



**Thursday 28 March 2019**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Joint Council meeting marks a new beginning for Closing the Gap**

The first ever Joint Council meeting on Closing the Gap was held yesterday in Brisbane between the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and a Coalition of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Bodies (Coalition of Peaks).

The Joint Council is comprised of 12 representatives elected by the Coalition of Peaks, a Minister nominated by the Commonwealth and Ministers from each state and territory governments and one representative from the Australian Local Government Association.

The Joint Council was established under the historic Partnership Agreement that was announced yesterday. The agreement represents the first time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies will have an equal say in the design, refresh, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Closing the Gap framework.

“This historic achievement of a hard-fought partnership between peak Aboriginal organisations and governments on Closing the Gap should be celebrated,” said Pat Turner, CEO of NACCHO. “Yesterday’s Joint Council meeting represented the first time we’ve had a seat at the table and was a culmination of many years of negotiations and hard work.”

“From this day forward, expert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in health, education and community services will be working as equal partners with COAG in crafting the best solutions to achieve better life outcomes within our communities,” Ms Turner said.

“The health disparities and widening gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians are unacceptable and as leaders in our fields, we are ready to do the hard work to reverse these trends.

“We are so pleased to see the Federal Government step up and commit \$4.6 million to support the efforts of our peaks to undertake this important work,” Ms Turner said.

The Joint Council will meet at least twice a year, and will develop a workplan to refresh the Closing the Gap framework and monitor its implementation over the next ten years.

The Joint Council agreed on a communique which can be read here:

<https://www.naccho.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ctg-joint-council-communique.pdf>

For more information on the Joint Council, the Partnership Agreement, the Coalition of Peaks and to sign up for our mailing list, go to:

<https://www.naccho.org.au/programmes/coalition-of-peaks/>

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