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
This booklet has been developed by the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations in consultation with Australian governments – federal, state and local – and with the assistance of a grant from the Commonwealth Government. The booklet is accompanied by a series of illustrations.

Gilimbaa, an Indigenous creative agency registered with Supply Nation, did the design, illustrations and layout. Cultural elements were created by Gilimbaa artist Tarni O’Shea (Butchulla and South Sea Islander).

Community: This graphic element represents a strong community and the need for community to always be at the centre of the work of the Coalition of Peaks. The outer elements show the support from the Coalition of Peaks in building and maintaining strong communities.

Moving Forward: This element represents the Coalition of Peaks moving forward and always looking to the future. Even when faced with challenges, it’s important to remain positive and think of what can be achieved.

CLOSING THE GAP ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES
Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks)
Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (Partnership Agreement)
National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement)
National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA)
Joint Ministerial and Coalition of Peaks Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council)
COAG Statement on the Closing the Gap Refresh (the Refresh)
Introduction

We all know there’s still a wide difference in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians, despite more than ten years of work, called ‘Closing the Gap’. We’re now taking a different approach. The Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks), with the support of Australian governments at all levels – federal, state and local – are talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, communities and organisations about Closing the Gap throughout September and October 2019.

The Coalition of Peaks has come together to be a formal partner with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in the next phase of Closing the Gap. The way we work together is set out in the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (Partnership Agreement) of March 2019. The Partnership Agreement is a public document that you can review at www.coag.gov.au/about-coag/agreements/closing-gap-partnership-agreement.

An important objective of our work together is negotiating a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement). The new National Agreement will set out how governments and the Coalition of Peaks will work over the next ten years to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

The Coalition of Peaks, with governments, wants to talk to you about the work that has been done on the development of the new National Agreement so far and get your ideas on what is needed from government and non-government sectors to make real change.

Your views will help to create practical action that could be included in the new National Agreement to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations in taking charge of their own lives and development.
Having your say

Meetings on the new National Agreement will be held across the country. The number and locations of the meetings have been agreed by the Coalition of Peaks and governments. We need to talk to enough people, in different parts of Australia, to make sure we’re on the right track and have support to finalise the new National Agreement with governments.

If you or people you know are not part of these meetings or are unable to make it, you can still have your say during this time through an online survey. The Coalition of Peaks is also talking to its own members.

A report on these discussions will be prepared by the Coalition of Peaks. It will cover what was said at each meeting, will be made public, and will be presented to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.

We won’t be able to talk to everyone this time, but this is not the end of the discussions. Under the Partnership Agreement, governments have committed to a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the long term.

Importantly, even if we sort out a new National Agreement with Australian governments by the end of this year, the new way of working will allow us to review how things are going on a regular basis and to consider, after more discussion, whether there should be changes.
In 2008, COAG agreed to work together to close the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

Closing the Gap targets were announced by COAG and a lot of additional money was provided for programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to help meet the targets. The way in which governments agreed to work together to achieve the targets was set out in a National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), signed by governments in November 2008.

The NIRA and the initial Closing the Gap commitment was welcomed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership. It included a significant amount of money to implement new programs and services. It also strengthened reporting requirements and accountability arrangements for national, state, territory and local governments to show whether progress was being made.

But the Closing the Gap strategy in the NIRA was only partially implemented in some areas and stopped in others. Efforts from governments to work together fell away and long-term funding for programs and services was not guaranteed or continued.

Initial Closing the Gap discussions involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations but there was no ongoing commitment to involve communities, based on their own representation, in decisions about how targets could be achieved.

This has meant that progress on Closing the Gap in life outcomes has been disappointing. Australia’s Productivity Commission stated in its Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report in 2016 that:

A number of indicators show improvements, particularly some early childhood, health and education measures. However, significant gaps in outcomes remain. Particularly concerning, it appears that family/community violence outcomes have stalled, while involvement with the child protection system remains high, and mental health, drug and alcohol, and youth and adult criminal justice outcomes appear to be worsening.
The Prime Minister’s 2019 Closing the Gap Report indicates that only two of the seven targets are on track to be met – the targets on early childhood education and Year 12 attainment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing the Gap Targets</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close the life expectancy gap within a generation (by 2031)</td>
<td>Not on track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade (by 2018)</td>
<td>Not on track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education at 95 per cent by 2025 (renewed in 2015)</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade (by 2018)</td>
<td>Not on track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap for Indigenous 20-24 year olds in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade (by 2018)</td>
<td>Not on track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close the gap in school attendance by 2018 (added in 2014)</td>
<td>Not on track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Governments’ Closing the Gap ‘refresh’

In December 2016, as the timeframes for some of the Closing the Gap targets were coming to an end and not enough progress had been made, governments said they wanted to ‘refresh’ their approach to Closing the Gap. Led by the Commonwealth, COAG set out to develop new Closing the Gap targets that could be better measured and were more achievable. Governments also said they wanted to strengthen the way they worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in determining new targets and how to achieve them.

Governments talked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians and organisations during 2017 and 2018 about the ‘refresh’. They also spoke about wanting to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The focus of the consultations was on a new set of Closing the Gap targets but missed some key elements on what they would do differently and what formal commitments would be made.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies became worried that COAG was going to agree to a ‘refresh’, focusing on new targets, without the formal agreement of representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It was difficult to see how the input that had been provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations was being reflected in what governments were considering.

In October 2018, 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies wrote to the prime minister, premiers and chief ministers to ask that changes to Closing the Gap not be agreed without formal input and support from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. They also asked for a seat at the table to share decision making on Closing the Gap.

In the lead-up to a meeting of COAG in December 2018, the Prime Minister met with some of the organisations that had written the letter and agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have ownership and share in the decision making on Closing the Gap. The Prime Minister then took this back to state, territory and local governments, through COAG, and they all agreed. Governments also agreed to a draft framework, including targets, implementation principles and better public accountability, to be finalised in a genuine partnership.
The Coalition of Peaks is made up of nearly 40 members of national, state and territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies within various sectors. It represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations that deliver and monitor a range of services and/or programs vital to Closing the Gap.

Each organisation has its own history and issues that are important to it. However, the Coalition of Peaks is united in its commitment to community-controlled representation of our communities and working together on Closing the Gap.

The Coalition of Peaks:

• consists of national, state and territory non-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and certain independent statutory authorities that have responsibility for policies, programs and services related to Closing the Gap

• has governing boards elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and/or organisations that are accountable to that membership

• supports the vision for a genuine partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and COAG in developing and implementing the next phase of Closing the Gap.

Our membership comprises nearly every national, state and territory peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. These bodies and their members have worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, communities, families and people, and have represented them on certain issues for decades. We also represent community-controlled organisations that provide services in support of achieving the Closing the Gap targets.

We know there are other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that are not represented by the Coalition of Peaks. That is why the Coalition of Peaks intends to talk to a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, regional governance bodies, representatives and community members in each jurisdiction.

We also want governments to talk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, regional governance bodies, representatives and community members in the implementation of local and regional Closing the Gap strategies and programs.

The Coalition of Peaks membership is listed at the back of the booklet, in Appendix 1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations can apply to become a member of the Coalition of Peaks at coalitionofpeaks@naccho.org.au.
In March 2019, the Partnership Agreement between COAG and the Coalition of Peaks came into effect. COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. Its members are the Prime Minister, state and territory first ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association. Its role is to manage matters of national significance that need coordinated action by all Australian governments. For a long time, one of those matters has been achieving better life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Partnership Agreement sets out how governments and the Coalition of Peaks will work together over the next ten years on Closing the Gap. It is based on a belief that:

• when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are included and have a real say in the design and delivery of services that impact on them, the outcomes are far better
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to be at the centre of Closing the Gap policy: the gap won’t close without our full involvement
• COAG cannot expect us to take responsibility for outcomes or to be able to work constructively with them if we are excluded from decision making.

The way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations is changing under the Partnership Agreement. For the first time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through the Coalition of Peaks, will share in decision making on the design, implementation and monitoring of Closing the Gap policies and programs.

The Partnership Agreement has established a Joint Ministerial and Coalition of Peaks Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council). Its role is to support national leadership, coordination and cooperation on Closing the Gap and provide advice to COAG. The Coalition of Peaks is represented by 12 members (elected by Coalition of Peak members) and each government is represented by a minister. The Australian Local Government Association is represented by its president. The Joint Council has already met twice, in March and August 2019.

The Joint Council has also set up a Partnership Working Group that is made up of the Coalition of Peaks and government officials to advise it.
A new National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Under the Partnership Agreement, the Coalition of Peaks sat down with governments and looked at the NIRA. The Coalition of Peaks and governments talked about what has been working and what areas need to be strengthened or changed.

The Coalition of Peaks and governments agreed that the NIRA needed to be replaced by a new National Agreement, covering the next ten years, that builds on its successful parts and includes some of the foundations that were missed.

The new National Agreement has been negotiated with governments by the Coalition of Peaks on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Coalition of Peaks has agreement in principle from governments that the new National Agreement will be built around key priority areas for action. The focus is on how we work together to accelerate improvements in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – and close the gap.

It was also agreed that the National Agreement will provide for new measures to improve the accountability of governments and increase the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in those arrangements, including:

- a comprehensive role for Australia’s Productivity Commission, over the life of the agreement, to ensure the provision of independent policy advice, monitoring and evaluation, and reports on progress, including a three-yearly review of progress and an annual dashboard showing targets and indicators of progress on those targets
- a three-yearly review led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s experiences of progress against the reform priorities, with the results to be made public
- an in-principle commitment to a new data project led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work towards regional profiles that cover reform priorities, outcomes, building blocks and targets, and other jointly agreed matters important to the development of each region, accessible by communities and organisations and traditional owner groups to support development led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
It has been agreed by the Coalition of Peaks and governments that a major strength of NIRA was that it had, for the first time, brought national attention to the unequal outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared with other Australians. The NIRA, also for the first time, brought into being a national strategy to end this inequality, including agreement on the Closing the Gap targets.

Governments, under the NIRA, had to be more answerable for the progress they were making on Closing the Gap. Annual progress reporting was required and checked by an independent body and the shared roles and responsibilities of governments were clearly spelled out.

While the NIRA itself did not provide more funding to support services and programs to help in closing the gap, a package of related agreements committed a lot more Commonwealth funds, often paired with state and territory funds.

The Coalition of Peaks and governments also agreed that there were significant weaknesses in the NIRA, including, significantly, that it was negotiated with little involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the same way, the NIRA did not include a formal structure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in its governance and there was no framework for working at the regional level.

The Closing the Gap targets were also considered to be very ambitious and not based on evidence of what could be achieved within the timeframes. For governments, this is a key reason why Closing the Gap targets have mostly never been on track to be met. The result has been that, when the prime minister has reported annually to the Australian Parliament on the lack of progress against the targets, a story of continuous failure has emerged, which does not convey the full picture, including that positive progress has been made in areas such as life expectancy.
Closing the Gap targets will continue to be part of the new National Agreement. However, instead of targets as the main focus for the next ten years, the Coalition of Peaks has proposed three areas for priority action to accelerate the achievement of much better life outcomes for our people. These areas have been agreed in principle by governments to be included in the new National Agreement.

• **Priority Action Area 1** is to develop and strengthen structures to ensure the full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in shared decision making at the national, state, local and regional level and embedding their ownership, responsibility and expertise to close the gap.

• **Priority Action Area 2** is to build the formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled service sectors to deliver closing the gap services and programs in agreed priority areas.

• **Priority Action Area 3** is to ensure mainstream government agencies and institutions that deliver services and programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertake systemic and structural transformation to contribute to Closing the Gap.

We have also heard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people say for a long time that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations deliver the best services and outcomes for our people. We know what services we need and the best way to provide them.

Reporting on Closing the Gap targets shows the difference in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians in areas like health, education, employment and justice. In addition, the Coalition of Peaks proposes that the new National Agreement includes targets on the proposed priority areas for action. We believe having targets on these priority areas will help everyone see if progress is being made where it is needed most.

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been calling for a long time to have a much greater say in how programs and services are delivered to their people, in their own places and on their own country.
Priority Action 1:
Developing and strengthening structures so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people share in decision making with governments on closing the gap

The first priority area for action proposed to be included in the new National Agreement is a commitment to develop and strengthen structures to ensure the full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in shared decision making with governments on closing the gap. It is proposed that ‘principles for action’ would be set out in the new National Agreement, which would guide the development or enhancement of decision-making structures and partnership arrangements in each jurisdiction. This is intended to take us beyond governments setting up their own structures to consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including appointing advisers.

The ‘principles for action’ could be used as a guide for developing or enhancing partnership arrangements that are negotiated and agreed to by governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We need to make sure that our people have the right to choose which of our organisations and which of our people should be included in these structures.

At the national level, a formal partnership is already in place through the Partnership Agreement that is consistent with the priority action we seek to be included in the National Agreement.

At the state and territory level, there may be existing or upcoming partnership arrangements for how governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people work together on closing the gap. The ‘principles for action’ could be used to enhance or report against those arrangements. We believe it is important that regional partnership arrangements are also put in place.

Where there are existing genuine partnerships, we want them strengthened to ensure that representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are chosen by them and are properly supported to share decision making about closing the gap in their locations.

The Coalition of Peaks believes that a formal partnership means an arrangement is in place that says who is making decisions, how those decisions will be made and what the decisions will be about.

We also believe it is essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations have independent policy support and advice made available to them to support their decision making. It is also important that, in a formal partnership, everyone has access to the same information and data. This helps support fair and informed decision making.

We would like to hear what you think about this priority and how it could be achieved.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Priority Action 1

1. Is Priority Action 1 important to be included in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap?
2. What is an example of a good partnership arrangement that allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make decisions with governments on important issues?
3. From the example, what are the things that make the partnership arrangement work?
4. What would help it work better?
5. What is the best way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to choose their own representatives in partnership structures to allow shared decision making on Closing the Gap?
6. What additional action do you need from governments to support existing arrangements and/or build new ones?
7. Do you think there should be an agreed target for this priority action built into the new National Agreement?
8. If yes, what do you think we should measure to show progress in this area?
9. Is there anything else you would like to say about shared decision making and this priority action?
Priority Action 2:
Building formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled service sectors to deliver closing the gap services

The second priority area for action proposed to be included in the new National Agreement is a commitment to – and support for – the building of the formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector to deliver Closing the Gap services and programs.

There is strong evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services are better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, achieve better results and help make sure we get the support we need.

They employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than do mainstream services and result in communities taking more responsibility for services that can be a cultural match to their needs.

Through their involvement in policy and political advocacy, our organisations also provide a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Without them, the accountability of governments would be far weaker.

We also know that, despite our long history and successes, funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services keep being allocated outside of community control.

A lot of money goes to making mainstream services more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, it is difficult to see how much difference this has made to improving outcomes. It is too hard for mainstream services to consistently be able to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, a very small percentage of the population, and support our self-determination and right to cultural difference.

It is proposed that the new National Agreement focus on building formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled service sectors in priority areas important to Closing the Gap.

A formal sector is where a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations:

• are governed by the same principles
• deliver certain services and address issues through an agreed model of care or approach
• has a dedicated employment stream and a dedicated ongoing funding stream
• can be supported by a peak body.

There are already successful, formal sectors for land, native title, health, legal aid and media. However, sectors are still developing in other service areas needed to close the gap, such as housing and its delivery, aged care and disability support, despite these service areas including some well-established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

Community control is an act of self-determination for our people. No other way of delivering and governing services guarantees Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander empowerment and protects our identity and culture for the long term.

We would like to know what you think about this priority and hear your ideas on why the community-controlled sector is important to you and what areas to you think need to be strengthened and how.
An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation is:

• an independent, not-for-profit organisation that is incorporated as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation
• is initiated by and is controlled and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
• is based in a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or communities
• is governed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board that is elected by members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or communities where it is based and where decision making of the board is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board members
• delivers services (with majority local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment) that build, strengthen and enable self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Priority Action 2

1. Is Priority Action 2 important to be included in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap?

2. Where do we have strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors now?

3. What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services are important to Closing the Gap?

4. What areas of service delivery is it most important to have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation to deliver that service?

5. What can governments do to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations grow and be strong?

6. Do you think there should be an agreed target for this priority action built into the new National Agreement?

7. If yes, what do you think we should measure to show progress in this area?

8. Is there anything else that you would like to say about community control or this priority action?
Priority Action 3:
Ensuring mainstream government agencies and institutions that deliver services and programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertake systemic and structural transformation to contribute to closing the gap

The third priority area for action proposed to be included in the National Agreement is a commitment by governments that mainstream organisations delivering services and programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do more than they have been to Closing the Gap, and are held publicly accountable for their actions.

Although building the community-controlled services sector to provide Closing the Gap services is a priority, not all the services can be delivered by a community-controlled organisation. This includes services such as university education, hospitals, courts, prisons and policing, and the provision of income support and Medicare.

Mainstream organisations get lots of money to provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so should be doing more to improve life outcomes for our people. They need to change the way they work, putting more effort into tackling systemic racism and promoting cultural safety. And they need to transfer power and resources to communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

While there are some examples of good practice from mainstream services, particularly when partnerships are formed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector, overall, communities continue to be concerned about whether mainstream services are supportive and culturally safe. We need measures such as ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play a key role in decision making in these institutions if there is to be any long-term change.

We would like to hear your ideas about the importance of this priority action, including how we can make mainstream services work better for us and how they can succeed in making a bigger contribution to Closing the Gap.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Priority Action 3

1. Is Priority Action 3 important to be included in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap?

2. What are some of the things that mainstream services and governments can do to work better with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

3. How can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be involved in the development, design, and implementation of mainstream services?

4. How should mainstream services work with community-controlled organisations within the same sector?

5. How can mainstream services be accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the services they deliver?

6. Do you think there should be an agreed target for this priority action built into the new National Agreement?

7. If yes, what do you think we should measure to show progress in this area?

8. Is there anything else you would like to say about mainstream service provision or this priority area?
Refreshed Closing the Gap targets

The National Agreement will include updated Closing the Gap targets to be agreed between the Coalition of Peaks and governments. In December 2018, Australian governments agreed to refreshed Closing the Gap targets in draft form for further consultation. These draft targets are included in the COAG Statement on the Closing the Gap Refresh (the Refresh) and are at the end of the booklet in Appendix 2.

It is intended by COAG that the refreshed Closing the Gap agenda will commit to targets that all governments will be accountable for achieving.

In addition to updated Closing the Gap targets, the Coalition of Peaks believes there should also be targets for each priority area for action. This would help bring more public accountability to these important reforms, so that all Australians can see whether action is being taken in a timely way.

We understand that many of you may have already talked to governments during the Refresh about options for Closing the Gap targets. The Coalition of Peaks will continue to work with governments on the new Closing the Gap targets to be included in the new National Agreement.

In the meantime, the Coalition of Peaks would like to hear your feedback on the draft COAG refreshed targets, what you like about them and whether you have any other ideas that are not yet included.

The Coalition of Peaks also intends to talk further with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts in specific areas before any new targets are agreed.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Closing the Gap targets

1. Do you support the refreshed targets as agreed to in draft form by COAG?
2. Do you support some targets being led by the Commonwealth and some being state led?
3. Do you have any additional suggestions?
4. Is there anything you would like to add about the Closing the Gap targets?
Finalising the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap

What you say at the meetings will help with the negotiations of the new National Agreement between governments and the Coalition of Peaks. We are working to finalise the agreement by the end of 2019.

Not everything that is talked about will be able to be included in the new National Agreement. The Coalition of Peaks will do its best to represent the issues and ideas that you have raised. There are some things that governments will agree to now, and some things that we will need to keep talking to governments about.

The new National Agreement will include reviews and evaluations that will allow governments and the Coalition of Peaks to keep working together and improving how they work and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on closing the gap.

Completing the online survey


Coalition of Peaks mailing list

The Coalition of Peaks has a mailing list that you can sign up to at coalitionofpeaks@naccho.org.au. We will keep you updated on the negotiations with governments on the new National Agreement.

We will also let you know when we have our own website so we can better keep you up to date.
# APPENDIX 1.
## Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Members</th>
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</table>
| **Coalition of Peaks Members**  | **National members**  
Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives  
First Peoples Disability Network  
Indigenous Allied Health Australia  
Lowitja Institute  
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association  
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services  
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation  
National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum  
National Native Title Council  
SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children  
The Healing Foundation  
Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association  

**Victorian members**  
Victorian Aboriginal Executive Council:  
• Victorian Aborigines Advancement League  
• Koori Youth Council  
• Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated  
• Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service  
• Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency  
• Djirra  
• Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations  
• Victorian Aboriginal Housing Board  
• Victorian Aboriginal Health Service  
• Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation  
• Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd  

**Western Australia member**  
Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia  

**Tasmanian member**  
Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre  

**Queensland members**  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld) Ltd  
Queensland Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Limited  
Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council  

**South Australia members**  
South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network:  
• Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement  
• Kornar Winmil Yunti  
• Nunga Mi:Minar  
• InComPro  
• South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council  
• Family Violence Legal Services Aboriginal Corporation  
• Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women’s Council  
• Kura Yerlo Incorporated  

**New South Wales members**  
NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO):  
• NSW Aboriginal Land Council  
• Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)  
• Link-Up (NSW)  
• NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group  
• Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW  
• NSW Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat  
• First Peoples Disability Network  

**Australian Capital Territory member**  
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body  

**Northern Territory members**  
Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory:  
• Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory  
• Central Land Council  
• Northern Land Council
## Draft COAG Closing the Gap targets

### Outcome Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Statement</th>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Draft COAG Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families, children and youth</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 45 per cent by 2028</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe</td>
<td><strong>State led</strong> Existing target: 95 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> Existing target: Close the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation, by 2031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> By 2028, 90–92 per cent of babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers have a healthy birthweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students succeed at school</td>
<td><strong>State led</strong> Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the top two bands of NAPLAN reading and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 by an average of 6 percentage points by 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students stay in school</td>
<td><strong>State led</strong> Existing target: Halve the gap in attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous 20–24-year-olds by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> 47 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 20–64 years) have completed Certificate III or above, including higher education, by 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Development</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> 65 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) are in employment, education or training by 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> 60 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years are employed by 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing as a pathway to better lives</td>
<td><strong>State led</strong> Increase the proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 82 per cent by 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justice, including youth justice</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system</td>
<td><strong>State led</strong> Reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention by 11–19 per cent and adults held in incarceration by at least 5 per cent by 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land and waters</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ land, water and cultural rights are realised</td>
<td><strong>Commonwealth led</strong> (target to be refined during further consultation) A ‘land and waters’ target will be developed by mid-2019 by all jurisdictions to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s access to, management and ownership of land of which they have a traditional association or which can assist with their social, cultural and economic development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>