

## First Meeting of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap

27 March 2019, Brisbane, Communiqué

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap met for the first time today in Brisbane. The Joint Council is established under the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap and represents an historic step forward in the practical working relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments. It will work to refresh the Closing the Gap framework and monitor its implementation over the next ten years. Ministers of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and representatives of the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisation (Coalition of Peaks) and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) will work together for the first time as genuine partners in an agenda of major national significance. The Coalition of Peaks is a group of almost 40 community controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies, operating across a range of sectors important to Closing the Gap.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed the Joint Council in December 2018 as a key part of its commitment to a formal partnership on Closing the Gap with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This commitment recognises that shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through their representative organisations, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Closing the Gap framework is essential to closing the gap in life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Joint Council, the first ever COAG Council that includes members from outside Governments, comprises 12 representatives elected by the Coalition of Peaks with broad geographic and subject matter coverage, a Minister nominated by the Commonwealth and each state and territory government, and one representative from the Australian Government Association.

Following meetings of the Joint Council, at least two times per year, decisions arising will be made public through a communiqué. A forward workplan for the Joint Council is also being developed and will be made public.

The formal partnership agreement between governments and the Coalition of Peaks came into effect on 22 March 2019 with the signatures of the Prime Minister, the Coalition of Peaks and the Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory.

### Members attending

Member	Representing
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion (Co-chair)	Commonwealth
Pat Turner AM (Co-chair)	Coalition of Peaks
Cheryl Axleby	Coalition of Peaks
Muriel Bamblett	Coalition of Peaks
Cindy Berwick	Coalition of Peaks
Natalie Lewis	Coalition of Peaks
John Paterson	Coalition of Peaks
Vicki O'Donnell	Coalition of Peaks
Melissa Clarke	Coalition of Peaks
David Warriner	Coalition of Peaks
Trevor Pearce	Coalition of Peaks
Katrina Fanning	Coalition of Peaks
The Hon Jacque Petrusma MP	Tasmania
Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA	ACT

<b>Member</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Tony Buti MLA	WA
Mayor David O'Loughlin	ALGA
Ngaree Ah Kit MLA	NT
The Hon Michelle Lensink MLC	SA
The Hon Gavin Jennings MLC	VIC
The Hon Jackie Trad MP	QLD