A new way of working

Talking about what’s needed to close the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians

An illustrated story
COALITION OF PEAKS

WE WANT TO GET YOUR VIEWS together with government officials are here today to talk about...

CLOSING THE GAP about what is needed to make the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people better.
CLOSING THE GAP

STARTED IN: 2008

with an agreement between governments to work together to close the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

GOVERNMENTS AGREED TO CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS WERE ALSO INTRODUCED TO SHOW PROGRESS AGAINST THE TARGETS, INCLUDING AN ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PARLIAMENT.

This agreement was developed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and it is called: THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS REFORM AGREEMENT (NIRA)

FOR THE FIRST TIME, GOVERNMENTS AGREED TO CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS WHICH ARE PART OF THE NIRA.

A LOT OF NEW GOVERNMENT MONEY WAS COMMITTED AT THE START, bringing new programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as:

- Remote Housing
- Health Services
- Early Childhood Centres
- Jobs
- Help Wanted

5. NEW ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING MEASURES WERE ALSO INTRODUCED TO SHOW PROGRESS AGAINST THE TARGETS, INCLUDING AN ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PARLIAMENT.

But over time...

MUCH OF NIRA FELL AWAY: governments stopped working together, there was no more new money, and the independent oversight (accountability measures) didn’t continue.

For the first time, a lot of new government money was committed at the start, bringing new programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as:

6. BUT OVER TIME...

7. PROGRESS AGAINST THE CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS HAS BEEN SLOW AND NOT WHAT WAS HOPED

Of the 7 targets, only 2 are on track to be met.
In December 2016, governments said they wanted to ‘refresh’ closing the gap. They also said they wanted to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Governments talked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in roundtables across Australia in 2018 about new targets that they thought were more realistic and achievable.

But many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations were worried that governments were not listening properly. We wanted to talk about more than just targets on closing the gap.

In October 2018, a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations wrote to governments to say that there needed to be a formal partnership with us to make decisions about closing the gap.

With the support of the Prime Minister, governments agreed to a formal partnership with us at the COAG meeting in December 2018.

A Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap was signed in March 2019 with our Coalition.

The Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap sets out how decisions will be made together on closing the gap for the next 10 years. It’s a public document and on the COAG website.
COALITION OF PEAKS

STATE/TERRITORY PEAK BODIES

Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia
Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peaks
New South Wales Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
Victorian Aboriginal Executive Council
Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

NATIONAL PEAK BODIES

Health
Children and Families
Native Title and Land
Social Justice
Media

Working together
PRIME MINISTER, PREMIERS, CHIEF MINISTERS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

DESICTIONS

COALITION OF PEAKS

12 REPS ELECTED

PEAK REPS

PARTNERSHIP WORKING GROUP

WORKING TABLE

COALITION OF PEAKS

12 REPS ELECTED

PEAK REPS
Community
This element represents a strong community and the need for community to always be at the centre.

Membership

Boards

Coalition of Peaks

Each peak organisation

WHERE
YOU
FIT IN!

Partnership Working Group
A new agreement on closing the gap

Next 10 years
- Replaces NIRA
- Agreed to by the Coalition of Peaks
- Focuses on 3 key areas for joint action to make a difference to people’s lives
- Based on what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying for a long time
- New accountability and reporting measures, and new Closing the Gap targets

We want to talk to you about changes which will make a difference
Formal partnerships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on closing the gap

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are properly involved in decision making, there are better outcomes.

- No more government appointed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisers
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have their own support for policy advice and don’t rely on governments
- Based on our own governance structures and formal agreement making
- Formal arrangements about who is making decisions, on what and how
- Everyone has access to the same materials to make decisions (like data)

What is needed to make this work?
Growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled services

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services deliver the best outcomes for our peoples, and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s self-determination.

2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations provide services that are important to us and in a way that is important to us.

3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations employ lots of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

4. Help keep governments honest.

5. Help wanted.

6. A strong sector has:
   - Dedicated jobs and training
   - Protected funding
   - Shared knowledge about how to deliver good services

We have strong organisations but we also need strong sectors.

4. We are strong in some sectors but others need development.

5. and also some service areas where there are nowhere near enough.

- Health
- Legal
- Family and children
- Land

What is needed to build stronger community-controlled organisations and sectors?
We want them to **DO BETTER** for Aboriginal people and to **BE ACCOUNTABLE** for doing better.

**WHAT ARE SOME OTHER IDEAS?**

**MORE PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS**

**EMPLOYING MORE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE**

**MORE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE ON DECISION MAKING BOARDS FOR THAT ORGANISATION**

We still need some critical services to be provided by mainstream service providers and governments, like...

- **HOSPITALS**
- **UNIVERSITIES**
- **POLICE**
**NEW CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS**

There will still be closing the gap targets

**COAG HAS ALREADY AGREED TO A DRAFT SET FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION**

We also think it is important to have targets on the **PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION** and we want to track progress in these areas too.

**WE WANT NATIONAL TARGETS THAT EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR, NOT SOME TARGETS THAT THE STATES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND SOME THAT THE COMMONWEALTH ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR.**

**WE WOULD LIKE YOUR FEEDBACK ON CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS THAT GOVERNMENT HAVE AGREED IN DRAFT AND ANY OTHER TARGETS YOU THINK WE SHOULD HAVE.**
What happens next?

Your ideas will be put in a public report by the Coalition of Peaks that will go to governments and inform the new agreement.

Governments and the Coalition of Peaks

The new agreement is just the start

We also want to talk to governments about new funding for programs and services to support closing the gap over the next ten years.

The new agreement, once signed, will be made public.

This includes in the implementation, monitoring and review of the agreement.

This is a new way of working. There will be more negotiations between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
Thanks for sharing your ideas.

Overall, we want...

Healthy and strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to be supported in bodies making decision and be connected to culture, land and language.

Have culturally responsive mainstream services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to have their ambitions pursued where everyone can live long lives.

Have services delivered by community-controlled organisations.

Have our own and be supported in Australia broader.