is about formal partnership and shared decision making.

As part of this Priority Reform, parties are committing to sharing decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Genuine partnership is critical to accelerating policy and place-based progress towards Closing the Gap.



STRONG PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS

Strong partnerships are those where:

1. Partnerships are accountable and representative
2. A formal agreement is in place between members
3. Decision making is shared between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



GOVERNMENT ACTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Governments commit to establishing policy and place-based partnerships across Australia which respond to local priorities.

Many shared structures already exist developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The actions under this Priority Reform are not intended to replace these arrangements but rather build on these successes.

Governments commit to review existing partnership arrangements to assess how they meet the partnership elements by:

- Undertaking a stocktake of partnership arrangements already in place
- Reviewing and strengthen all current partnership arrangements to meet the strong partnership elements in the National Agreement, if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners want to do so
- Reporting on the number of partnerships, changes to existing partnerships, and whether or not the partnerships meet the strong partnership elements.



PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Together, the Joint Council on Closing the Gap will establish five policy priority areas for partnerships between all Australian governments, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. These policy areas are:

- justice (adult and youth incarceration)
- social and emotional wellbeing (mental health)
- housing
- early childhood care and development
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap will establish six new place-based partnerships between the Commonwealth, relevant state or territory governments, local government, and agreed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“In order to effect real change, governments must work collaboratively and in genuine, formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because they are the essential agents of change.”

Engagement survey participant from the Northern Territory