

Introduction

We want to hear your views on what is needed from governments to make real change in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks), with the support of Australian governments at all levels, is talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, communities and organisations about Closing the Gap throughout September and October 2019.

A report on these discussions and the survey results will be prepared by the Coalition of Peaks. The report will be available to the public and will be provided to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.

Your views will help inform practical actions that could be included in a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This new agreement will set out how governments will work with the Coalition of Peaks over the next ten years to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We understand that you may have already talked to governments about closing the gap during the Refresh process in 2017 and 2018. These discussions are different. They are led by the Coalition of Peaks and are part of a changed approach to how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are working with governments. The Coalition of Peaks want to hear from you about what is needed to make real change in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, even if you have told government before.

The survey is published and managed by the Coalition of Peaks. Survey results will be analysed and used by the Coalition of Peaks to help negotiate a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Access to raw data from the survey results is limited to the Coalition of Peaks members and its secretariat. You do not have to tell us your name or organisation. If you do tell us your name or organisation and do not give us permission to attribute your name or organisation to your comments (at question 9), only the Coalition of Peaks secretariat will have this information.

More information on Closing the Gap which may help you answer the survey is available in [A new way of working](#) (this will open a new window). The survey will be available up until 25 October 2019.

We estimate you allow up 30 minutes to complete this survey. All questions are optional and you can choose to answer only those questions that are important to you. Thank you for participating in this survey.

1. If you feel comfortable, can you provide us with your name?

2. Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Yes

No

3. Are you responding as an organisation or an individual?

Individual

Organisation

4. What is the name of your organisation?

5. If you are responding as an organisation, what type of organisation are you? Eg. business, community-controlled, not for profit, other.

6. What State / Territory do you live in, or if you are an organisation where is it based?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> New South Wales | <input type="radio"/> Western Australia |
| <input type="radio"/> Australian Capital Territory | <input type="radio"/> South Australia |
| <input type="radio"/> Victoria | <input type="radio"/> Tasmania |
| <input type="radio"/> Queensland | <input type="radio"/> Northern Territory |

7. Have you participated in one of the Coalition of Peaks' face-to-face meetings on closing the gap?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you agree to your comments being published in a report on these consultations?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, do you agree to your name / organisation being attributed to your comments?

- Yes
- No

New National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The Coalition of Peaks has proposed three areas for priority action to accelerate the achievement of better life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These areas have been agreed in principle by governments to be included in the new National Agreement.

- **Priority Area 1: More formal partnerships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on closing the gap.**
- **Priority Area 2: Growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled services and organisations.**
- **Priority Area 3: Improving mainstream service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

Priority Action Area 1

The first priority area for action is to develop stronger arrangements which ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people share decision making with governments on closing the gap.

We hope this means governments will stop creating their own structures, including appointing advisers, to consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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.

Questions (only answer the questions that you want to):

10. How important is it to have formal partnership arrangements between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to share decision making on closing the gap?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

11. How important is it for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to choose their own representatives to provide advice to government, rather than governments appointing people?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

12. How important is it for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have independent advice when making decisions with governments on Closing the Gap policies and programs?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

13. How important is it for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have the same data as government to make informed decisions on Closing the Gap policies and programs?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

14. What is needed to make sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are equal partners with governments and can make shared decisions on issues that are important to us? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

15. Do you agree that actions in this area should be measured and made public?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. What do you think we should measure which would show action is being taken in this area? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

17. Is there anything else you would like to say about arrangements between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and government on closing the gap? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

Priority Action Area 2

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.

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.

There is strong evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services are better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 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 peoples. 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.

Questions (only answer the questions that you want to):

18. How important is it for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to deliver services related to your communities?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

19. Which service do you think it is most important for a community controlled organisation to deliver and can you tell us why? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

20. Which community controlled services should be made stronger? You can list as many as you like and please also tell us why they should be made stronger. (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

21. What can governments do to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations grow and be strong? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

22. Which mainstream services should be transferred to community control? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

23. Do you agree that action in this area should be measured and made public?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

24. What do you think we should measure which would show action is being taken in this area? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

25. Is there anything else you would like to say about making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations stronger? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

Priority Action 3

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 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 building 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 (only answer the questions that you want to):

26. How important is it for mainstream services to improve their services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important

27. What are some things that would stop you from using a mainstream service? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

28. What are some of the things that mainstream services and governments can do to work better with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

29. How can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be involved in the development, design, and implementation of mainstream services? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

30. Do you agree that action in this area should be measured and made public?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

31. What do you think we should measure which would show action is being taken in this area? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

32. Is there anything else you would like to say about how mainstream services can be improved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

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 new draft [Closing the Gap targets for further consultation](#) (this will open a new window).

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.

Questions (only answer the questions that you want to):

33. Do you support the refreshed targets already agreed to in draft form by COAG?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

34. Who should be responsible for Closing the Gap targets?

- All governments should be responsible
- Just the Commonwealth government should be responsible
- Just the State and Territory governments should be responsible
- The Commonwealth government should be responsible for some targets and State/Territory governments should be responsible for others

35. Are there any draft targets you really support? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

36. Are there any draft targets you really do not agree with? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

37. Are there any other targets you think should be included? If yes, can you tell us about those targets and why they should be included? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

38. Is there something that you would like to add about the Closing the Gap targets? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)

What happens next

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey on closing the gap. Your views are very important.

If there is anything else you would like to say or send to us, you can email coalitionofpeaks@naccho.org.au.

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.

39. Is there anything more you want to add that needs to be considered in the finalisation of the new National Agreement on closing the gap? (Say as much as you like, there is no word limit)