

2025

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

Annual Impact Statement 2024/25 for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028

**Presented by
Suzanne Orr MLA
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
June 2025**

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ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028

ACT Annual Impact
Statement 2024-25



ACT
Government

Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

This report was compiled by the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA). OATSIA is a branch within the Community Services Directorate. OATSIA is a voice to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, providing advice on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. OATSIA's role is to work collaboratively across the ACT Government with directorates, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB), the ACT Reconciliation Council and the United Ngunnawal Elders Council to organise a shared approach to issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. We also share government services, programs and events with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Publication enquiries

General enquiries about this report should be directed to:
ACTAboriginalAgreement@act.gov.au

Indigenous artwork and graphic elements

Leah Brideson's artwork "**Strength in Community**" was commissioned for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and is used in this publication with the artist's consent. Ms Brideson was born in Canberra and is a descendent of the Kamilaroi people from her grandmother's country in Gunnedah, Breeza and Quirindi. More information about the Artist and Artwork is included in this report.



Acknowledgement



The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

The ACT Government acknowledges the historical dispossession and its continuing legacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and their vital ongoing contribution to the ACT community.

We acknowledge the deep significance of families' enduring connections to kin, community, culture, language and Country. We also acknowledge the cultural wisdom and strength found in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures and approaches to raising children.

We extend our gratitude to the many individuals and organisations who contributed to the development of this report. This includes government officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders who provided valuable insights, data, and support.

We sincerely thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for their participation and input. Their contributions are invaluable in ensuring the accuracy and relevance of this report.

We acknowledge and thank the artists and cultural contributors whose work is featured in this report. Their creativity and cultural expressions enrich our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

We acknowledge the support services and organisations that provide essential assistance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Their dedication and hard work are vital in improving the health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life for these communities.

Accessibility



The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues accessible to as many people as possible. If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, and need the telephone typewriter (TTY) service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for 13 22 81. For speak and listen users, please phone 1300 555 727. For more information on these services, contact us through the National Relay Service: www.accesshub.gov.au. If English is not your first language and you require a translating and interpreting service, please telephone Access Canberra on 13 22 81.



Content Warning

This report contains material that can be confronting and disturbing. Sometimes information (words and data) can cause sadness or distress, or traumatic memories for people. For some people, these responses can be overwhelming. Support is available if you need to talk to someone. The following services are available 24 hours a day:

13YARN: 13 92 76

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

Lifeline: 13 11 14

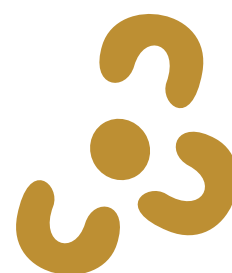
Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 46

About the Artist and Artwork



Strength in Community by Leah Brideson

Leah Brideson is a self-taught Aboriginal artist born in Canberra and is a descendent of the Kamilaroi people from her Grandmother's country in Gunnedah, Breeza and Quirindi. She is mother to two young children and also works as an Indigenous Education Officer in ACT public schools, supporting students, teachers, family and community, primarily through the arts. Her pieces are a 'visual yarn,' providing an opportunity for people to connect with the stories and meaning behind her work. A great deal of her artistic vision and inspiration comes from the changing landscapes in this region. Ms Brideson's ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement artwork is titled 'Strength in Community,' and depicts the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as represented by the two meeting places next to the centre circle and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as represented in the centre. The pathways represent journeys of growth of understanding and the strong relationship building of our families and community. The four outer circles represent the Ngunnawal, Ngarigo, Ngambri and our neighbouring countries and the knowledge they hold, share and bring to our community. The central meeting place symbolises our community working together to build strength in culture, family, identity and community. The outer design represents the local ACT landscape, the connection we have with our land, the importance of caring for country and an acknowledgement of our ancestors who continue to guide us. The painting is rich in the colours of the ACT landscape and the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.



Minister's Foreword

I am honoured to present the ACT Government's 2024 Annual Report on the Impact Statement under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028. This report encapsulates our unwavering commitment to improving the health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 is a testament to our dedication to delivering real outcomes that enhance the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This annual Impact Statement serves as a vital tool for tracking our progress, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring transparency and accountability in our efforts. This was developed in partnership with the Elected Body, who hold us to account for the implementation of the Agreement and how we support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28 aligns with and helps deliver against our commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. As such, this report marks the first time that we have more successfully aligned the key areas of both agreements so that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community can have a clearer picture on what we are doing, how we are working, and our efforts to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the ACT.

Our approach is comprehensive, covering a wide range of focus areas including Children and Young People, Cultural Integrity, Inclusive Community, Community Leadership, Connecting the Community, Life-long Learning, Economic Participation, Health and Wellbeing, Housing, and Justice. Each section of this report provides detailed insights into recent activities, action plans reporting, and data reporting, reflecting our holistic strategy to address the diverse needs of the community.

In the past year, we have made significant strides in various areas. Our initiatives for children and young people have focused on empowerment, culturally safe services, legal support, and education. We have strengthened cultural integrity through healing and reconciliation efforts, showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, and enhancing cultural competency within the ACT Government.

Our commitment to an inclusive community is evident in our efforts to increase awareness, improve accessibility, and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We have also prioritised community leadership by fostering partnerships, enhancing service delivery, and supporting cultural integration and disaster management.

Connecting the community remains a key focus, with programs like Yurwan Ghuda's 'On Country' initiative and various learning and training opportunities for ACT Government staff. In the realm of life-long learning, we have supported educational symposiums, language workshops, and student aspirations programs to ensure continuous growth and development.

Economic participation has been strengthened through employment and training programs, business support, and major infrastructure projects. Our health and wellbeing initiatives have included comprehensive health service planning, mental health support, and the establishment of specialised facilities like the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.

In housing, we have focused on public housing initiatives and cultural competency training to ensure equitable access to secure and appropriate housing. Our justice initiatives aim to reduce overrepresentation in the criminal justice system through culturally safe programs and community collaborations.

This report also highlights the implementation of the ACT Government's response to the recommendations from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) reports, showcasing our commitment to addressing systemic issues and improving outcomes for the community.

While we celebrate these achievements, we acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. The data presented in this report provides a clear picture of our progress and the challenges that remain. We are committed to using this information to refine our strategies and continue working towards our goals.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to these efforts, including our partners in the Elected Body and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, community members, and government staff. Together, we are building a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

Suzanne Orr MLA

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

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About this Report

Purpose of the Report

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–28 (the ACT Agreement) represents the commitment of the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to deliver successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. The ACT Government is dedicated to publishing an annual Impact Statement to track its performance and identify areas where more effort is needed to meet its commitments and targets under the ACT Agreement.

The Annual Impact Statement serves to ensure accountability and transparency by tracking the ACT Government's commitments and progress under the ACT Agreement. The report monitors the effectiveness of various programs and initiatives through the Outcomes Framework and Focus Area Action Plans, identifying areas needing improvement.

The data and insights provided inform policy decisions and program development, guiding resource allocation and strategic planning to better support the community. Building genuine partnership with community to ensure their voice is heard in the development and planning for future actions is imperative to success going forward.

Overall, the report is a vital tool for tracking progress, fostering accountability, and guiding future efforts to improve the health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT and region.

You can see more at: [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028](#)

Scope and Reporting Analysis

This report provides clear insights into key focus areas such as Children and Young People, Cultural Integrity, Inclusive Community, Community Leadership, Connecting the Community, Life-long Learning, Economic Participation, Health and Wellbeing, Housing, and Justice. It ensures transparency and accountability through detailed reporting on recent activities, action plans, and data analysis. Each focus area included 3 different approaches to reporting:

- 1. Recent Activities:** Showcases the latest initiatives and programs undertaken within each focus area, ensuring the report remains current and relevant.
- 2. Action Plans Reporting:** Tracks the progress of specific action plans, detailing steps taken to achieve targets set in the Outcomes Framework and informs stakeholders about ongoing efforts and their outcomes.
- 3. Data Reporting:** Based on data collected from multiple sources, including ACT Government directorates and national databases, provides a comprehensive assessment of progress, and identifying areas needing further attention.

It includes both qualitative and quantitative data to present a holistic view of the impact of various programs and policies and compares the ACT's progress with national targets and benchmarks, particularly those outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Methodology

This report's data is collected from multiple published sources and directly from ACT Government Directorates. Comparative data from the National Closing the Gap dashboard is used to assess progress.

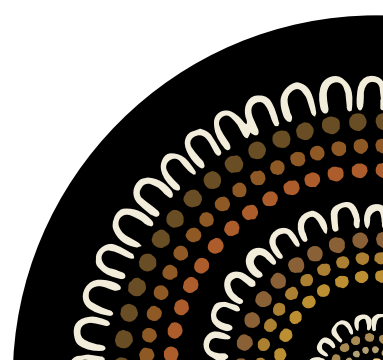
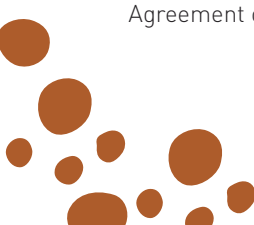
The ACT Government will publish 2024 data only after the Productivity Commission updates the Closing the Gap dashboard, expected after mid-2025. This ensures consistency with the national reporting framework for ACT measures and avoids comparing different data sets or visual trends and trajectories based on different years.

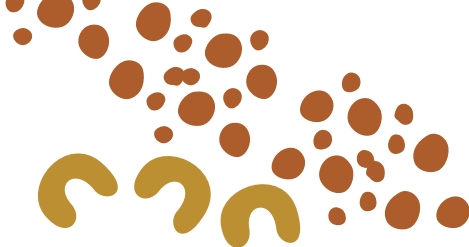
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to choose whether to disclose their cultural identity. The data presented reflects those who have chosen to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The report captures the latest available data for each indicator, which may include information from the last calendar year or financial year, depending on the target, indicator and measure.

Datasets relating to the ACT may involve small numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or records, leading to high variability. Changes for a small number of people can significantly affect the results, making data over time difficult to interpret. Rates and proportions based on small data sets can be sensitive to stability and change. Year-on-year movements in results derived from small numbers should be interpreted with caution. Apparent inconsistencies between datasets may result from updates to data sources, differences in reporting scope, or timing of data releases. These variations do not indicate contradictions in findings but reflect the evolving nature of data collection and publication across the ACT Government. Differences may also arise from changes in classification, methodology, or confidentiality requirements. Care has been taken to maintain consistency with the ACT Government's commitments to transparency, data integrity, and the responsible presentation of public data.

Rates and proportions based on small data sets can be sensitive to changes in the numerator (e.g., the number of preschool enrolments) and/or the denominator. For instance, enrolment proportions may exceed 100% if the numerator and denominator come from different sources. Changes in results from year to year, based on small sample sizes, should be viewed carefully.

In some data tables, the abbreviation "n.p." has been used to indicate that no data was published or is not publicly available for the specified year. This may be due to data suppression, privacy concerns related to small numbers, or the unavailability of updated data at the time of publication. Importantly, "n.p." does not imply zero or missing performance but reflects limitations in public reporting or national data availability.





Interpreting the data

Interpreting the data presented in this Impact Statement involves understanding the context, significance, and implications of the information provided. All data reported in this statement pertains to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Comparative data for non-Indigenous populations is included to assess progress towards achieving parity and closing the gap if relevant to the target. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to choose whether to disclose their cultural identity. The data presented reflects those who have chosen to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

When interpreting the data, it is important to look for overall trends rather than focusing on year-to-year fluctuations. While there may be short-term increases or decreases, the long-term trend provides a clearer picture of progress or areas needing improvement. Comparing the data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with non-Indigenous data helps to understand disparities and progress towards closing the gap. This comparative analysis helps identify areas where targeted interventions may be needed.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the data are essential to track progress and make necessary adjustments. This ensures that the initiatives remain effective and responsive to the community's needs. By considering these points, you can gain a comprehensive understanding of the data presented in this Impact Statement and its implications for the wellbeing, and overall progress of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Reporting on raw numbers without considering population context can be misleading—particularly in a small jurisdiction like the ACT. As the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population grows, raw numbers may naturally increase, even if the actual rates or proportions remain stable or improve. This can give the false impression that outcomes are worsening when they may not be.

For this reason, indicators and measures based on raw numbers should be interpreted with caution. However, raw data remains highly valuable. It provides a clear picture of the scale of service use, demand, and community reach. Raw numbers help inform planning, resource allocation, and program design, and offer a tangible sense of how many individuals are affected. When used alongside rates, percentages, and trends, raw data contributes to a more complete and meaningful understanding of progress.



Executive Summary

This Executive Summary provides a high-level overview of the ACT Government's progress under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028, highlighting key achievements and challenges from the 2024–25 reporting period. It reflects the Government's commitment to improving the health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT, while ensuring transparency and accountability in delivering on its commitments.

Over the past year, significant progress has been made across a range of focus areas. Initiatives to empower and support children and young people have continued to strengthen, with a consistently high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in preschool in the year before full-time schooling. The number of children and young people in out-of-home care has also continued to decline, suggesting improvements in family preservation and support systems. In the area of lifelong learning, the number of young people completing Year 12 or an equivalent qualification has shown a positive upward trend, reflecting strong engagement in education.

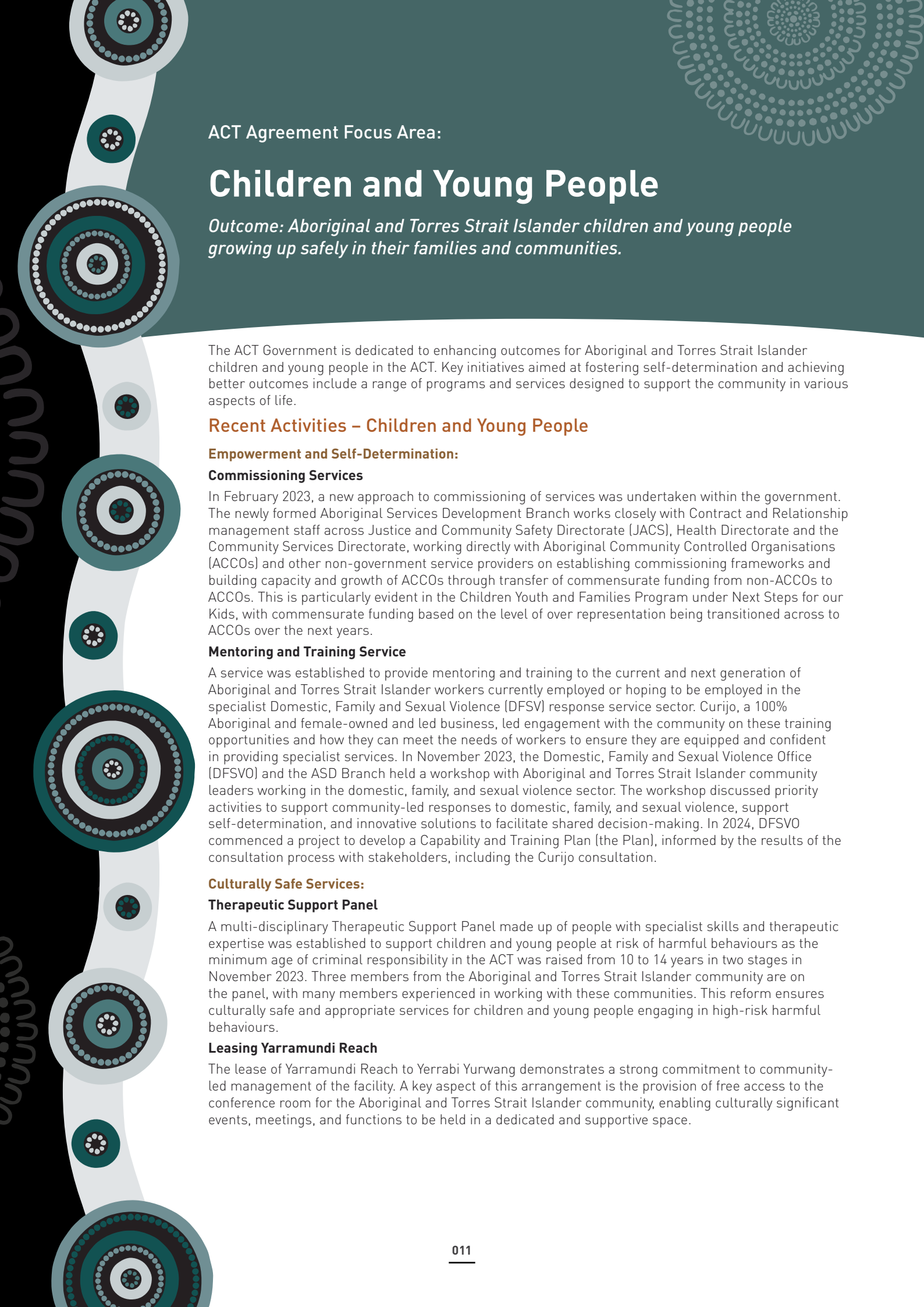
Economic participation has been bolstered through employment and training programs, business support, and inclusive procurement policies. Notably, there has been a growing percentage of Addressable Spend directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises, alongside a steady increase in the number of unique businesses engaged. In the justice system, the adult imprisonment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has decreased from 1,924.3 per 100,000 in 2017–18 to 1,593.2 in 2022–23. While this indicates progress, the rate of decline must accelerate to achieve parity by 2031.

The report also details efforts to connect the community through youth engagement programs, cultural immersion experiences, and improvements to community facilities. Cultural integrity has been promoted through healing and reconciliation initiatives, cultural competency training, and the showcasing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and languages. Community leadership has been enhanced through strengthened partnerships, increased representation, and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations. Health and wellbeing initiatives have focused on community engagement, specialised health services, and mental health and suicide prevention programs. Housing efforts have included the development of culturally appropriate engagement approaches and cultural competency training for housing sector staff. Justice initiatives have aimed to provide culturally safe programs and services, reduce overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and support youth justice.

While these achievements are encouraging, the report also acknowledges several areas of concern that require urgent and sustained attention. The proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census remains below target, and the number of people requiring crisis support due to domestic and family violence remains high. In health, the proportion of babies born with a healthy birthweight has not improved at the necessary rate, and the number of overnight bed days for mental health patients remains elevated. These trends suggest that achieving the targets set out in the Agreement and the National Closing the Gap framework—many of which are due by 2031—will be difficult without significant intervention. In the justice system, the number of young people in detention has fluctuated, with recent increases undermining earlier progress and highlighting the need for more consistent and effective diversion strategies.

This Impact Statement provides a clear and honest picture of where progress is being made and where further work is needed. As we move into the next phase of the Agreement, the ACT Government remains committed to working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to accelerate progress, address systemic barriers, and uphold the principles of equity, cultural integrity, and self-determination.





ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Children and Young People

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people growing up safely in their families and communities.

The ACT Government is dedicated to enhancing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the ACT. Key initiatives aimed at fostering self-determination and achieving better outcomes include a range of programs and services designed to support the community in various aspects of life.

Recent Activities – Children and Young People

Empowerment and Self-Determination:

Commissioning Services

In February 2023, a new approach to commissioning of services was undertaken within the government. The newly formed Aboriginal Services Development Branch works closely with Contract and Relationship management staff across Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS), Health Directorate and the Community Services Directorate, working directly with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other non-government service providers on establishing commissioning frameworks and building capacity and growth of ACCOs through transfer of commensurate funding from non-ACCOs to ACCOs. This is particularly evident in the Children Youth and Families Program under Next Steps for our Kids, with commensurate funding based on the level of over representation being transitioned across to ACCOs over the next years.

Mentoring and Training Service

A service was established to provide mentoring and training to the current and next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers currently employed or hoping to be employed in the specialist Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSVO) response service sector. Curijo, a 100% Aboriginal and female-owned and led business, led engagement with the community on these training opportunities and how they can meet the needs of workers to ensure they are equipped and confident in providing specialist services. In November 2023, the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office (DFSVO) and the ASD Branch held a workshop with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders working in the domestic, family, and sexual violence sector. The workshop discussed priority activities to support community-led responses to domestic, family, and sexual violence, support self-determination, and innovative solutions to facilitate shared decision-making. In 2024, DFSVO commenced a project to develop a Capability and Training Plan (the Plan), informed by the results of the consultation process with stakeholders, including the Curijo consultation.

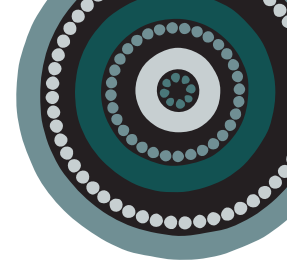
Culturally Safe Services:

Therapeutic Support Panel

A multi-disciplinary Therapeutic Support Panel made up of people with specialist skills and therapeutic expertise was established to support children and young people at risk of harmful behaviours as the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the ACT was raised from 10 to 14 years in two stages in November 2023. Three members from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are on the panel, with many members experienced in working with these communities. This reform ensures culturally safe and appropriate services for children and young people engaging in high-risk harmful behaviours.

Leasing Yarramundi Reach

The lease of Yarramundi Reach to Yerrabi Yurwang demonstrates a strong commitment to community-led management of the facility. A key aspect of this arrangement is the provision of free access to the conference room for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, enabling culturally significant events, meetings, and functions to be held in a dedicated and supportive space.



Legislative Reform of the Children and Young People Act 2008 (CYP Act)

A 6-week consultation in October and November 2023 on proposed Stage 2 changes to the CYP Act included workshops with key stakeholders, such as the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee, ACCOs and representatives from the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). Other key stakeholders included the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Advocate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Ministerial Advisory Committee, including those with lived or living experience of the child protection system, and the Aboriginal Co-design network. Significant feedback was received, with a listening report released in March 2024. There was overall support for the changes, with calls for more detail and consultation.

Legal Support:

Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service

In response to the 'Our Booris, Our Way' report, \$743,000 was allocated over two years to establish this service through the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT. Launched in April 2023, it provides legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved with the ACT's child protection system, with two designated lawyers assisting children, parents, and family members.

Reduced Out-of-Home Care:

Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (OBOWIOC)

The Community Services Directorate worked closely with OBOWIOC to work to implement the 28 recommendations and 8 sub-recommendations from the Our Booris, Our Way Final Report. From July to December 2023, they met monthly to discuss quarterly reports on three themes:

- > Reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care
- > Improving their experience in care
- > Strengthening restoration, oversight, and legislation

Identification of 12 high focus recommendations have been agreed as the basis for deep dive discussions and agreement on any further work required. As of June 30, 2024:

- > 12 recommendations have entered the Monitoring phase
- > 12 recommendations are classified as Medium Focus, with the directorate continuing to report on their implementation progress
- > 12 recommendations are designated as High Focus,

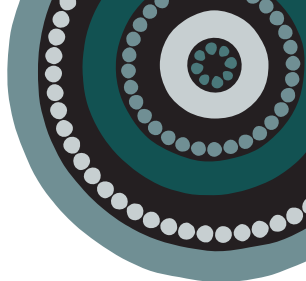
with the directorate working closely with the Committee through deep dive meetings to address key issues and progress the recommendation to the Monitoring phase.

Support for Families and Children Affected by Violence:

Funding Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations

Five ACCOs have been funded to provide a range of services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people impacted by Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence (DFSV):

- > **Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation:** Total funding of \$530,000 (July 2023 - January 2026) to deliver the Nara-Gana-Wali Strengthening Families Program, a community-led Aboriginal initiative to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly women and children affected by DFSV, with legal, advocacy, practical, and healing activities, and intensive case management.
- > **Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation:** Total funding of \$1,016,448 (April 2023 - December 2024 and December 2024 - June 2026) to deliver advocacy and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in the ACT.
- > **Yhurwun Bullan (formerly Clybucca Dreaming):** Total funding of \$1,336,207 (May 2023 - July 2024 and July 2024 - June 2026) to deliver a Women's Outreach program to provide wraparound support and case coordination for women with experiences of DFSV.
- > **WhISPers:** Total funding of \$181,000 (April 2023 - June 2025 and January 2025 - June 2026) to deliver Community Healing Our Way, improving access to services and safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.
- > **Yeddung Mura:** Total funding of \$1,913,557 which includes, \$952,932 (April 2023 - September 2025 and October - June 2026) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families affected by DFSV, with activities including interventions for victims and for people who use violence, a trauma-informed community education program, and family-centred healing camps and yarning circles. Also \$960,625 (March 2025 - June 2027) - funded through the National Partnership on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV National Partnership). This supports The Caring Dads program which is a 17-week evidence-based behaviour-change program that helps fathers who have used violence to improve relationships with their children and change their behaviour. The program will be adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers in partnership with Kids First Australia.



Youth Engagement:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner

Under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner Act 2022, the Commissioner is tasked with advocating for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, identifying and examining issues affecting their human rights and wellbeing, and making recommendations to government and non-government agencies on legislation, policies, practices, and services. In March 2024, Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts was appointed as the inaugural Commissioner. She is a Bundjalung Widubul-Wiabul woman, human rights advocate, lawyer, and Fulbright Scholar with lived experience of the child protection system. During the reporting period, the Commissioner focused on:

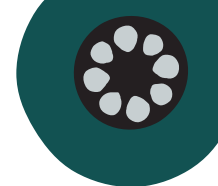
- > Establishing the office and developing strategic priorities
- > Holding a youth forum on March 6, 2024, attended by 88 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from public and private schools (years 7-10) to discuss various issues
- > Providing individual advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people involved in child protection and youth justice matters

Education and Cultural Connection:

Koori Pre-School Charter Service

In 2023, Transport Canberra launched the Koori Pre-School Charter Service to provide transport for school excursions, ensuring children and the community stay connected to the land. During 2024, 48 charters were provided. Transport Canberra, the Education Directorate and the Koori Preschool program agreed to continue the program in 2025.

These initiatives reflect the ACT Government's commitment to fostering self-determination and improving the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families in the ACT. Through targeted programs, legislative reforms, and community engagement, the government aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region.



Action Plans Reporting – Children and Young People

Action	Progress status update
A review of the Mandatory Reporting project needs to be undertaken to ensure alignment with CHS and EDU projects on mandatory reporting and policy changes.	Completed The Mandatory Reporting project has been incorporated into the Children, Youth and Families reform program. In addition, CSD has worked with Education and Canberra Health Services to update policy and practice as part of the implementation of the Children and Young People Amendment Act 2023. This matter can be closed.
Develop a cross-sector approach to effective transitions for children moving from early childhood education and care into school, based on strong collaborative relationships, best practice, and a formal process for sharing information about children's learning and development across both settings.	Completed A suite of resources is being developed that is designed to support a consistent, ACT-wide approach to effective transitions between early childhood settings across the ACT. The new resources have been published and will build on the existing Continuity and Transitioning Framework and Statement which supports children transitioning from ECEC services to four-year-old preschool. the resources can be accessed here: https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/set-up-for-success-an-early-childhood-strategy-for-the-act/effective-transitions . Currently, children's transitions into four-year-old preschool are supported by the revised and expanded Continuity and Transitioning Framework and Statement and the Preschool Pathways Program developed under Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT. Through the ACT three-year-old targeted initiative (Set up for Success), early childhood education and care providers are required to ensure that effective and collaborative transitions are in place for vulnerable children as they move between settings. Sharing information about each child's knowledge, skills, learning, strengths and interests to support educators in a new setting or group helps to ensure that children are secure, confident and connected. The introduction of the Education (Early Childhood) Legislation Amendment Bill in October 2023, formally recognised the importance of quality early childhood education, strengthened principles for collaboration and cooperation to encourage information sharing, and, clarified equity-based programs in ACT law.
Implement actions from the Koori Preschool co-design process including the Koori Pre-Cultural Safety Framework and Koori Pre-Curriculum and associated professional learning for school staff.	On track The professional learning package on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood education practices, for staff, educators and educational leaders working in early childhood education and care services is expected to be launched in early 2025. The Education Directorate has worked with Koori Pre staff to review current transition processes to align with the Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework and Koori Pre Curriculum. Koori Pre staff reflected on transition documents capturing individual strengths, expectations and aspirations of families and children throughout their experiences at Koori Pre. The Education Directorate has enhanced professional learning opportunities for Koori Pre staff to support the implementation of Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework and Koori Pre Curriculum. These opportunities included implementation of cross-collaborations across Koori Pre teams, facilitating a gathering at the National Gallery of Australia to participate in the art through culture program, and promoting other relevant professional learning events.



Work to build supports around children and their families accessing the three-year-old initiative, including investigating the feasibility of developmental checks to make sure children have the best possible start to their education, including speech and hearing, and undertake further screening prior to them starting school, as well as linking their parents and families with a range of other supports.	On track CSD, CHS, Health and Education are collaborating on the development and proposed implementation of a pilot 3 year old check that aligns with already existing services. It is expected the pilot will be delivered in 2025. Consultation on the preferred pilot model/s is required before implementation, especially with the Aboriginal community.
Undertake service and system reform to support the implementation of raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility and the development of a throughcare program for Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.	On track The ACT is the first jurisdiction to raise the minimum age to 14 years (from July 2025). Children will receive support facilitated and overseen by the Therapeutic Support Panel (the panel), an independent group with expertise to guide an alternate service response to the youth justice system. The panel was established in March 2024, following an open selection process. A pilot Safer Youth Response Service was established in December 2023, to work with young people in contact with ACT Policing. Progress has been made in developing a Youth Justice Throughcare model for the ACT. The 2023-24 ACT Budget provided \$200,000 to co-design and develop a youth justice throughcare model and independent consultants were engaged to support an intensive co-design project to design a draft youth justice throughcare model for government consideration.
Modernise the Children and Young People Act 2008 including embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle into the Act based on extensive consultation with community to ensure child protection services are contemporary and achieve good outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children.	On track The ACT Government is committed to modernising the CYP Act in stages to enhance child protection, bolster family support in the ACT, improve outcomes for children, young people, and their families. The first stage of reforms was enacted through the Children and Young People Amendment Act 2023, passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 2 November 2023 and commenced on 1 July 2024. This stage embedded the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, reflecting the Government's commitment to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child and youth protection system and support the delivery of Our Booris, Our Way recommendations.
Establish and implement the new position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner.	Completed The Commissioner, Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts has been appointed and the office established.
Develop a Child and Family Network across Government and community service partners to improve connection and service integration across health, mental health, education, early childhood education and care, community and mainstream health and paediatric services, and community service sectors to better support children, young people, and their families.	On track During the term of the 10th Legislative Assembly, significant work was undertaken to develop the Child and Family Network, including working with Child and Family Centres, the Child Development Service, the Education Directorate and Canberra Health Services to map initiatives and identify gaps and opportunities to provide integrated, culturally competent and holistic support services. The Government has confirmed its commitment to the Child and Family Network during the 11th Assembly. CSD will work with the incoming government to provide an update on work undertaken to date and determine how it would like to finalise this initiative.
Continue to implement the ACT Government's 10-year plan for early childhood education, Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT, and ensure access to two days per week, 48 weeks per year, of quality education and care for up to 500 three-year-olds, prioritising children, and families most in need.	Completed Since January 2020, over 1200 children have been referred into the 3 year-old initiative, accessing places offered through 19 providers representing 56 ECEC services as at November 2024. As at Quarter 4 reporting for the free three-year-old preschool program, partnerships have been established with 80 providers representing 141 ECEC services. For Quarter 4, 3,188 children were enrolled in the program with 54 children (1.7%) reported as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, compared with 12% of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in the targeted 3-year-old initiative.



Work with CSD, CHS and Education to ensure the information from the Kindy Health Check is informing policy and operational responses to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children meet developmental goals	Ongoing/BAU This work is now embedded in the Kindergarten Health Check process as business-as-usual, with ACT Health supplying data, CHS delivering the service, the Education Directorate supporting access for children and families, and CSD overseeing wellbeing where needed.
Work with Department of Education (Australian Government), ACT Education Directorate, Catholic and Independent school sectors to ensure the AEDC 2024 collection has access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Consultants in the ACT to support teachers when completing the census for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.	Completed In Term 1, 2024 ACT AEDC Teacher workshops were offered to all 3 school sectors in the ACT to share information about the upcoming AEDC 2024 collection, understanding unconscious bias and utilising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Consultants to support teachers when completing the census for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children. The workshops were developed in a collaborative partnership with ACT Education Directorate, with the bias modules developed with NSW and QLD AEDC coordinators. The 2024 AEDC collection was open from May-July 2024 and principals can now access their school cohort data to support their school planning. The 2024 AEDC results will be publicly available nationally in March-April 2025.
Continue to support the Our Booris, Our Way review of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the ACT child protection system, and implement initiatives that address the Our Booris, Our Way review recommendations.	On track The directorate has continued to work closely with the independent, self-determined Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (OBOWIOC) to progress the implementation of the 28 recommendations and 8 sub-recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way Final report. From July to December 2023 the directorate and OBOWIOC continued meeting monthly and discussing quarterly reports delivered according to the three agreed themes: reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering out of home care, improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's experience in out of home care and strengthening restoration, oversight and legislation. As a greater concentration of recommendations began moving to the monitoring phase the OBOWIOC and the directorate agreed to a new approach to monitoring and reporting on recommendations. Starting in January 2024, the directorate and the OBOWIOC have adjusted their approach to concentrate on the 12 recommendations identified as High Focus. Bi-monthly deep dive meetings were held to assess progress on these recommendations and agree on what is required for each recommendation to transition into the monitoring phase. On the alternate months the directorate has joined OBOWIOC meetings to discuss key agenda items related to the recommendations. As of June 30, 2024: > 12 recommendations have entered the Monitoring phase > 12 recommendations are classified as Medium Focus, with the directorate continuing to report on their implementation progress > 12 recommendations are designated as High Focus, with the directorate working closely with the Committee through deep dive meetings to address key issues and progress the recommendation to the Monitoring phase. Key achievements for 2023-24 were shared in the last update and include the commencement of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner; continued work on modernising the Children and Young People Act 2008; Aboriginal-led teams continuing to provide culturally safe and informed support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families; supporting a sustainable ACCO sector to enable the transition of case management responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to one or more registered ACCOs; the directorate's continued work with the committee on broad ranging changes to the child and youth protection system including to policy, practice, training and staffing; ongoing investment in the Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service.
Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Legal Advocacy Service	Completed The Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service (CPLAS), delivered by the Aboriginal Legal Service, received budget funding in the 2022-23 Budget and commenced operation in April 2023.



Children and Young People

Target 1: Maintain parity between the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children enrolled in year before full-time schooling (YBFS) early childhood education.

On track



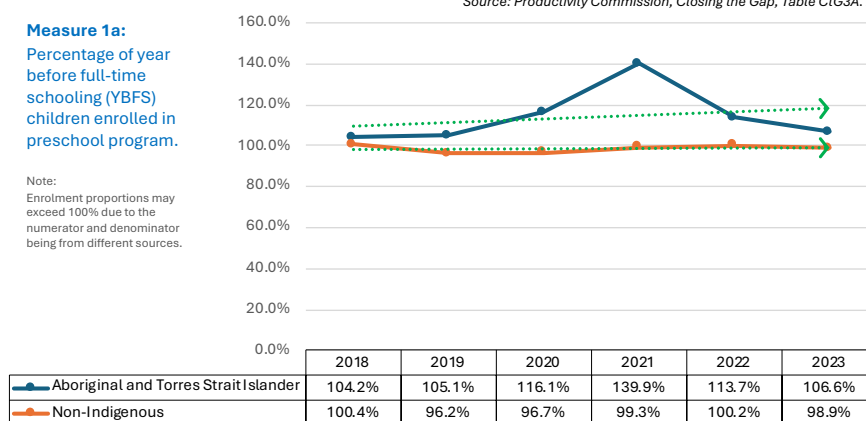
Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and data, it appears unlikely that the target of increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five AEDC domains to 55% by 2031 will be achieved without significant and effective interventions.

Indicator 1: Continued high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in preschool in the year before full-time schooling (YBFS).

Measure 1a:
Percentage of year before full-time schooling (YBFS) children enrolled in preschool program.

Note:
Enrolment proportions may exceed 100% due to the numerator and denominator being from different sources.

Source: Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap, Table CtG3A.1



Key Trends and Observations:

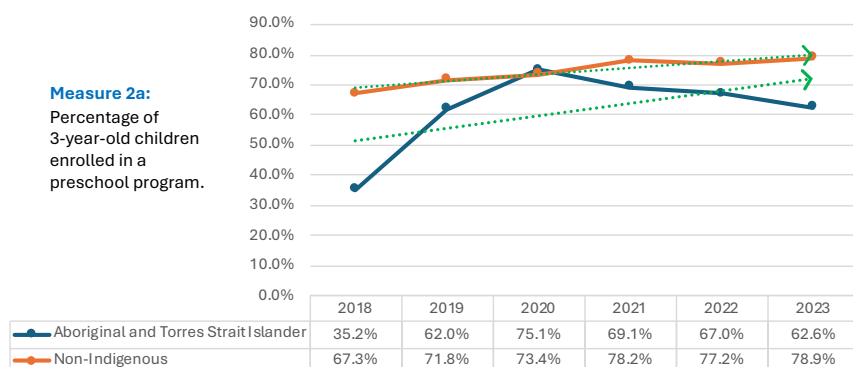
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment:
 - Enrolment rates have consistently risen since 2018, peaking at 139.9% in 2021 before declining to 106.6% in 2023.
 - Despite the decline from the 2021 peak, the 2023 figure remains extremely high, indicating strong participation in preschool programs.
- > Non-Indigenous Enrolment:
 - Enrolment rates have remained extremely high over the years, fluctuating between 96.2% in 2019 and 100.4% in 2018.
 - Unlike the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort, non-Indigenous enrolment has shown greater stability, with minimal variation over the years.
 - The 2023 figure of 98.9% suggests a slight decline from the previous year but remains close to full enrolment.

Key Takeaways:

- > Non-Indigenous enrolment has remained stable, with only slight variations year to year, suggesting consistent participation in preschool programs.
- > Overall both trajectories suggest the ACT has made strong progress toward achieving the target of parity. While the most recent data shows a small decline, participation levels remain high, reflecting continued success in supporting early childhood enrolment.

Indicator 2: Increasing proportion of 3-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program.

Chart 2
Source: ACT Government, Education Directorate



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment:
 - Enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 3-year-old children in preschool programs increased sharply from 35.2% in 2018 to 75.1% in 2020.
 - After peaking at 75.1% in 2020, enrolment declined to 69.1% in 2021, 67.0% in 2022, and further to 62.6% in 2023.
- > Non-Indigenous enrolment:
 - Enrolment increased from 67.3% in 2018 to 78.9% in 2023, indicating steady participation in early childhood education.
 - While there were slight dips in 2021 (78.2%) and 2022 (77.2%), these changes were minimal, and the trend remained upward over time.
 - However, the gap widened again in 2023 (16.3 percentage points).

Key Takeaways:

- > While there was a major improvement between 2018 and 2020 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment, the decline afterward suggests that more consistent efforts are needed to maintain participation rates.
- > Non-Indigenous enrolment is stable and high.
- > Parity was briefly achieved in 2020. Since 2021 the gap widened again. Overall both trajectories suggest the ACT has progressed positively toward achieving the target of parity, however, recent years trend suggests this may be in jeopardy of being sustained.



Target 2: By 2031, 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 (AEDC) to 55%.

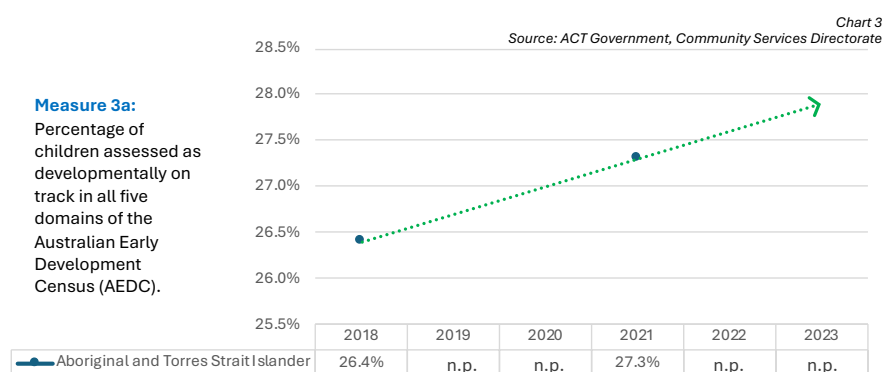
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and data, it appears unlikely that the target of increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five AEDC domains to 55% by 2031 will be achieved without significant and effective interventions.

Indicator 3: Increasing proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55%.

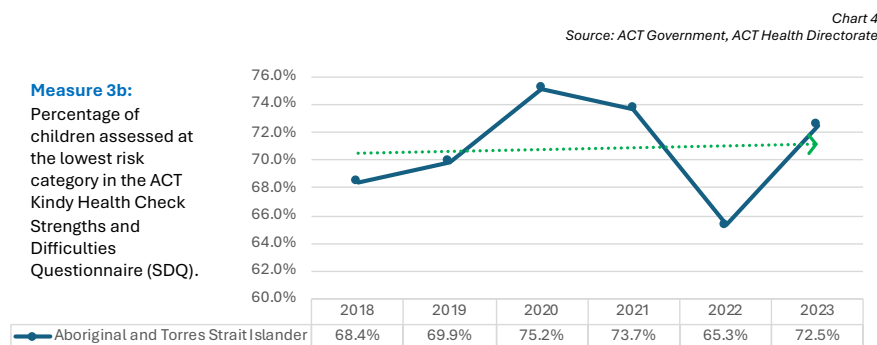


Key Trends and Observations:

- > The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) has increased from 26.4% in 2018 to 27.3% in 2021, with a projected increase continuing into 2023.
- > Data is available every 3 years.

Key Takeaways:

- > The data suggests that policies and initiatives aimed at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's development may be having a positive impact, with more children meeting developmental milestones.
- > If the current trajectory continues, it suggests that by 2031, the number is not on track reach the target of 55%. Instead, it is projected to reach 30.53%. To stay on track, the rate of increase must accelerate. However, this data should be interpreted with caution, as there have only been two reporting periods.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Starting at 68.4% in 2018, the percentage increased to 69.9% in 2019 and peaked at 75.2% in 2020.
- > A slight decline occurred in 2021 (73.7%) before a sharp drop to 65.3% in 2022, the lowest point in the observed period.
- > In 2023, the percentage rebounded to 72.5%, aligning closely with the earlier trend.



Key Takeaways:

- > The data reflects volatility, particularly with the sharp decline in 2022, suggesting potential external influences such as changes in healthcare access, educational environments, or broader social determinants of health.
- > The rebound in 2023 to 72.5% indicates a positive recovery, suggesting resilience or improvements in early childhood interventions or support systems.
- > Despite short-term variations, the overall trend remains relatively stable, underscoring the need for sustained efforts to support the wellbeing of children in this demographic.



Target 3: By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care by 45%.

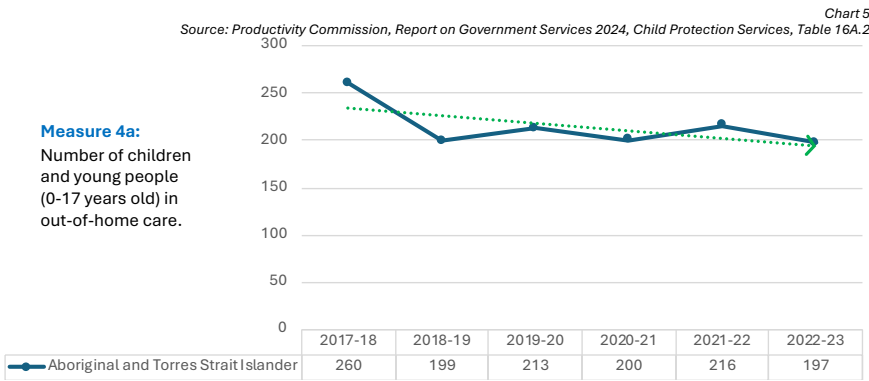
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

On track



Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and data, it appears that achieving the target of reducing the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031 is challenging but not impossible.

Indicator 4: Decreasing number of children and young people in out-of-home care.



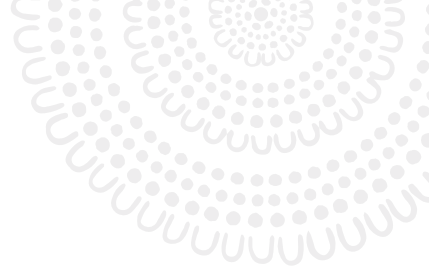
Key Trends and Observations:

- > The number of children in out-of-home care has decreased from 260 in 2017–18 to 197 in 2022–23. This suggests efforts to reduce reliance on out-of-home care placements, possibly through early intervention, family support services, or reunification programs.
- > A sharp decline occurred between 2017–18 (260) and 2018–19 (199).

Key Takeaways:

- > The overall downward trend is a positive indicator of potential improvements in family preservation and support systems within the ACT.
- > If the current trajectory continues, it suggests that by 2031, the number may not reach the target of 143. To stay on track, the rate of decline must continue to increase.



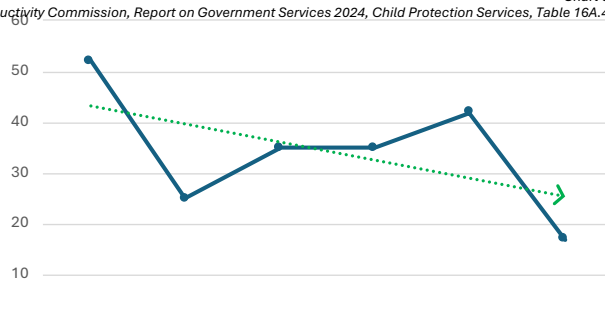


Indicator 5: Decreasing number of children and young people entering out-of-home care.

Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Child Protection Services, Table 16A.4

Chart 6

Measure 5a:
Number of children and young people (0-17 years old) admitted to out-of-home care.



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	52	25	35	35	42	17

Key Trends and Observations:

- > The number of children entering out-of-home care has decreased from 52 in 2017-18 to 17 in 2022-23. This suggests efforts to prevent child removals, likely through early intervention, family support services, or unification programs.
- > A significant drop occurred between 2017-18 (52) and 2018-19 (25).
- > The numbers then fluctuated, rising to 35 in both 2019-20 and 2020-21, followed by an increase to 42 in 2021-22.
- > A sharp decline to 17 in 2022-23 indicates a major reduction in new out-of-home care placements.

Key Takeaways:

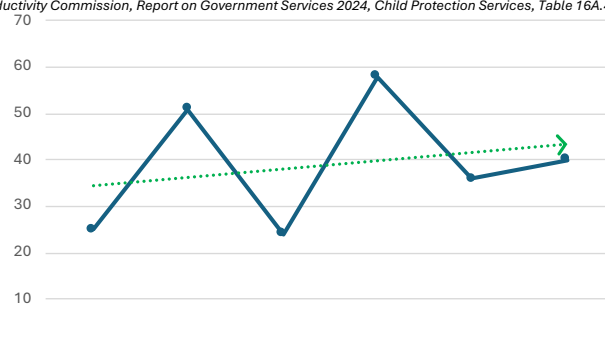
- > The long-term downward trend reflects progress in family preservation and early intervention initiatives.
- > The sharp drop in 2022-23 signifies successful prevention strategies.

Indicator 6: Increasing the number of children and young people exiting out-of-home care.

Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Child Protection Services, Table 16A.4

Chart 7

Measure 6a:
Number of children and young people (0-17 years old) discharged from out-of-home care.



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	25	51	24	58	36	40

Key Trends and Observations:

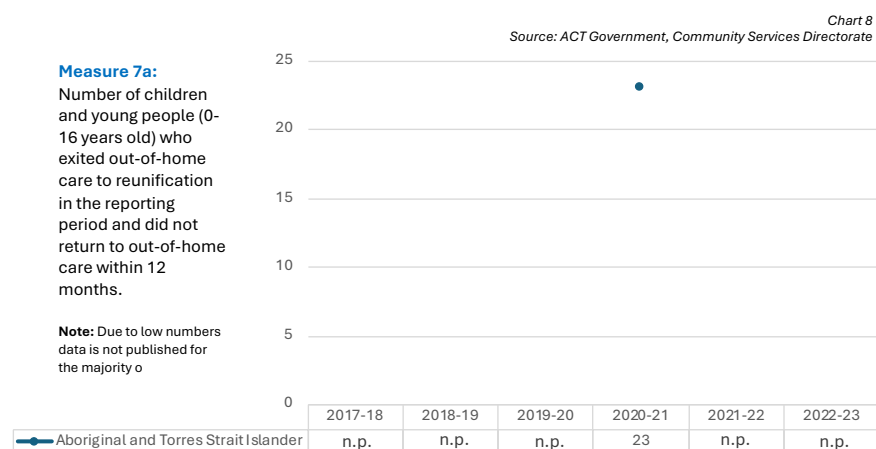
- > The number of children and young people exiting out-of-home care has shown significant fluctuations over the six year period.
- > The exits increased sharply from 25 in 2017-18 to 51 in 2018-19, followed by a drop back to 24 in 2019-20.
- > The highest number of exits was recorded in 2020-21, with 58 children leaving care.
- > A decline occurred in 2021-22 (36 exits), but there was a slight increase to 40 in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

- > Despite year-to-year variability, the overall trendline suggests a gradual upward movement, indicating an increase in successful exits over time.

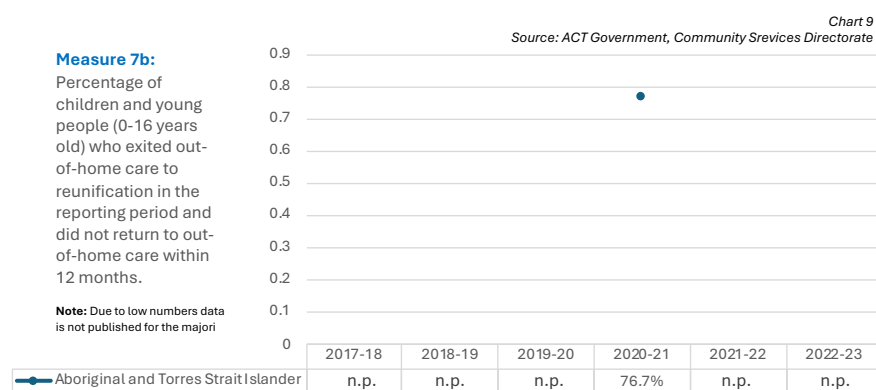


Indicator 7: Increasing number / percentage of children and young people supported to stay within or return to their family and kin environment.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Data for all years except for 2020-21 has been suppressed due to small numbers and confidentiality in a national context.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Data for all years except for 2020-21 has been suppressed due to small numbers and confidentiality in a national context.

Measure 7c and 7d: Number and percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (0-17 years old) who were not in long-term guardianship or custody order and were reunified in the reporting period.

- > Data for 2017-18 through to 2022-23 is not published and is suppressed for confidentiality reasons in national context.



Target 4: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

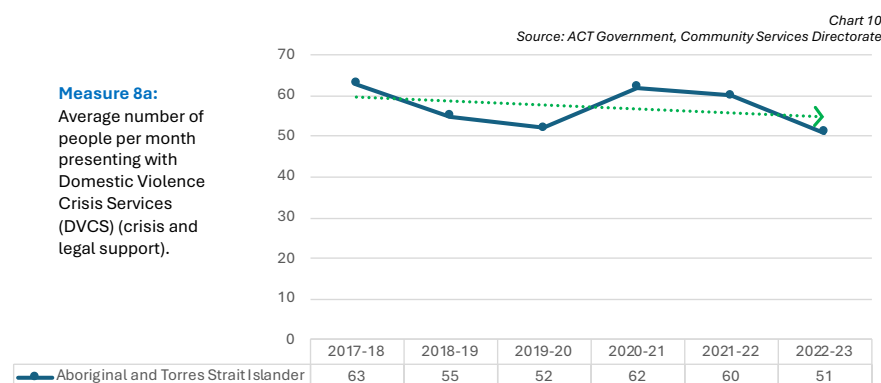
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Given the current trends and fluctuations, the trajectory indicates that achieving the target of a 50% reduction in family violence and abuse by 2031 is unlikely without significant and sustained interventions.

Indicator 8: Decrease in people needing crisis support in relation to domestic and family violence.



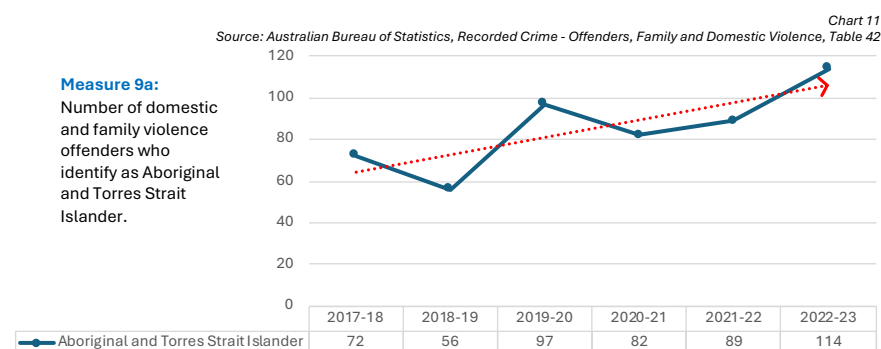
Key Trends and Observations:

- > The data starts in 2017-18 with 63 people per month and shows a general declining trend, reaching 51 people per month in 2022-23.
- > The lowest point recorded was in 2019-20 (52 people), followed by a temporary increase in 2020-21 (62 people), before continuing the downward trend.

Key Takeaways:

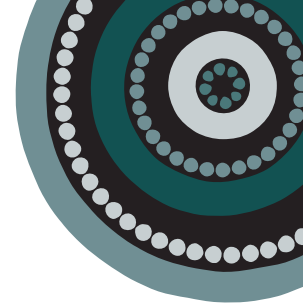
- > Increase in 2020-21 could be related to external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have influenced domestic violence rates and service accessibility.
- > Despite some fluctuations, the overall trend suggests a slight decline in the number of people accessing crisis and legal support services.

Indicator 9: Decreasing number of domestic and family violence offenders who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.



Key Trends and Observations:

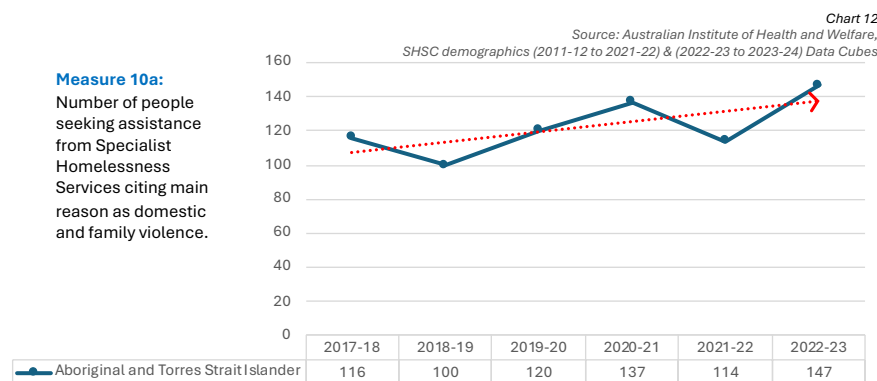
- > The number of domestic and family violence offenders identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has shown fluctuations over the years but shows an overall increasing trend.
- > In 2017-18, the number of offenders was 72, which decreased to 56 in 2018-19 before significantly increasing to 97 in 2019-20.
- > A slight decline followed in 2020-21, bringing the number down to 82, but the upward trend resumed in 2021-22 (89) and peaked at 114 in 2022-23.



Key Takeaways:

- > The red trend line indicates a steady upward trajectory, suggesting a long-term rise despite short-term variations.
- > If the current trend continues, the 50% reduction target by 2031 will not be reached—instead, family violence-related incidents may continue to rise.

Indicator 10: Decreasing number of people experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic and family violence.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services due to domestic and family violence has fluctuated over the years but shows an overall increasing trend.
- > In 2017-18, the number was 116, which decreased to 100 in 2018-19.
- > A steady increase followed, reaching 120 in 2019-20 and 137 in 2020-21, before dropping to 114 in 2021-22.
- > The highest recorded number was in 2022-23, with 147 individuals seeking assistance.
- > The red trend line suggests an overall upward trajectory despite year-to-year variations.

Key Takeaways:

- > The long-term rise in the number of people seeking assistance highlights the ongoing impact of domestic and family violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- > The drop in 2021-22 followed by a sharp rise in 2022-23 suggests potential external factors such as economic conditions, or the aftermath of COVID-19.
- > At the current rate, the target will not be met—instead, family violence-related support needs may continue increasing.





ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Cultural Integrity

Outcome: A society that supports the aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contributes to the building of respectful, fair and sustainable communities

The ACT Government is committed to fostering cultural integrity and supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through a range of initiatives and programs, the government aims to build respectful, fair, and sustainable communities. These efforts focus on healing and reconciliation, empowerment and self-determination, cultural competency and safety within the ACT Government for employees, showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists, and community engagement and reconciliation.

This commitment is consistent with the ACT Government's commitments under the Transformation Elements under Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which includes:

- > **Identify and eliminate racism** – Identify and call out institutional racism, discrimination and unconscious bias in order to address these experiences. Undertake system-focused efforts to address disproportionate outcomes and overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by addressing features of systems that cultivate institutionalised racism.
- > **Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety** – Embed high-quality, meaningful approaches to promoting cultural safety, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's strength in their identity as a critical protective factor. This applies to all levels of staff within government organisations. Feedback from the engagements included making cultural awareness training courses ongoing for all boards and staff. Another strategy could be to strengthen the role of internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander units in promoting and monitoring cultural safety.
- > **Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures** – Ensure government organisations identify their history with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and facilitate truth-telling to enable reconciliation and active, ongoing healing.

Recent Activities – Cultural Integrity

Healing and Reconciliation:

Healing is essential to address the structural disadvantage, racism, and poverty experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. The ACT Government is committed to partnering with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community for healing, truth-telling, and reconciliation. In October 2020, the ACT Government committed \$20 million over 10 years to a Healing and Reconciliation Fund to invest in community priorities.

Fund Priorities:

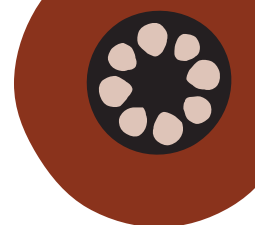
- > Developing sustainable ACCOs.
- > Progressing Voice, Treaty, and Truth through a healing and reconciliation process.

The ACT Government emphasises shared decision-making and co-design with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to determine the best way to administer the fund.

Empowerment and Self-Determination:

Coolamon Advisors Indigenous Talent Management Program

Coolamon Advisors, an Indigenous majority-owned company, offered their 'Indigenous Talent Management Program' to the ACT Government. The JACS directorate promoted and supported staff participation. The program aims to boost personal and professional career aspirations, covering personal development, leadership within the government, and cultural integrity in the workplace. It features guest speakers from senior Indigenous leadership roles in public service. JACS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff praised the program for its focus on personal and professional development, cultural confidence, and opportunities for growth. It also provides a safe environment for peer connection and post-course mentoring.



Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance

The Health Directorate partnered with Maiam nayri Wingara to manage the Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance (IDS-G) project. Key activities include:

- > Educating and building capability within the Directorate, including a 2023 training session.
- > Engaging First Nations communities in the ACT and region through workshops.
- > Developing Indigenous Data Governance policies and procedures.
- > Evaluating and monitoring systems change with IDS-G principles.

Project Outcomes:

- > Increased knowledge and understanding of IDS-G within the Directorate.
- > Establishment of an Indigenous Data Governance structure led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- > Embedding a new approach to data systems and practices through a monitoring and evaluation framework.
- > Immediate impacts include monthly data deep dives with the ATSIEB member for Health and identifying First Nations health data needs to support self-determination in health prioritisation and outcomes. The project aims for autonomous creation, collection, ownership, application, and governance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data by the Directorate.

Culturally Appropriate Memorial Parks

A portion of Gungahlin Cemetery has been set aside for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, developed in consultation with local elders. In 2023–24, representatives discussed improvements and raised awareness of interment options. Significant consultation also took place for the design of Stage 1 Southern Memorial Park.

Cultural Competency and Safety for ACT Government for Employees:

Cultural Competency Training

Under Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement, all governments committed to embed and practice meaningful cultural safety. Feedback identified in the National Agreement included making cultural awareness training courses ongoing for all boards and staff.

In August 2023, the Elected Body enquired with all directorates how they were working to embed cultural awareness training and practice meaningful cultural safety. It was noted that the newly established Cultural Transformation Branch within CMTEDD as a pivotal part of

this approach, driving ACTPS wide approaches to strengthen the cultural capability, cultural integrity and cultural safety within the ACTPS workforce.

Each directorate is required to identify and implement strategies for how they undertake cultural competence training.

As an example the Education Directorate offers Cultural competency training that includes 10 online modules from the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia and 3 face-to-face workshops. Offered to school-based and ESO staff, as well as P&C and school board members, 99 participants (69 teachers and 30 non-teaching staff) completed the training during the reporting period.

Engoori

Engoori is a strength-based training approach for addressing complex challenges and transforming school and organisational culture. In 2023–24, four schools participated in whole-school Engoori training. The Education Directorate also incorporated Engoori training into New Educator induction and offered it to various branches. Over 300 Directorate employees participated in Engoori training during this period.

Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs) and Cultural Integrity Coordinators (CICs)

IEOs and CICs assist schools in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across all learning areas. They build school staff's capability to maintain productive relationships with Indigenous students, families, and communities. In 2023–24, there were 4 CICs and 16 IEOs, with numbers fluctuating as they pursue further career opportunities within the ACT Public Service.

IEOs and CICs collaborate on events like Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day, Mabo Day, and NAIDOC. They support teachers and schools in building cultural integrity through various activities, including:

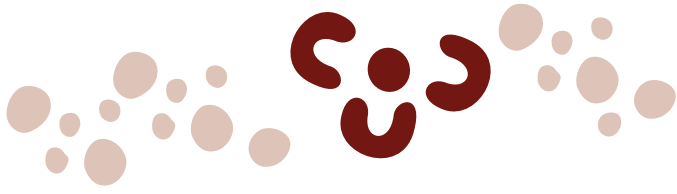
- > Establishing a garden with native edible plants for science and cooking.
- > Using yarning circles in lessons, such as discussing First Nations poetry.
- > Providing resources for a 'Connecting to Country' languages class.
- > Developing and delivering professional learning to empower and upskill IEOs and CICs.

These efforts ensure the integration of Indigenous perspectives and cultural integrity in education.

Cultural learning activities for staff

Cultural Awareness training is recommended for all CMTEDD staff and is required learning for Senior Officers A/B and Executive staff and supervisors of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff. The Cultural Awareness training





helps staff to gain an appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, customs, cultures and histories and an understanding of issues affecting them. The training also helps build engagement tools and a knowledge of how to increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The CMTEDD Cultural Learning Strategy was launched in December 2023 outlining priorities and learning pathways for all staff to continue their cultural awareness, exploration and understanding. The strategy aims to promote foundational, explorative and immersive reconciliation pathways and encourages all CMTEDD staff to understand, value, and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, history, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning. In 2023-24 CMTEDD also promoted the ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and other inclusion eLearning resources. Modules include unconscious bias awareness, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness, as well as inclusion of other diversity workforce groups.

Introducing Yarning Circles

To support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACTPS staff during times of high cultural load, the Cultural Transformation Branch organised yarning circles and 1:1 culturally safe support. During the 2023 Referendum, these circles were facilitated by an Aboriginal trauma-informed professional, providing a safe space for staff to discuss wellbeing and connect with others. Due to their success, a second series was held in early 2024, focusing on changes in the ACT government and ensuring culturally safe connections. Sessions included men's, women's, open yarning circles, and one-on-one sessions to maintain cultural integrity and incorporate culturally safe practices into the ACTPS.

Cultural Transformation Branch (CTB) Supports

The role of the CTB is to guide and empower directorates to embed and practice meaningful cultural safety. This is in line with issues identified by the Elected Body in their public hearings in 2019 and 2023. It is the responsibility of leadership within each directorate to work with the CTB and embed approaches developed by them, which support compliance with ACT Government commitments under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The CTB provided one-on-one support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and their supervisors, ensuring a culturally safe and informed approach. However, this must be requested by individual directorates and business areas. Supervisors participating in this approach increasingly engaged with the CTB to upskill themselves, creating an environment free from racism and reducing cultural load on staff. These efforts led to transformational changes, including establishing directorate-specific cultural advisor roles.

The CTB also published a culturally specific mental health resource to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff access existing services and seek additional support as needed.

It is the role of directorates to implement the measures developed by the CTB within their work practices as a support to addressing systemic and institutionalised discrimination, racism and unconscious bias.

A further example of this was the development and distribution of the Cultural Load Matrix in April 2024 which identified the varying levels of cultural load, aligns this to workplace health and safety risks, and provides strategies for directorates and individual line managers addressing cultural load in the workplace.

Directorates must consider how they apply these as part of their corporate functions through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategies, Reconciliation Action Plans or Cultural Integrity Frameworks, and their human resource management processes.

Cultural Advisors

The CTB supported most ACTPS directorates in establishing dedicated cultural advisor roles to enhance cultural capability and safety. These roles were designed to meet specific directorate needs, with the CTB contributing to their design and recruitment process.

The CTB will also connect this network of cultural advisors to manage their workload and ensure a coordinated approach, focusing on implementing Closing the Gap: Priority Reform Three (Transforming Government Organisations).

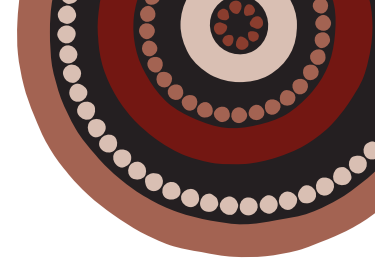
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability uplift to support cultural safety in the ACTPS

The CTB published a whole-of-government SharePoint site accessible to all ACTPS staff, featuring materials to build cultural capability and competency. Key resources include:

- > A resource on 'Cultural load in the ACTPS' to educate staff on cultural load, how to reduce it, and support colleagues experiencing high cultural load.
- > A 'Building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability' site with information on cultural protocols, language guides, professional development, systemic racism, and cultural advisor contacts.
- > Inclusive recruitment guidance to support hiring from diverse backgrounds.

During National Reconciliation Week 2024, CMTEDD and the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs hosted a successful all-Senior Executive Service (SES) event on Allyship and Closing the Gap, followed by a panel discussion with two Aboriginal SES members.





Showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Artists:

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Artists

The ACT Government committed to establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Space at the Kingston Arts Precinct. In 2023-24, a Reference Group with majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership was formed to guide this project, starting work in 2024-25.

Additionally, a second round of targeted cultural arts funding was provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, offering grants from \$3,000 to \$15,000. An all-Indigenous panel assessed the applications, supporting eight arts activities across various artforms and cultural practices, totalling \$100,451.

Showcasing at the Canberra Theatre Centre

The CTC ensures cultural diversity in its programming, including exhibitions, theatre presentations, and programs featuring Australian First Nations cultures. In 2023-24, the Canberra Theatre Centre (CTC) showcased First Nations artists through events like Bangarra Dance Theatre's Yuldea, The Visitors, Walanbaa Yulu-Gi, and the ACT UP! Secondary Schools Festival. The festival featured First Nations playwright Dylan van den Berg as Festival Ambassador.

New work development included Liz Lea and Muruwarri woman Tammi Gissell's one-woman show, Diamond. The CTC also embedded First Nations principles into its Vision for our Future, led by Yerrabingin, to make the theatre a place for traditional storytelling and gathering.

Galleries, Museums, and Heritage

CMAG engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to enhance the interpretation and management of First Nations stories and values. In 2023-24, CMAG presented the exhibition "Materiality...but not as we know it," featuring First Nations artists Paul Girrawah House and James Tylor. They also hosted a CareerTrackers intern in Exhibitions and Collections to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students.

In partnership with ANU and Canberra Glassworks, CMAG submitted a proposal to co-host artist Maree Clarke for a research project and exhibition. Extensive research was conducted on Calthorpes House and Lanyon to highlight First Nations stories in future interpretations. The Calthorpes Garage received a new fit-out, including First Nations connections, in consultation with the Smith Family. New interpretative panels featuring Muruwari man William 'Deucem' Smith were installed at the Lanyon Machinery Shed.

During NAIDOC Week, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" was presented in Ngunnawal language. Jessika Spencer won

second prize in the ACT Historic Places Art Prize with her work, Ochre. Ngunnawal Custodian Tyronne Bell presented a talk on the Ngunnawal six seasons during Harvest Day Out, and Ngunnawal Elder Wally Bell led Maring Ngala Walks at Lanyon Homestead during Reconciliation Week.

Artwork in Sport and Recreation Facilities

Indigenous art continues to be installed across sport and recreation facilities, including at Ngunnawal District Playing Fields in 2023-24. Many projects by Infrastructure Delivery in 2023-24 featured landscaping and artwork by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.



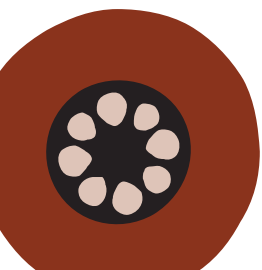
Ngunnawal sportsground amenities block adorned with artwork by artist Kristie Peters.

Community Engagement and Reconciliation:

Ngunnawal Cultural Plant Workshops

The Taylor Mingle community development program supported Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural Services in facilitating two Ngunnawal Cultural Plant workshops in September and October 2023. Staff training was expanded to implement the Ngunnawal Plant Use Guide, which provides information on native plants in the ACT region and their Ngunnawal uses. The guide is essential for designing, constructing, and maintaining public spaces and landscaped areas. Future efforts will focus on educating about the guide's implementation during concept design and construction phases to incorporate native plants in neighbourhoods.

This initiative aligns best with the Cultural Integrity focus area, which supports the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contributes to building respectful, fair, and sustainable communities.



NAIDOC Week

During NAIDOC Week 2023, the theme “For Our Elders” was celebrated through various cultural heritage activities. Ngannawal-Wiradjuri Elder Serena Williams hosted an Indigenous Culture Day in Taylor, featuring a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony, Yukeembruk Dancers, and traditional weaver and artist Shanice Allen. Additionally, CMTEDD coordinated a series of activities to improve employees’ cultural awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including native plant use workshops and Yarning Circle tutorials delivered by members of the CMTEDD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network. These combined efforts provided meaningful opportunities for cultural engagement, education, and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

National Reconciliation Week

The ACT remains the only jurisdiction to have a public holiday during Reconciliation Week and uses this to host the Reconciliation Day event. The event was held on Monday 27 May 2024 at Commonwealth Park and drew in approximately 5,000 people to celebrate reconciliation and participate in activities and discussions and hear from various performers celebrating reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

The EPSDD Portfolio marked National Reconciliation Week with the theme “Now More Than Ever” on 28 May 2024. The event featured an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Panel Discussion with nine SLA staff participating and engaging in a Q&A session to discuss reconciliation challenges and support.

In Whitlam, Reconciliation Week included a musical performance by Wallabindi artist Monica Moore and a yarn sticks workshop by Clarissa Shateri. Shateri also led yarn sticks workshops through the Place Curation program, resulting in an installation at the Heartbeat Café.

SLA, in collaboration with Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural Services, conducted Ngannawal Language workshops for SLA and EPSDD staff. These workshops taught an Acknowledgement of Country in Ngannawal language and shared the history and language revitalisation journey of the Ngannawal people.

The ACT Government demonstrated a commitment to integrating and acknowledging Indigenous culture, programming, and experiences as part of our major and community events. Key highlights included a Reconciliation-themed garden bed at Floriade 2023 featuring artwork by Ngannawal artist Lynnice Church, a collaboration for the Enlighten Festival 2024 with the National Gallery of Australia and APY Lands artist Vincent Namatjira OAM to project his Indigenous All Stars work, and a Canberra Day 2024 performance by Budjerah, a Coodjinburra man from the Bundjalung nation, on Stage 88.

Activities for the City Renewal Authority

The Authority is a signatory to the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023-2025 with EPSDD and SLA. It organises reconciliation actions around awareness and recognition, protocols and processes, procurement, relationships and consultation, and projects and placemaking. A working group, led by the CEO, coordinates RAP implementation, with First Nations people participating in activities, programs, and consultations.

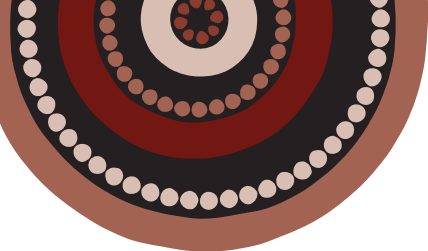
In the reporting year, the Authority collaborated with First Nations people on significant projects like Ngamawari and the Civic and Cultural District (CCCD). A foreword by Mary Mudford, Assistant Director of the Traditional Custodian Engagement Unit, was included in the CCCD plan (February 2024). The future park at Acton Waterfront, named Ngamawari, will focus on Ngannawal cultural significance, incorporating Ngannawal soil and public art by local artists. A mural by Ngannawal artist Lynnice Church was commissioned in Garema Place (late 2023).

Staff education and awareness initiatives included an On-Country tour of Black Mountain, language workshops to learn Acknowledgement of Country in Ngannawal language, and the incorporation of the ‘Caring for Country’ staff guide into project engagement processes. Public engagement and dialogue were promoted through a national architecture conference panel on ‘Designing with Country’ featuring Ngannawal colleagues (October 2023) and a panel discussion on the same topic with the Australian Institute of Architects (September 2023).

The Authority celebrated First Nations cultures by recognising NAIDOC Week through articles and events and committing to showcasing First Nations stories and perspectives in the City Centre. The Authority’s goal is to procure 2% of addressable spend from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. In the reporting year, approximately 1.95% (\$136,950) was procured from First Nations suppliers.



Ngannawal Traditional Custodian Bradley Bell and son Braithan look on as the City Renewal Authority’s then-Chair Christine Covington and then-CEO Malcolm Snow participate in a smoking ceremony commemorating the gifting of the name Ngamawari to Acton Waterfront’s future park



Ginninderry Joint Venture

The Ginninderry Joint Venture engaged Waters Consultancy in 2017 to conduct an Aboriginal Cultural Values Assessment, identifying intangible cultural values through consultation and research. In 2023-24, the Joint Venture continued to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by exhibiting the Ginninderry Design Library at The Link Artspace, featuring artwork from five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Ongoing engagement with the community will be maintained through Representative Aboriginal Organisations, Cultural Knowledge Holders, and the Ginninderry Conservation Trust's Caring for Country

Rangers.

The ACT Government's initiatives demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing the wellbeing and cultural integrity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By prioritising healing and reconciliation, empowering communities, promoting cultural competency, and supporting artistic expression, these programs contribute to building a more inclusive and respectful society. Through ongoing engagement and collaboration, the government aims to create a supportive environment that honours and uplifts the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Action Plans Reporting – Cultural Integrity

Action	Progress status update
ACTPS to develop general guidelines on identifying systemic racism in systems and processes, including expert input on barriers and governance to progress.	On track This activity is progressing with a first draft prepared for consultation in 2025. The CTB has met with a range of external collaborators including the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Anti-racism team and the Jumbunna Institute to leverage their experiences and research and apply learnings for the ACTPS. CTB are also focusing efforts in this space to coordinating whole of government participation in the 2025 ANZSOG First Nations Public Administration Conference, noting the specific focus on Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This conference will provide representatives across the service with tools to identify systemic barriers and address them.
Develop and implement an ACT Public Service Cultural Integrity Framework to support each Directorate to create their own Cultural Integrity Action Plan and Professional Learning Plan relevant to their own contexts	On track To implement the Education Directorate Cultural Integrity Framework, the Directorate is supporting each Branch to prepare their branch plans for 2025, where Cultural Integrity actions will be included. A range of supports, such as the Cultural Integrity Community of Practice, and guides (Building a Cultural Authentic Team and Building a Culturally Authentic Action), are in final stages of drafting and clearance. A gap analysis of current professional development opportunities, against the five tier Cultural Integrity PL Model has been undertaken, resulting in a request to procure additional training. The aim of the additional training is to go beyond the basic cultural awareness to developing practical skills through case studies, workshops and discussions that are contextualised at the local and professional business environment. The Education Directorate has now transferred the lead of this action to CMTEDD.
Establish an ACTPS Cultural Integrity Professional Learning Database to guide the creation of Directorate specific Professional Learning Plans aimed at building ACTPS workforce cultural capability and workplace cultural safety.	Complete The Education Directorate has now transferred the lead of this action to CMTEDD. CMTEDD, through the CTB has delivered this action in May 2025. Through collaboration with all directorates the CTB has established a live data base that captures all current cultural learning opportunities across the ACTPS. This database can be used to inform directorate learning plans.



Develop a Cultural Integrity 'best practice' guide including case studies that align with the ACT Public Service Cultural Integrity Framework to support all Directorates to develop their own Cultural Integrity Action Plans.	On track The Education Directorate has developed a range of supports, such as the Cultural Integrity Community of Practice role and responsibilities, and guides (Building a Culturally Authentic Team and Building a Culturally Authentic Action). These documents are in final stages of drafting and clearance and are yet to be shared with CMTEDD.
In collaboration with the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group, develop Ngunnawal language resources for use in ACT Government and Public Schools.	Delays or delays anticipated OATSIA is working with Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to finalise the funding agreement, which includes the scoping for an Indigenous Language Centre. This will provide an overarching investment in first nations languages, supporting work with language owners on the preservation, revitalisation and use of language - including in schools.
Implement the National Guiding Principles for Native Title Compensation that reaffirms the ACT Government's commitment to settle native title compensation matters by negotiating an agreement, where possible, supporting the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as recognised in s 27(2) of the ACT Human Rights Act 2004.	Delayed or delays anticipated ACT Government is participating in national discussions to develop an overarching framework for addressing Native Title compensation. This will respond to legal parameters under the Timber Creek determination (2016) and the Yunupingu case (currently under appeal). This framework will map how all jurisdictions will address Native Title compensation. National Guiding Principles and the Framework cannot be applied until a successful Native Title claim and an application to the Federal Court for compensation related to the recognised claim has been passed.

Cultural Integrity



Target 5: By 2031, reduce experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within government systems by at least 80% as progress towards zero.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Measure not yet defined



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown, due to lack of available data.

Indicator 11: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

Government mainstream institutions and agencies reporting actions to implement the transformation elements:

- > Identify and eliminate racism
- > Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety
- > Deliver services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people
- > Increase accountability through transparent funding allocations
- > Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- > Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Inclusive Community

Outcome: A self-determined and inclusive society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, respected, and experience a life free of racism and systemic discrimination.

The ACT Government has undertaken a series of initiatives aimed at fostering an inclusive community where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, respected, and free from racism and systemic discrimination. These efforts span various areas, including increasing awareness and understanding, enhancing cultural integration, improving accessibility and mobility, and supporting community engagement and collaboration. The following highlights key programs and their positive impacts on the community.

Recent Activities – Inclusive Community

Increased Awareness and Understanding:

Unconscious Bias Workshop

In January 2024, the Education Directorate delivered a workshop at All Colleges Day for 68 participants. The workshop focused on unconscious bias, encouraging participants to examine underlying assumptions in curriculum documents and highlighting the transformative power of recognising unconscious bias.

Enhanced Cultural Integration:

Reconciliation-themed Events

The ACT Government remains the only government to have agreed a public holiday specifically to recognise and acknowledge reconciliation. Each year since 2018, the ACT Government has worked in partnership with the ACT Reconciliation Council to host a Reconciliation Day Event.

In recent years there has been an increase in artists and performers, with the ACT Reconciliation Council hosting key discussions and panel sessions on local and national issues relating to reconciliation and expanding the family friendly activities that help to educate future generations of Canberrans and build a more inclusive community that respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures.

In 2024, it is estimated that approximately 5,000 people participated in the event.

Improved Accessibility and Mobility:

Community Bus Service

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Bus provides transport for those unable to access standard services, including elders' groups, juvenile and justice support groups, family groups, and individuals. It facilitates access to medical appointments, cultural events, and social and sporting activities. In the 2023–24 financial year, the program provided 2,988 passenger movements.

Playground upgrades

Playground upgrades were completed at Chisholm, Aranda, and Ngunnawal, with partial upgrades at Gordon. The Ngunnawal cultural themes were developed in consultation with Bagariin Ngunnawal Cultural Consulting. Designs for Lyons and Kaleen are complete, with construction starting in late 2024. Kaleen's theme is the freshwater ecosystem, while Lyons' theme is the autumn forest. These upgrades provide community spaces to gather, play, and engage with nature, integrating Indigenous cultural themes into equipment, artwork, and signage.

Community Engagement and Collaboration:

Kenny and Molonglo Indigenous Design Frameworks

Balarinji, an Aboriginal-owned design and strategy organisation, was contracted to develop Connecting with Country frameworks for greenfield sites in Kenny and the Molonglo Valley. The project began with site walks in November 2023, followed by interviews with knowledge holders in December 2023. Community members, including the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee, United Ngunnawal Elders Council, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, were involved and compensated for their participation. Draft reports were reviewed by these groups. The frameworks will guide cultural design principles for the developments, ensuring they align with and promote the wellbeing of Country and community.

Kingston Arts Precinct Development

The Kingston Arts Precinct (KAP) place brief was completed at the end of 2022, with SLA and ArtsACT collaborating with the community and key stakeholders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2023, engagement continued through various avenues:

- > July 2023: A KAP stall at NAIDOC in the North at Belconnen Arts Centre engaged about 50 people, sharing development updates and answering questions.
- > August 2023: A Ngunnawal community workshop consulted 19 Ngunnawal members to gather insights on their priorities for the precinct.
- > November 2023: Curiyo co-facilitated a workshop with ACT community members and Ngunnawal representatives (about 20 people) to discuss masterplan options.

Curtin Dementia Village Site

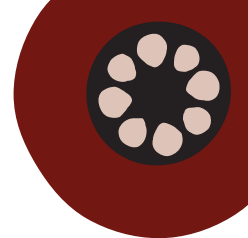
SLA conducted community and stakeholder engagement for the Curtin dementia village site, forming a specialist Stakeholder Advisory Panel. Representatives from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Elected Body were invited to participate.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities:

Legal and Financial Support for Indigenous Communities

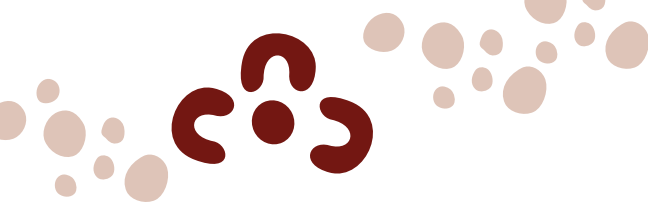
The Public Trustee and Guardian offers free will drafting services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, providing essential legal support in 2023-24. Additionally, the Bob Henry Memorial Fund, through GreaterGood, allocated \$20,300 to Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation. This funding supports the Young Men's Mentoring Group Cultural Camp and the Young Women's Group Healing and Yarning Circles, aligning with Mr. Bob Henry's wish to enhance the lives of disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

Through these comprehensive initiatives, the ACT Government demonstrates a strong commitment to reconciliation and the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. By addressing unconscious bias, integrating Indigenous culture into public spaces and events, providing essential legal and financial support, and ensuring accessibility and mobility, these programs contribute to a more inclusive and respectful society. The ongoing engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities ensure that their voices and cultural values are at the forefront of these efforts, promoting a self-determined and inclusive future for all.



Action Plans Reporting – Inclusive Community

Action	Progress status update
ACTPS to develop general guidelines on identifying systemic racism in systems and processes, including expert input on barriers and governance to progress.	On track The Cultural Transformation Branch is formalising a joined-up network of cultural advisors from across the service to work in partnership on systemic issues relating to experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This network, in addition to the journey mapping project will better inform development of guidelines to identify and address these matters.
Co-design Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty principles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and develop implementation guidance for use across Directorates.	On track Work on data sovereignty is being progressed between directorates. Within CMTEDD: > The ACT Data and Analytics Centre (ACTDAC) presented improvements to the whole of government data catalogue to the Data Management Group's 9 July meeting. This included improved views and navigation of relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high-value datasets. > ACTDAC met with the Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) and the CMTEDD Cultural Transformation branch and agreed the high level project scope and deliverables. > The Offices agreed to workshop scope and deliverables over Q2, FY24-25 for refinement. ACTDAC engaging with the Office for Industrial Workplace Relations and Workforce Strategy to access facilitation services.
Co-design an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language data standard with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The language data standard should support the consistent collection of information about the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in the Canberra region, support consistency with the Australian Standard Classification of Languages, and is supported with implementation guidance for use across Directorates.	On track This action has been committed to be delivered as part of CMTEDD's Reconciliation and Cultural Integrity Plan 2024-27. The CMTEDD Reconciliation and Cultural Integrity Plan 2024-27 was launched on 6 November 2024, with implementation commencing immediately. Commitment 4.3 will deliver - develop, in partnership with the Data Reform Group and relevant business areas and assist directorates to pilot relevant data governance and management tools that support an Indigenous Language Data Standard.
Develop an implementation-ready roadmap that will support an improved understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander demographic information at different statistical geography levels. The roadmap could consider data sharing or commissioning of survey collection activities.	On track ACT Health is leading development of a model of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance principles alongside Maïam nayri Wingara (MnW) to apply to ACT Health data.



Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service and product design capability across Directorates and ensure it is seen as integral to delivering on policy intent.	Delayed or delays anticipated ArtsACT continue to work on finalising the Protocol for the Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork, as part of this commitment. Once that is complete, CMTEDD Communications & Engagement will provide assistance in publishing and communicating to ACT Public Service staff.
Increase diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander user perspectives for all programs and services early and often.	Ongoing/BAU The Cultural Transformation Branch has developed draft cultural safety care plan templates and has partnered with CSD to pilot these within the directorate. CSD will independently pilot the plans on a smaller scale and feedback outcomes to the CTB for future iterations. The Cultural Safety Care Plans aim to identify and reduce cultural load as well as embed cultural safety measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
Co-design mainstream government policy and service pathways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	Delayed or delays anticipated ArtsACT continue to work on finalising the Protocol for the Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork, as part of this commitment. Once that is complete, CMTEDD Communications & Engagement will provide assistance in publishing and communicating to ACT Public Service staff.
Design ACT Government services in an integrated way, from end to end, ensuring it makes sense to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.	Delayed or delays anticipated ACT Government directorates continue to explore opportunities to work in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Key examples include the work with the Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee who are working in partnership with the ACT Government to redesign approaches that will embed culturally appropriate approaches and reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home-care. The Community Services Directorate also works with representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to design services in an integrated way through programs such as Next Steps. Canberra Health Services (CHS) works with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Reference Group (CRG) in the development of service responses specific to the needs of the local community. An example of this has been CHS commencing a dedicated project to improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on outpatient waitlists, including Ear Nose and Throat, Dermatology and General Paediatrics. Additional clinics (including weekend) have been established. As of April 2024, the waitlist has reduced from 703 to 285 children. This was done in partnership with the CRG to address priorities identified by the community. Many other directorates are engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people either through the Elected Body, ACCOs or dedicated advisory groups in the design of programs and services that better respond to the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
Increase opportunities across the ACT Government to promote the public use and visibility of Aboriginal languages in the Canberra Region including through funding and grants. This will be undertaken in collaboration with the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group.	Delayed or delays anticipated OATSIA is working with Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to finalise the funding agreement, which includes the scoping for an Indigenous Language Centre. This will provide an overarching investment in first nations languages,
The ACT Government will collect wellbeing data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT and region, to help identify barriers experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and support self-determination in seeking solutions.	On track CMTEDD has amended Wellbeing Impact Assessment templates to collect data regarding the impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of matters presented to Cabinet or its Expenditure Review Committee. While this does not collect primary data from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or enable self-determination or give the Cabinet in Confidence nature of the data, it does impose a requirement for directorates to identify barriers and collected and present data for any Cabinet items.

Inclusive Community



Target 6: Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Measure not yet defined



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown, due to lack of available data.

Indicator 12: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

- > Number of formal data sharing partnerships established between government agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/organisations
- > Number of comprehensive regional data profiles created
- > Number of government initiatives established to make data more accessible and usable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations
- > Number of government agencies working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to build expertise in data collection and analysis.



Target 7: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Status Unknown



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown, due to lack of available data.

Indicator 13: Increase the visibility and use of Aboriginal languages of the Canberra region.

Measure 13a: Number of initiatives implemented to enable the revitalisation of languages of the Canberra region.



Target 8: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

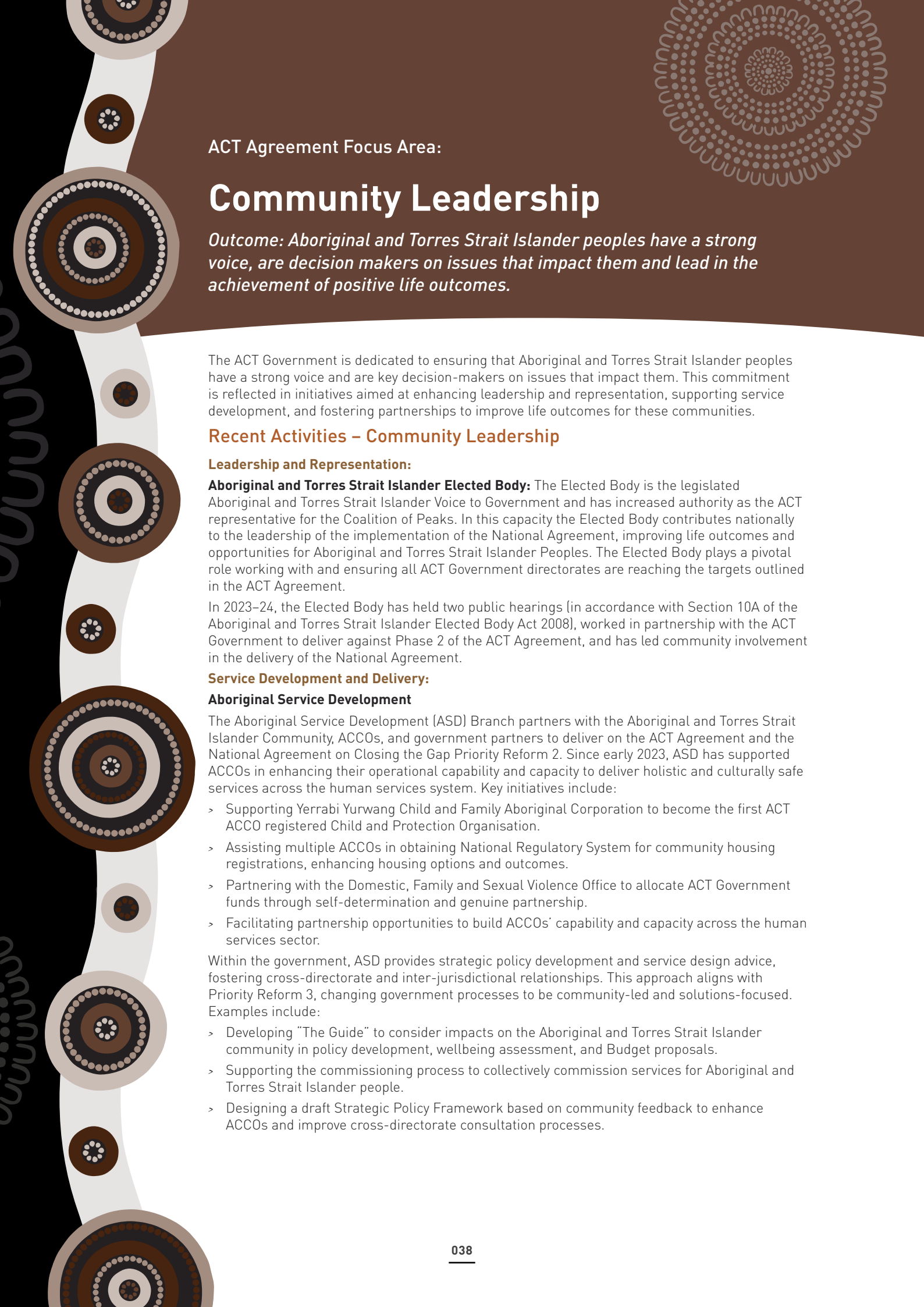
Measure not yet defined



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown, due to lack of available data.

Indicator 14: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

- > Levels of digital inclusion among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as compared with other Australians (disaggregated by access, affordability and digital ability)
- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households accessing the internet
- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing the internet (disaggregated by point of access: home, work, school, public access, government shopfront)
- > Frequency of internet access at home in last 12 months (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)
- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using internet to access government services for private purposes (e.g. health services, taxation, bill payments, social security payments)
- > Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in media (disaggregated by income levels).



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Community Leadership

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong voice, are decision makers on issues that impact them and lead in the achievement of positive life outcomes.

The ACT Government is dedicated to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong voice and are key decision-makers on issues that impact them. This commitment is reflected in initiatives aimed at enhancing leadership and representation, supporting service development, and fostering partnerships to improve life outcomes for these communities.

Recent Activities – Community Leadership

Leadership and Representation:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body: The Elected Body is the legislated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Government and has increased authority as the ACT representative for the Coalition of Peaks. In this capacity the Elected Body contributes nationally to the leadership of the implementation of the National Agreement, improving life outcomes and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Elected Body plays a pivotal role working with and ensuring all ACT Government directorates are reaching the targets outlined in the ACT Agreement.

In 2023–24, the Elected Body has held two public hearings (in accordance with Section 10A of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008), worked in partnership with the ACT Government to deliver against Phase 2 of the ACT Agreement, and has led community involvement in the delivery of the National Agreement.

Service Development and Delivery:

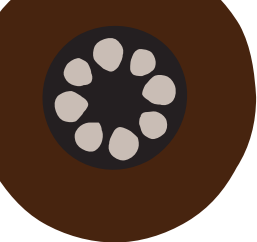
Aboriginal Service Development

The Aboriginal Service Development (ASD) Branch partners with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, ACCOs, and government partners to deliver on the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2. Since early 2023, ASD has supported ACCOs in enhancing their operational capability and capacity to deliver holistic and culturally safe services across the human services system. Key initiatives include:

- > Supporting Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation to become the first ACT ACCO registered Child and Protection Organisation.
- > Assisting multiple ACCOs in obtaining National Regulatory System for community housing registrations, enhancing housing options and outcomes.
- > Partnering with the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office to allocate ACT Government funds through self-determination and genuine partnership.
- > Facilitating partnership opportunities to build ACCOs' capability and capacity across the human services sector.

Within the government, ASD provides strategic policy development and service design advice, fostering cross-directorate and inter-jurisdictional relationships. This approach aligns with Priority Reform 3, changing government processes to be community-led and solutions-focused. Examples include:

- > Developing "The Guide" to consider impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in policy development, wellbeing assessment, and Budget proposals.
- > Supporting the commissioning process to collectively commission services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- > Designing a draft Strategic Policy Framework based on community feedback to enhance ACCOs and improve cross-directorate consultation processes.



Cultural Integration and Disaster Management:

First Nations Cultural partnership project

As part of the JACS Security and Emergency Management Division's strategy to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's perspectives into disaster management, the division has commenced the First Nations cultural partnerships project. The project establishes a meaningful engagement process with local First Nations people to share knowledge and develop a collective approach to disaster risk reduction and resilience building in the ACT. The project has created a new position of assistant director, First Nations partnerships. This role will work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to deliver culturally led approaches to disaster risk reduction, foster inter-generational transfer of knowledge and enhancing existing programs to better recognise culturally sensitive resilience to disasters.

Health and Workforce Improvements:

CHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committees and Reference Groups

The CHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee leads and oversees initiatives to improve health service access, experience, and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT and surrounding region. It works in partnership with the Consumer Reference Group. The Consumer Reference Group (CRG) was formed in 2020, the CRG collaborates with CHS to ensure better access to health services and culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The group includes representatives from the local and South Coast Aboriginal community, community leaders, Elders, health care service users, and carers. Members share their experiences and provide cultural advice and direction.

Appointed Cultural Advisor and Workplace Cultural Transformation

In 2023, CMTEDD appointed Mr. Donald Hage, a senior manager and proud Kombumerri man, as the Cultural Adviser. This role, in collaboration with the Cultural

Transformation Branch, advocates for the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network, led by the Cultural Adviser, continues to welcome members, provide peer-to-peer mentoring, and connect with other networks. The network also played a key role in shaping strategic initiatives, including the Cultural Learning Strategy.

CMTEDD's Cultural Transformation Branch (CTB) was operationalised in 2023-24 to empower the ACT Public Service through inclusive workforce strategies and programs. The CTB focuses on:

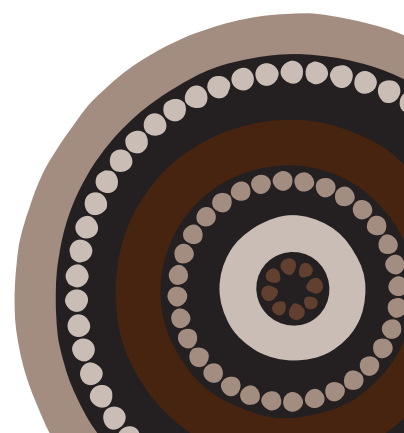
- > Enhancing systems: Designing systems, strategies, policies, and processes to support inclusive outcomes and ensure safety.
- > Uplifting capability: Enabling the ACTPS workforce to build cultural and inclusive capabilities through tailored experiences.
- > Improving experience: Reflecting diverse communities in the workforce, ensuring staff feel safe, included, and able to thrive.

The CTB established the ACTPS Culture and Pathways Team, dedicated to Closing the Gap: Priority Reform Three – Transforming Government Organisations. This team, staffed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, focuses on improving the employee experience across the ACTPS, ensuring First Nations voices and experiences are central to this transformation.

Strengthening Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making:

Engagement with the Ngunnawal Community

EPSDD is committed to enhancing and strengthening the engagement of Ngunnawal people in the development, care and management of Country and to respect and value the voice of all members of the Ngunnawal community.



Case Study:

The Traditional Custodian Engagement team's work has seen a change in the way EPSDD facilitates engagement with the Ngunnawal community to strengthen and empower their voice in policy, programs, projects and initiatives. The Directorate's new engagement methodology is inclusive and facilitated through a cultural approach, engaging First Nations facilitators to manage consultation meetings and yarning circles. Tidbinbilla precinct The new visitors centre at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and redevelopment of the Tidbinbilla precinct business case is a prime example of this new approach to engagement that strengthens formal partnerships and shared decision making. In July 2023, a meeting facilitated by MurriMatters Pty Ltd identified that a number of Ngunnawal community members would like to see a Ngunnawal working group created to provide ongoing cultural input into the design of the new Tidbinbilla visitor centre and the business case. The meeting's listening report was given to the DNCCC. The Ngunnawal Tidbinbilla Working Group came together and worked with Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) staff, Cox Architects and KPMG to develop a concept design and business case that was inclusive of the views and aspirations of the Ngunnawal community. Members of the working group attended a DNCCC meeting and shared their journey and input into the concept design. This process demonstrated a different way of doing engagement that created space both for shared decision making and to explore a different way of doing things. The Directorate is still working to deliver the targets and meet outcomes of Closing the Gap. Work in the last 12 months demonstrates our commitment to continue to grow and evolve the relationships with and engagement of our Traditional Custodians and the ACT First Nations community.



View from Dalsetta, proposed site for the new visitor centre at Tidbinbilla.

Representation on Boards and Committees

CMTEDD has been actively working over several years to improve the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on CMTEDD boards and committees. This is in line with the action from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of ACT Government boards and committees. Representation levels have remained steady, with five members in June

2023 (reduced from seven in 2023), across approximately 200 positions.

The ACT Government's focus on community leadership empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by enhancing their representation and decision-making roles. These efforts underscore the importance of their voices in shaping policies and programs, leading to positive and sustainable outcomes for their communities.



Action Plans Reporting – Community Leadership

Action	Progress status update
Explore, in conjunction with Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians and other First Nation groups as appropriate, the feasibility and potential models for a co-managed agreement for lands and waters relating to Namadgi National Park.	No longer progressing This action is not progressing at this time as it is not yet possible to confirm the cultural authority body/bodies to engage with. EPSDD is maintaining engagement with the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and the Representative Aboriginal Organisations in caring for Country matters.
Co-design and implement a Cultural Resource Plan to enable the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources by Traditional Custodians and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the ACT.	No longer progressing The Ngunnawal Cultural Resource Management Plan has been drafted. Due to legal advice that the plan may be in conflict with the ACT's human rights legislation and frameworks, further work on this body of work has been paused.
Co-design the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to conserve and protect cultural heritage across the ACT for public land including health assessments for modified trees.	No longer progressing Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is the responsibility of the land or asset manager. ACT Heritage and Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) remain available to provide advice and guidance in relation to the requirements of the Heritage Act 2004, and any decisions made under it during plan's development. EPSDD will continue to engage the Representative Aboriginal Organisations and traditional custodians for the protection of cultural heritage across the ACT.
Prepare protocols in collaboration with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council for the naming of places in the ACT with Ngunnawal language to reflect 25,000 years of ongoing cultural connection to this place now known as Canberra and rename key sites as identified by community.	Ongoing/BAU The Place Names Unit in EPSDD has embedded the protocol for place naming into business as usual. Places named in Ngunnawal language and/or in recognition of First Nations people are reported annually in the EPSDD Annual Report.
Co-design and develop a new Heritage database and website to provide access to heritage.	On track Preliminary funding has been provided to progress procurement of a new Heritage Database in the 2024-25 budget. Significant progress has been made in cleansing data on First Nations cultural objects that is proposed to be made available on ACTMapi following consultation with First Nations representatives.
Co-Design the ACT Disability Strategy with people with disability to ensure the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability are included.	Completed Throughout 2023 and 2024 the Community Services Directorate (Office for Disability, CSD) continued to engage and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, their families and carers on the development of the ACT Disability Strategy. We heard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their families experience complex forms of discrimination and disadvantage and face significant barriers to accessing culturally safe and responsive services and support. The ACT Disability Reference Group, which includes representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, met with the Minister for Disability on 13 February 2024 to provide feedback on final drafts of the Strategy and First Action Plan, prior its finalisation.
Encourage development of community leaders with disability.	Completed This measure is a business as usual responsibility for all directorates under the ACT's disability laws and frameworks. TCCS has a Disability and Carers network in operation. We have also built our capability in this area via the recent Leaders Forum about "Thinking outside the box – neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments".

Community Leadership



Target 9: There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in each state and territory enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have chosen their own representatives.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Measure not yet defined



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown, due to lack of available data.

Indicator 15: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians reporting they are able to have a say in their community on issues important to them
- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians reporting improvements in their communities

Indicator 16: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

- > Partnerships reviewed (new or existing) meeting the 'strong partnership elements' (as defined in the National Agreement)
- > Number of partnerships by function, such as decision-making or strategic



Target 10: By 2030, a 15% increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

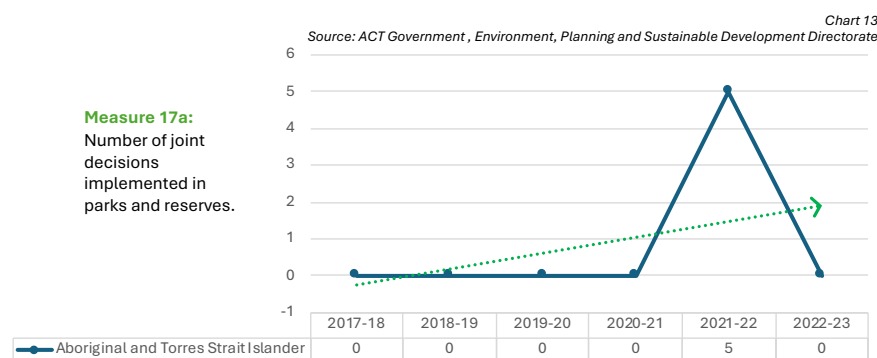
Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Low, unless there is a significant increase in joint decision-making efforts.

Indicator 17: Increasing role in decision making on parks and reserves which make up 70% of the ACT land mass.

Measure 17a: Number of joint decisions implemented in parks and reserves.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Despite the minimal activity the trendline shows a gradual increase, indicating some progress in 2020-21.

Key Takeaways:

- > The data reflects an inconsistent approach to joint decision-making, with long periods of inactivity followed by a sudden increase and then a decline. However, the number of decisions which were eligible for joint consideration is not known.

ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Connecting Community

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are connected to strong families, and social and support networks building upon the foundation of community leadership.

Recent Activities – Connecting the Community

The focus on connecting the community is a vital aspect of fostering strong families and social support networks among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. This initiative builds upon the foundation of community leadership and aims to create a cohesive and supportive environment. Recent activities under this focus area have included various programs and events designed to engage and empower the community, with a particular emphasis on cultural connection and education.

Community Engagement for Youth:

Case Study:

Yurwan Ghuda's 'On Country' Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People

Yurwan Ghuda (meaning Strong Child in Ngunnawal language) is a 10-session On Country program offered to school-aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people within the ACT. This program is designed to connect First Nations youth who are at risk of contact with the justice system due to sociological factors, such as being disengaged or at risk of disengaging from school, loss of culture, and family stressors that have historically affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The name Yurwan Ghuda was gifted to the program by senior Ngunnawal Elder, Aunty Violet Sheridan.

Funded through the FNJB, Yurwan Ghuda's 'On Country' program is a partnership between JACS, the ACT Education Directorate (ED), the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), and cultural program provider Naa-Ni Ngara, a local First Nations business owned and operated by respected local Aboriginal community leader, Dean Jard. Mr. Jard, along with Aboriginal staff from EPSDD and ED, facilitate and deliver the program, with active support from an FNJB staff member.

During the program, participants connect with Country, culture, and community through hands-on experiences, such as guided cultural tours of nature reserves and visiting places of significance to Ngunnawal people. They also engage with Aboriginal Elders and community organisations. Participants learn about bush tucker and medicines, and how to make artifacts such as spears, boomerangs, and clapsticks. They are greeted onto the program with a traditional smoking ceremony and are welcomed to Country by a senior Ngunnawal Elder.

In 2024, participants in the program gained a significant amount of cultural information and knowledge from being on Country each week. Their engagement was demonstrated by their keen interest in native plants and their uses, as well as the different species of native animals found in and around Canberra and why these plants and animals were so important to the Ngunnawal people. Participants learned to identify certain plants, explain their use, and understand their cultural significance to the region. For example, the young men could point out dogwood, also known as cauliflower bush, its medicinal use, and how to use the seeds when the plant is in flower. Another example was lomandra, which can be eaten, used as a whistle, and prepared for weaving.

Students also learned why Aboriginal people practiced Caring for Country, what that means, why it is so important to look after Country, and how to achieve revegetation and restoration through cultural land practices.

The pilot program commenced during ACT school term one of 2024 with 8 male students from Richardson Primary School. Each student had been identified as suitable for the program through the ED. The program was successful, with a 75% attendance rate of students and 6 students managing to complete the entire 10-week program. The program continued through term 2 of 2024, involving students from Richardson Primary School and the addition of some suitable students from Namadgi School. The second instalment of the 10-week program was also highly successful in providing participants with a positive sense of traditional Aboriginal culture and a sense of belonging.



Learning and training opportunities for ACT Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:

Garma Cultural Immersion

For the second year running, ACT Government sent staff to the annual Garma Festival (Garma) in remote East Arnhem Land. The event is a 4-day immersive cultural event run by the Yothu Yindi Foundation. Garma welcomes people from

all walks of life to experience traditional customs, ceremony and histories of the Yolngu and surrounding nations. It hosts key forums to discuss important political issues that directly impact First Nations People, Community and Culture. Jaimie Johnston from the FNJB was one of 3 JACS staff who attended. Jaimie tells her story:

Case study: Garma, experience of Jaime Johnston

Garma was an extraordinary experience. I came back feeling a profound shift in my perspective and thoughts around culture, relationships, and how we interact with each other. I set off with no expectations, intentionally. A blank canvas ready to learn and immerse.

I embraced the experience wholeheartedly. I surrendered to the things that challenged me and held a space of listening to learn with local community. Yes, there were key forums, NITV hosted Q&A discussions and the Prime Minister shared thoughts on television about the event and the referendum. But honestly, I wasn't there.

I was truly fortunate to find family and be welcomed into the Yolgnu community so warmly. I spent hours listening and learning from knowledge holders of Gulkula, Elcho Eylandt and Groote Eylandt. I shared sacred experiences with families through ceremony, healing, and women's business. I connected with people. I came home with an expanded heart, a lively spirit, and more family than I could have hoped for in all my dreaming.

The image I have provided are of my family from the Gurruwiwi clan of Gulkula. They are the people of the Rainbow Serpent and the knowledge holders of the Yidaki healing ceremony. I was fortunate to receive a Yidaki healing ceremony from my Wawa (brother through kinship). An honour I will keep with me forever.

I dissolved hours with the old ladies from the islands as they taught me a weaving practice that has continued, uninterrupted for thousands of years.



We weaved while we dyed more panadas, recently harvested for weaving. I learnt so much from them, life lessons, songlines and perspectives on respect, and building relationships that are mutually replenishing. These women are my Mari (sisters' granddaughter through kinship), and I am eternally grateful for the wisdom they so generously passed on to me. Because of them, I was able to bring home a new way of engaging with community and share them with my team. Through discussions upon my return, we were able to pivot in our approach to community that is more sustainable on culturally minded matters.



Jai with her Yapa (sisters) painted up in honour of our totem, the rainbow serpent. All ready for the nighttime Bungle (Dance ceremony).

At Garma, we danced Bungal and told the story of the Rainbow Serpent. We sat in ceremony and grieved for those who arrived at their finishing time. We celebrated their lives both here and in the dreamtime.

There is too much to cover in one short story, so instead I welcome conversation. I welcome people to call, send a Teams message or sit down for a cuppa. We can swap and share stories as we get to know each other, ask questions the way I have now been taught. The way all exchanges of information, stories and self should be shared.

Manymak (Thank You)

Rinytjangu Gurruwiwi (My name given to me by the Gurruwiwi Clan. I was named after the bush yam).

Community Engagement and Facilities:

On Country Walks

The Education Directorate has provided On Country Walks to staff which have been popular professional learning opportunities for several years, allowing participants to engage with community members and learn about the Country. During the reporting period, 56 people attended two walks at Theodore Grinding Grooves and Mulligans Flat.

Boomanulla Oval

Since 2018, TCCS Sport and Recreation Facilities (SRF) has served as the interim land custodian for Boomanulla Oval. SRF has collaborated with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to increase community involvement in managing the site. In 2023–24, they continued developing a governance model to re-engage the community, aiming to transition the oval back to a community-operated facility.

Improvements in 2023–24 included repainting gates, installing new Australian rules football posts, hinged rugby posts, and mobile soccer goals, leading to increased usage

across various sports. The GWS Giants training academy and Wellington Phoenix A-League Women's side have utilised the facilities, and Tigers Football Club now uses the oval as their home ground.

Consultation sessions in 2023 proposed forming an advisory committee to provide cultural guidance. A report on the consultation findings will be delivered in 2024–25.

The efforts to connect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members through programs like Yurwan Ghuda's 'On Country' and the Garma Cultural Immersion have shown significant positive outcomes. These initiatives not only provide cultural education and engagement but also foster a sense of belonging and community leadership. The continued development of community facilities and engagement opportunities further strengthens the social fabric, ensuring that the community remains connected and supported. Through these activities, the foundation of strong families and social networks is continually reinforced, contributing to the overall well-being and resilience of the community.

Action Plans Reporting – Connecting the Community

Action	Progress status update
Further develop the Strengthening Partnerships – Investing for Social Impact (Commissioning Framework) to support delivery of services and new initiatives, including communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about these opportunities.	On track JACS, ACTHD and CSD are continuing to apply commissioning in a self-determined way to ACCOs and for culturally safe services across the human service system. Achievements included JACS working closely with the Aboriginal Justice Caucus, ACCOs and people with lived experience for their first discovery workshop held in July 2024 to develop appropriate and culturally sensitive participation opportunities. To better support and guide commissioners, the Aboriginal Service Development Branch will release in September 2024 a guide to strengthen the understanding of impact on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community through each commissioning cycle. Commissioning cycles are continuing to target greater investment towards ACCOs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provision such as those for the Housing and Homelessness sector.
Establish a cross directorate framework that will guide the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Sector within the ACT. The framework will demonstrate our commitment to genuinely partner with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to develop the capacity of current and future organisations in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Sector.	On track The Aboriginal Service Development Branch (ASD) has briefed the CSD ATSIEB Member as to the intent of this Action and desired Outcome to support this Action being considered a priority for the ATSIEB's work plan. CSD will aim to work with ATSIEB to embed a genuine partnership approach and relationship with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and human services CSD will aim to work with the Elected Body to embed a genuine partnership approach and relationship with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and human services sector to finalise the Strategic Policy Framework.



Develop an engagement plan to increase awareness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy across government and the community, to increase the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses obtaining ACT Government contracts.	On track Procurement ACT's website provides training and support for suppliers wanting to work with the Territory. Procurement ACT has also held targeted sessions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers and enable suppliers to meet with ACT Government buyers. In October 2024, as part of Indigenous Business Month, Procurement ACT has presented to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers to assist them to better understand supplying to the ACT Government. Procurement ACT is also progressing a comprehensive review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy. Importantly, this review will centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.
Establish whole of government cultural standards and protocols, to build the cultural effectiveness of ACTPS staff to enable more impactful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members.	On track CMTEDD Comms & Engagement are finalising additional tools to support the new framework. The framework is currently being reviewed and going through approval process. The document will soon be designed and internal communications will commence.
Ensure that the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is reflected in the operation of Yarramundi Cultural Centre and Boomanulla Oval, as we progress towards returning these assets to full community control.	On track Yerrabi Yurwang remain at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre where they continue to provide and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to access the site for events and functions including Sorry Business. TCCS remain the primary point of contact for Boomanulla Oval.
Identify training to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board members to perform effectively on government boards and committees. If suitable and appropriate training is not available, CMTEDD will work with CIT to explore development of new options.	Completed From an ACTPS staffing perspective, two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members are now fully enrolled in the AICD Company Directors' Course and have completed the in-person component of their courses in May and June in 2024.
The Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs will actively encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate as members of the ACT LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council, and to seek grant funding through the Capital of Equality grants program.	Completed Grants Program have been led by or benefited LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Projects ranged from arts and performance to better outreach and services. An LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person has been supported through the LGBTIQ+ Leadership stream to build their professional skills.
The ACT Government will seek to ensure decision-making processes, including through Budget and Cabinet, are informed by the impact of policies, projects, and programs on the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans including through seeking input from partners and the community.	Completed The Wellbeing Team has implemented the Wellbeing Impact Assessment process which provides for the impact of budget proposals and Cabinet Submissions to indicate the impact of the initiative on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. While this mechanism addresses the impact of initiatives, either through Cabinet or through the Budget process, and provides the capacity to reflect input from partners and the community for these initiatives, it does not address the impact of existing policies, projects or programs, and is not a mechanism through which input from partners and the community for existing policies, projects or programs can be reflected.

Incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives into ACT Government infrastructure projects.

Ongoing/BAU

Inclusion of First Nations cultural perspectives are achieved through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation during the design and delivery of ACT Government projects. Significant ACT Government infrastructure projects being managed by Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) include financial and individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation targets to support stronger economic participation and industry understanding of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives within the infrastructure sector, which leads to better outcomes for the community. Through these targets the ACT Government is ensuring long lasting change for our First Nations people in our projects not only through the built form, but also through economic empowerment. Some examples of projects being undertaken by iCBR include the Canberra Hospital Expansion project which incorporates first nations perspectives through design of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lounge, and also throughout the Welcome Hall with artwork elements that integrate the importance of First Nations culture. The Light Rail project developed a Designing with Country Framework to ensure First Nations perspectives are incorporated into the Light Rail Stage 2B design. In the Canberra Institute of Technology project at Woden, First Nations consultants were engaged to ensure learning spaces enable better learning outcomes and inclusion of First Nations cultural outcomes. The new Yuruana centre design team includes First Nations consultants that are incorporating cultural elements into the design. The Canberra Theatre Project has sought guidance from First Nations people as to how the redeveloped Canberra Theatre Centre can best respond to and incorporate First Nations history and culture in the Canberra Theatre Centre buildings and precinct. Construction of the new Gugan Gulwan Youth Facility has prioritised the inclusion of First Nations cultural elements within the structure and layout of the facility. Some examples of participation targets for the inclusion and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives within the ACT Government's infrastructure workforce empowerment include:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, business, education and training expenditure exceeding \$25m on the Canberra Hospital Expansion project,
- > The Light Rail Stage 2B project has exceeded a 4% employment target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement,
- > The Gugan Gulwan project (at 30 June 2024) has achieved an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rate of 18%.
- > School projects such as the East Gungahlin High School, North Gungahlin High School and Garran Primary School Modernisation include expenditure and/or participation targets along with cultural awareness training for project personnel.
- > Major road and civil infrastructure projects incorporate consultation with local community representatives to ensure cultural heritage impacts can be identified and addressed.
- > Smaller neighbourhood projects increasingly recognise First Nations cultural perspectives within the landscape and the inclusion of First Nations artwork.
- > In 2023-24, many infrastructure projects included landscaping and artwork inspired by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
- > For the Molonglo Valley Library, Libraries ACT collaborated with Ngunnawal Cultural Consulting to incorporate Ngunnawal values, such as sacred site protection and cultural heritage, and representations of flora, fauna, and cultural history throughout the new development.
- > TCCS collaborated on the Sullivans 'Creek to Creek' project, engaging Indigenous artists to paint bridge sides.
- > Indigenous art installations were also added to sport and recreation facilities, including the Ngunnawal District Playing Fields.



Connecting the Community



Target 11: Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Measure not yet defined



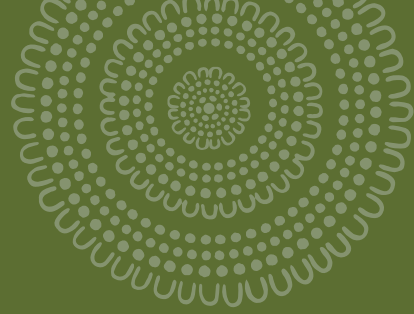
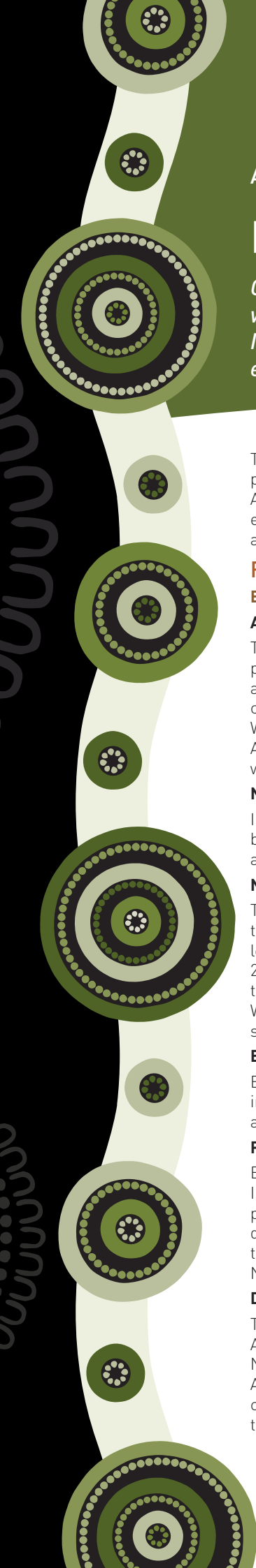
Likelihood of Achievement - Uncertain, due to lack of data.

Indicator 18: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

- > Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting fewer barriers in accessing services

Indicator 19: ACT Indicators require further work and may be informed by the National Closing the Gap Indicators:

- > Number of Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations (ACCOs) contracted by governments across the Closing the Gap socio-economic outcome areas of the Agreement.
- > Number of government contracts awarded to ACCOs (etc)
- > Number of sectors with elements of a strong sector, by element (etc).



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Life-long learning

Outcome: Respect is given to preserving the world's oldest living cultures which enhances social inclusion and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fully engage in lifelong learning and positive generational experiences.

The focus on lifelong learning within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is crucial for preserving the world's oldest living cultures. This commitment enhances social inclusion and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fully engage in lifelong learning and positive generational experiences. The following sections outline recent activities and initiatives aimed at supporting this focus area, particularly in education, student support, and community and cultural initiatives.

Recent Activities – Life-long Learning

Education Initiatives:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Symposium

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Symposium, held on 11 August 2023, was a professional learning event celebrating First Nations histories, cultures, languages, knowledge systems, and teaching methods. The keynote was delivered by Wiradjuri author Anita Heiss, and workshops were conducted by First Nations authors, educators, illustrators, and thinkers. Topics included On Country Walks, Possum Skin Cloaks and Cultural Practices, Indigenous Creativity, Ngunnawal Language, Australian Languages, and Creative Writing and Illustration for Indigenous authored books. The event was attended by 150 Education Directorate staff.

New Educator Inductions

In January 2024, 161 new educators attended sessions on cultural integrity in schools, the difference between a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, Engoori, and embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in teaching.

Ngunnawal Language Workshops

The Education Directorate offers Ngunnawal language workshops which are 2-hour sessions that cover the language revitalisation process and the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal languages. Participants learn to give an Acknowledgement of Country in Ngunnawal language and the associated protocols. In 2023–24, two workshops were held with 24 participants, including school-based and ESO staff, leading to the use of Ngunnawal language in various settings. The Directorate has an agreement with the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to advance Ngunnawal language revitalisation in ACT public schools.

Book Clubs

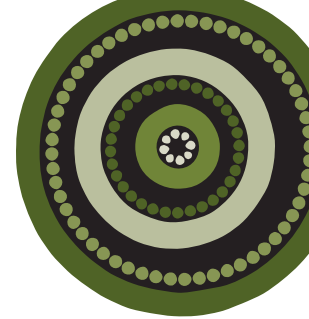
Book clubs help educators integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures into their teaching. In 2023–24, seven book clubs were held with 119 participants. School teachers appreciated the opportunities to share reflections and work samples.

Primary School Resource Development Project

Eight primary school teachers participated in a resource development project in 2023–24, using Indigenous authored texts to create units of work focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, languages, histories, and cultures. The project produced resources on literacy development, On Country experiences, and truth-telling activities, available for ACT public school teachers. A secondary resources development project began in March 2024 and will be completed by November 2024.

Deep Time Curriculum Development Project

The Deep Time curriculum development project focused on the newly included Deep Time history in the Australian Curriculum V9.0. It aimed to create resources to help teachers understand and teach First Nations history, emphasising the 65,000+ year history before colonisation and its ongoing impact. Sixteen ACT public school secondary educators, including five First Nations teachers, participated. The curated content is now available to support the Year 7 HASS curriculum, either as a whole unit or to enhance teachers' understanding.



Student Support Programs:

Student Aspirations Program

The Student Aspirations Program offers tertiary scholarships of up to \$10,000 per annum for three years to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students pursuing a teaching qualification at an ACT university. In 2024, one-year scholarships of up to \$10,000 are also available for full-time study in any course. In 2023–24, two rounds of applications were held, awarding one health-related scholarship and continuing two teaching scholarships from previous years. Secondary scholarships of up to \$4,000 are available annually to senior secondary students to support Year 12 completion and further education. Ten scholarships were awarded for 2024, with nine continuing from 2023. The Mura Awards provide \$400 bursaries to students in key transition years (Years 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11) who show high engagement, leadership, or improved achievement. For 2023, 46 students received Mura Awards, and 66 students were awarded for 2024.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy Program

Operated by Indigenous Allied Health Australia, this Australian School-based Apprenticeship (AsBA) program allows year 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to pursue a Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance while completing their year 12 certificate. Graduates often continue to further education or employment in the field.

In Semester 2, 2024, 2 students were enrolled, and 1 student completed a placement in Semester 2, 2023.

National Skills Agreement

In October 2023, the ACT Chief Minister signed a five-year National Skills Agreement, starting January 1, 2024. This agreement includes a commitment to Closing the Gap, ensuring vocational education and training for First Nations Australians is designed and delivered in partnership with First Nations communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and employment pathways

In 2023–24, the ACT provided opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners through the User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) and Skilled Capital training initiatives. These programs included additional support for Registered Training Organisations enrolling First Nations students to aid retention and completion.

Community and Cultural Initiatives:

ACT Cross-Sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduate Program

In 2023–24, the Legal Aid Commission began planning a graduate program to support one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law graduate in their early legal career. This program, starting in July 2024 and running until June 2026, will be delivered by Legal Aid ACT in collaboration with community legal services, including the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), Care Consumer Law, Canberra Community Law, the Women's Legal Centre ACT, and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The program may continue with new graduates in future years, depending on its success and funding availability.

Mingle Program

The Mingle community space at Whitlam includes an informal Indigenous bookshelf, offering a selection of books by Indigenous authors for community members to borrow and read.

Promoting Public Use and Visibility of Aboriginal Languages

Several initiatives by TCCS in 2023–24 support this focus area and Priority Action 9, which aims to increase the public use and visibility of Aboriginal languages, contributing to the Closing the Gap goal of increasing the number and strength of Aboriginal languages spoken by 2031.

Initiatives:

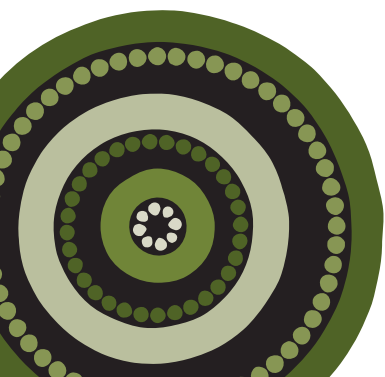
- > Molonglo Valley Library and Community Hub: Libraries ACT collaborated with Bagariin Ngunnawal Cultural Consulting to incorporate Ngunnawal values into the design. The new building was named Yillambidji, meaning 'Molonglo River' in Ngunnawal language.
- > Heritage Festival Workshops: The Heritage Library hosted workshops celebrating Ngunnawal language and culture, featuring Ngunnawal greetings and children's songs shared by the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Aboriginal Corporation.
- > Domestic Animal Services: Worked with traditional custodian elders to name their Symonston facility in Ngunnawal language, with the name to be announced in 2024–25.

These initiatives demonstrate a comprehensive approach to integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into education, supporting students through various scholarship programs, and promoting the use and visibility of Aboriginal languages. By fostering respect for First Nations histories, cultures, and knowledge systems, these efforts contribute to a more inclusive and empowered community, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can fully participate in lifelong learning and achieve positive generational outcomes.

Action Plans Reporting – Life-long Learning

Action	Progress status update
Review subsidy loadings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeships and apprenticeships.	Completed Loadings remain in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for both User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) and Skilled Capital funded training initiatives. Through the National Skills Agreement, signed in October 2023, there is a special policy initiative on Closing the Gap. The Implementation Plan for this initiative is being developed to outline the approach to engaging with First Nations partners to deliver programs to support Closing the Gap.
Strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary and Tertiary Scholarship Programs to support Year 12 retention and attainment and to extend support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking a teaching degree.	Completed The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary and secondary scholarships undergo a process of review at the conclusion of each scholarship year. Work is being undertaken within the Directorate to increase the uptake of the Tertiary Scholarship opportunities. This work will include a revision of the eligibility requirements and an exploration of options that will increase the likelihood of graduates pursuing a teaching career.
Increase community awareness of post school pathways and lifelong learning opportunities available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.	Ongoing/BAU This action has been implemented into BAU. Skills Canberra Field Officers continue to promote community awareness of post school pathways and lifelong learning opportunities available through the ACT Australian Apprenticeship (AA) program. AAs combine paid employment with study towards a nationally recognised qualification. The ACT Government provides substantial subsidies towards the cost of AA training for approximately 100 different trade and 400 different non-trade occupations. The places available are uncapped. To provide additional support to engage in AAs, the ACT Government provides a \$500 loading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AAs and \$1000 loading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AAs with a disability. The same subsidies and loadings are also available for Australian School-based Apprenticeships with the aim of supporting the successful transition from school to work and further learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. More information is available on Skills Canberra's website https://www.act.gov.au/skills
Develop, implement, and promote quality pathways to tertiary qualifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT.	On track Skills Canberra provides a student loading in addition to subsidies paid for both User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) and Skilled Capital programs. The ACT Free TAFE initiative includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander as a priority learner cohort. Through the National Skills Agreement, signed in October 2023, there is a special policy initiative on Closing the Gap. The Implementation Plan for this initiative is being developed to outline the approach to engaging with First Nations partners to deliver programs to support Closing the Gap.

Monitor the uptake and breadth of Australian School-based Apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to inform future planning.	Ongoing/BAU This action has been implemented into BAU. Head Start is an Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASBAs) initiative for ACT public school students administered by the ACT Education Directorate. It provides a tailored school-based apprenticeship and traineeship program that matches a students' job interest with a local business in need of skilled workers. Head Start provides ASbA opportunities in ACT skills needs occupations and industry sectors targeted for future growth. The program also provides access to a dedicated student support officer, career coach and industry coordinator to ensure students and employers are well supported throughout the ASbA pathway. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are strongly encouraged to participate in this program. Since the Head Start pilot commenced in 2022, the program has provided 50 ASbA placements, with six Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island students supported into an ASbA pathway. To date, two of these students have transitioned into full-time apprenticeships with their employers.
Identify opportunities to develop capability and leadership within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including women and on content that has a strong impact on women (gender-based violence)-consistent with We Don't Soot Our Wounded report, recommendation 6.	On track The ACT Government has provided grant funding to support the establishment of 5 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to provide a range of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV). Four of these services are women-led and focus specifically on responses for women and children (see additional detail below). > In 2024 the DFSVO completed a key community consultation project with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members on upcoming projects and programs which address DFSV. To facilitate a culturally safe, responsive and meaningful consultation process the DFSVO engaged Curijo, a 100% Aboriginal and female owned business. The project included consultation on DFSV training to build capability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in the DFSV sector. Outcomes from this consultation continue to inform and influence the development of a strategic approach to support DFSV workforce development and mechanisms to continuously build capability for both specialist and non-specialist DFSV sectors from 2024-25 onwards.



Life-long Learning



Target 12: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (aged 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.

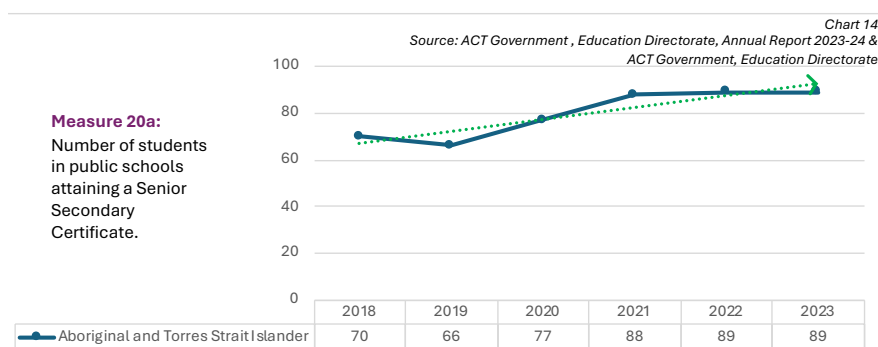
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

On track



Likelihood of Achievement – Based on the current trends and data, it appears that the target of increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (aged 20–24) attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96% by 2031 is on track to be achieved.

Indicator 20: Increasing number of young people complete year 12 or equivalent qualification.

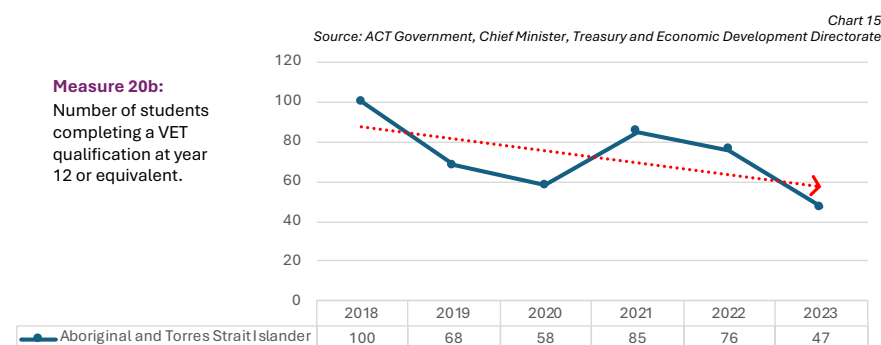


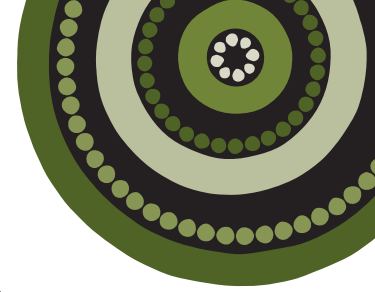
Key Trends and Observations:

- > The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attaining a Senior Secondary Certificate in public schools has shown a positive upward trend from 2018 to 2023.
- > There was a slight decline in attainment between 2018 (70 students) and 2019 (66 students).
- > From 2019 onwards, the numbers increased significantly, reaching 77 in 2020, followed by a steeper rise in 2021 (88 students).
- > The trend then stabilises in 2022 and 2023.

Key Takeaways:

- > Overall after 2019 the trajectory suggests there has been a steady increase in students attaining their Senior Secondary Certificate.
- > If the early trend (2019–2021 growth rate) resumes, the target could be met before 2031. However, if the recent plateau persists, the target will not be achieved.
- > Data should be interpreted with caution: The number of students who are eligible/studying to attain their Senior Secondary Certificate will affect the data and trend.





Key Trends and Observations:

- > In 2018, 100 students completed their qualification, whereas by 2023, this number had dropped to 47.
- > In 2021, there was a temporary increase to 85, suggesting an improvement.
- > However, the downward trend resumed in 2022 (76 students) and continued in 2023 (47 students).

Key Takeaways:

- > The significant decrease from 100 students in 2018 to 47 students in 2023 highlights an ongoing challenge in maintaining VET qualification completion rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- > This suggests that if current patterns continue, further reductions in completion rates can be expected in the future.



Target 13: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 25–34) who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.

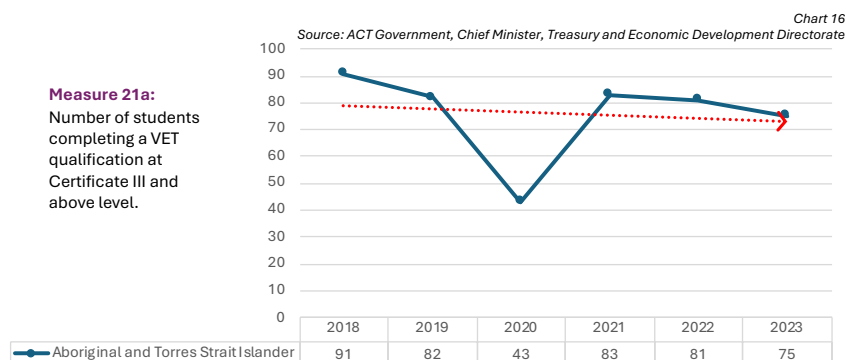
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and data, it appears unlikely that the target of increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 25–34) who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70% by 2031 will be achieved without significant and sustained efforts.

Indicator 21: Increasing number of adults complete a tertiary qualification.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > In 2018, there were 91 completions, but by 2020, this number had dropped drastically to 43.
- > A significant recovery occurred in 2021, with completions rising to 83—nearly back to 2018 levels.
- > Since then, numbers have remained relatively stable, with 81 completions in 2022 and 75 in 2023.

Key Takeaways:

- > The data suggests that while 2020 saw a significant decline, students and institutions were able to recover, bringing numbers back to pre-2020 levels in 2021.
- > This drop may have been influenced by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- > Unlike the declining trend in lower-level VET qualifications (Measure 20b), completions at Certificate III and above have remained relatively stable post-2020, suggesting sustained interest and participation at higher qualification levels.



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Economic Participation

Outcome: Equality of access to employment and growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community services organisations which drives economic development across their communities.

The ACT Government is dedicated to enhancing economic participation and access to employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through targeted employment and training programs, business support initiatives, and inclusive procurement policies, the government is working to create sustainable economic growth and development within Indigenous communities. By fostering a culturally supportive environment and providing opportunities for professional development and career progression, these initiatives are paving the way for a more equitable and prosperous future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT.

Recent Activities – Economic Participation

Employment and Training Programs:

Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy (IFARES)

As part of the ACTF&R strategy to engage suitable applicants, ACTF&R continued to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment initiatives through the Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy (IFARES). In partnership with NSW Fire & Rescue, IFARES offers a unique opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to gain recognised qualifications relating to firefighting and fitness. The 6-month program designed to increase the skills and knowledge of intelligent, fit, health and community-minded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interested in becoming firefighters. Candidates complete a certificate IV in fitness while engaging in simulated firefighter training activities. At the end of the program, graduates will have the option to progress through the ACT Fire & Rescue recruitment process to gain permanent employment as a firefighter.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Pathways Program

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) launched a program in October 2021 to support the employment and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the building and construction sector. In 2023-24, the program employed 7 year 11 students to complete a Certificate II in Workplace Skills, with opportunities for ongoing employment upon finishing year 12. In 2023, 10 students completed the program, with 8 securing ongoing employment with CMTEDD, 1 with an ACT public school, and 1 progressing to higher studies at university.

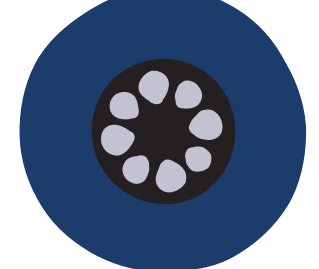
Access and Equity Program

The Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority (the Authority) funds training for entry-level and eligible existing workers to develop skills in short supply in the ACT building and construction industry. During 2023-24, several initiatives were undertaken to enhance participation and retention of Indigenous workers. The Authority provided financial incentives to employers hiring Indigenous apprentices, offering \$4,000 per apprentice in the first year of their ACT Training Contract, supporting 45 Indigenous apprentices. The Authority also improved training and mentoring initiatives to boost retention and success rates of Indigenous apprentices, with input from Indigenous communities, the CIT Yurauna Centre, and industry stakeholders, fostering a culturally supportive learning environment.

In response to industry feedback, the Authority is exploring additional support mechanisms to help Indigenous workers transition from entry-level roles to advanced positions. This includes increased funding for training rebates and scholarships for Certificate IV and Diploma level training in Building and Construction. These initiatives demonstrate the Authority's commitment to improving access and equity in the construction sector, ensuring Indigenous Australians have the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

CHS Attracting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees

CHS is working to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in its workforce. In 2023-24, they engaged with specialist recruitment agencies, launched a recruitment kit, improved data reporting, and introduced 'yarning circles' for interviews. They also promoted careers at expos, updated the application portal, advertised on Indigenous platforms, funded leadership summit attendance, and held cultural events and community breakfasts.



For 2024-25, CHS plans to fund attendance at the Garma Festival, implement a wellbeing strategy, continue cultural events, support professional development, formalise a staff network, refresh cultural training, and implement care model recommendations. These efforts aim to attract and retain Indigenous employees and create an inclusive work environment.

CMTEDD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention

CMTEDD continued implementing its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action and Retention Plan 2021-24 to enhance recruitment, retention, and professional development. Key initiatives in 2023-24 included:

- > Promoting Identified positions to create career progression pathways and incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
- > Improving recruitment for Identified positions using diverse advertising channels and supporting new starters in connecting with staff networks.
- > Promoting the Professional Development Fund for relevant development activities, such as the Queensland University of Technology's Public Sector Management Program and the First Nations Women in Leadership Summit.

The CMTEDD Gender Action Plan 2024-28 focuses on career progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to reduce the gender pay gap. Activities include strengthening pathways from entry-level to mid-career programs, facilitating progression into senior leadership, and ensuring strong female representation in leadership programs.

The CMTEDD Employment Pathway Program offers entry-level opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their final two years of secondary school through the Australian School Based Apprenticeship (ASBA) model. In 2023-24, two participants completed the program, with one accepting permanent employment. Currently, eight students are undertaking the program.

CMTEDD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career and Professional Development

The CMTEDD has implemented a comprehensive career and professional development program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across the ACTPS through centralised funding. This initiative targets various classifications to support leaders at all levels.

The program includes eight places for SOG C-A at the 2024 Indigenous Leadership Summit, six places for SOG C-A on the Australian and New Zealand School of Government's Authentic Leadership for the Path Ahead Program, and eight places for ASO4-6 staff on the Institute of Public Administration Australia's First Nations Emerging Leaders Program.

Additionally, the CTB facilitated four staff members to complete the Queensland University of Technology Public Sector Management Program and two staff members to complete the Australian Institute of Company Directors Course.

Business Support and Procurement:

CMTEDD Business support - Badji Program

The directorate continued to support Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through the Badji Program, offering business support and concierge services. In 2023-24, the program supported 30 local Indigenous businesses across various industries, including Healthcare, Arts and Recreation, Administration, Consultancy, Construction, Facilities Management, Hospitality, Food Production, Education, and Cultural Services.

The Badji Program referred businesses to support providers like the Canberra Innovation Network, Canberra Indigenous Business Network, ASIC, Worksafe ACT, Access Canberra, Procurement ACT, ACT Health, VisitCanberra, ANU, and Indigenous Business Australia. Promotion was done through the program manager's website, e-newsletters, social channels, and participation in community events such as the 2024 Multicultural Festival, 2023 NAIDOC Week, and Reconciliation Day events.

In April 2024, an open tender process was conducted for the continuation of the Badji Program from June 2024 to May 2026. The refreshed program will continue concierge-led services, enhance trade and export capacity, and facilitate networking opportunities. A program manager was engaged to deliver the program until May 2026.

CMTEDD Procurement Policies and Support

Procurement ACT attended the Canberra Indigenous Business Showcase in October 2023 and presented recent procurement developments relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises. From July 1, 2024, under the Government Procurement Regulation 2007, Territory officers can seek exemptions to directly source goods and services up to \$500,000 and construction-related procurements up to \$1 million from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises.

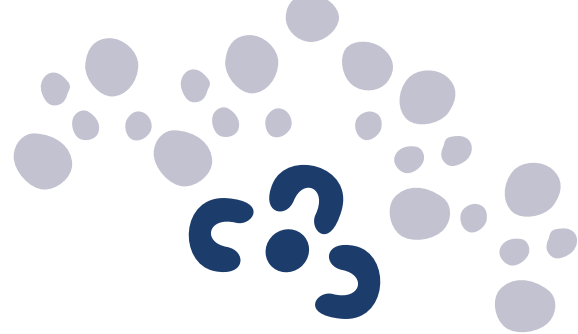
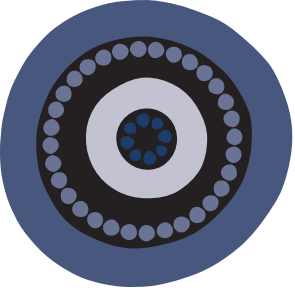
CMTEDD supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy by managing the Canberra Region Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprise list and dashboard reporting for each Territory entity. The policy, which began in 2019, will undergo a comprehensive review in the 2024-25 financial year as part of the Procurement Reform Program.

Tourism and Cultural Programs:

Aboriginal Tourism Programs

VisitCanberra developed and delivered 69 Aboriginal tourism programs for national and international tourists in the first half of 2024. We collaborated with CIT to offer a tourism program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (ages 17-24), including cultural practice sessions and day trips to local cultural sites, attracting around 35 participants. Additionally, we continue to sell products created by local Aboriginal people at the Canberra and Regions Visitors Centre.





Major Projects and Infrastructure:

CFC Facility Operations & Capital Works

FOCW actively uses the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprise List Database to identify relevant enterprises in the Canberra Region for delivering works. Contractors are encouraged to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises as sub-contractors on large projects, with contracts designed to include Indigenous participation targets, verified through contract administration. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and the Canberra Region Local Participation Policy are also utilised. Securing local jobs is crucial for the CFC FOCW team due to the specialised nature of our facilities and collections, ensuring exemplary and reliable services.

Summary of Major Projects Canberra Initiatives:

- > **Canberra Hospital Expansion:**
 - Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, businesses, and training.
 - Achieved over \$25 million in expenditure on these initiatives by June 2024.
- > **Light Rail Project:**
 - Stage 2: 2% spend target on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise capability.
 - Raising London Circuit: 2.5% workforce target, exceeded with 4.1%.
 - Stage 2A: 4% workforce target.
 - Technical Advisor AECOM engaged a First Nations subconsultant for design framework.
- > **Property Management:**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre upgrade at Yarramundi Reach.
 - First Nations artwork commissioned for CIT Project Package 1 – Easty Street.
- > **CIT Projects:**
 - Package 2/3 Woden Campus: 10% procurement target, cultural design integration by Yerrabingin.
 - Package 4 Yurauna Centre: Design by First Nations consultants, construction by First Nations-led contractors.
- > **Canberra Theatre Redevelopment:**
 - Engagement with First Nations people led by Yerrabingin for design and cultural integration.
- > **EOGGA Program:**
 - Electrification projects by Projex, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned company.
- > **Commercial Infrastructure:**
 - East Gungahlin (Shirley Smith) High School: 5% subcontracted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprise.
 - North Gungahlin (Agnes Shea) High School: 4% contract spend target.
 - Garran Primary School Modernisation: 1.75% contract spend target.

> Civil Infrastructure:

- Grevillea Park Dragon Boat Facility: Constructed by a Canberra-based Aboriginal enterprise.
- New Material Recovery Facility and FOGO Facility: Heritage assessment with Aboriginal Organisations.
- Monaro Highway Upgrade: 4% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation spend.
- Gundaroo Drive Stage 3: Landscape design by local Aboriginal company.
- John Gorton Drive and Molonglo River Bridge: 2.4% Indigenous expenditure target.
- Playgrounds and Toilet Facilities: Aboriginal artwork by local artists.
- Kippax Oval Reactivation: Aboriginal artwork on water cabinet structure.

Community Support and Engagement:

ACT NoWaste Contract with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Businesses

In early 2024, ACT NoWaste entered a 12-month contract with Onpoint 365 Pty Ltd, an Indigenous-owned business providing scribing services. This contract will support ACT NoWaste's recruitment and procurement activities and aligns with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) objectives of increasing employment and economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Canberra Region. ACT NoWaste aims to meet the Territory's target of 2% of the 2023–24 financial year's addressable spend going to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learner Drivers

The Learner Driver Mentor Program, funded by the ACT Road Safety Fund and delivered by the Salvation Army, helps disadvantaged young learner drivers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to gain their provisional licence. The program provides access to ACT Accredited Driving Instructors, the Vulnerable Road User Program, the Safer Driver Course, and volunteer driver mentors to help learners accumulate the required driving hours. Obtaining a licence can open up opportunities for education, employment, and community engagement.

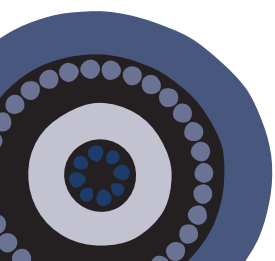
The comprehensive efforts of the ACT Government to enhance economic participation and access to employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples demonstrate a strong commitment to equity and inclusion. Through targeted employment and training programs, business support initiatives, and inclusive procurement policies, the government is working to create sustainable economic growth and development within Indigenous communities. By fostering a culturally supportive environment and providing opportunities for professional development and career progression, these initiatives are paving the way for a more equitable and prosperous future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT.

Action Plans Reporting – Life-long Learning

Action	Economic Participation
Review the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to ensure its cultural effectiveness and capacity to maximise opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises and workers.	Completed The review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy was completed in Q4 2024-25. Updates to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy are anticipated to be delivered in Q1 2025-26.
Provide information sessions, guidance and engagement opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that may wish to tender for Territory procurements such as workshops, supplier guides and supplier connect events.	Completed Procurement ACT's website provides training and guidance for suppliers seeking to work with the Territory. In Q2 2024-25, as part of Indigenous Business Month, Procurement ACT presented to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to assist them to better understand and respond to ACT Government procurement processes.
Business and Innovation branch to deliver the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business support Program with Coolamon Advisors, providing: Mentoring and Coaching advice; Concierge connections to business support providers; and access to Accelerator programs for businesses looking to grow.	On track The Badji program continues to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the ACT. Between June 2022 to December 2024, Badji has: > supported 63 unique businesses or individuals during 97 different engagements across a range of industries including Healthcare, Arts and recreation, Administration and support, Consultancy, Construction, Facilities management, Hospitality, Food production, Education and training, and Cultural services; > worked with stakeholders in the ecosystem to develop long term opportunities for Indigenous businesses including liaising with staff from the Canberra Theatre redevelopment project and hosting two workshops with Major Projects Canberra focusing on the Indigenous Procurement Policy; > referred client businesses to a range of eco-system support providers, including the Canberra Innovation Network, the Canberra Indigenous Business Network, Supply Nation, Canberra Business Chamber, Canberra Women in Business, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Access Canberra, Procurement ACT, ACT Government Health, Visit Canberra, the Australian National University, and Indigenous Business Australia; > commenced discussions with the Bush Healing Farm to assist with their 2025 procurement needs; > participated in the CBR Small Business Expo held at EPIC in May 2024; > delivered the inaugural Badji Pitch on a Page micro grant program in September 2024, enabling local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to participate in program delivery and engage in learning and mentoring activities to enhance competitiveness; > delivered a series of targeted 'Working Together Ecosystem Workshops' to support Indigenous Business Month in October 2024, providing information and advice regarding taxation considerations for business, identifying and applying for grants, business financials basics, and ACT Government procurement delivered in conjunction with Procurement ACT; > hosted a stall at NAIDOC Family Day on 26 October 2024, supporting other groups and organisations to attend the Day and engage with Community to promote awareness of the Program.
Facilitate business development workshops, for current business owners and prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and businesses, to increase the number of cost-competitive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that meet the Territory's requirements.	On track In October 2024 Badji delivered a series of targeted 'Working Together Ecosystem Workshops' to support Indigenous Business Month. The workshops provided information and advice regarding taxation considerations for business, identifying and applying for grants, business financials basics, and ACT Government procurement delivered in conjunction with Procurement ACT.



Maximise opportunities to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with the ACT Public Service workforce, to achieve the employment target of 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People employed across the Service by 2026.	On track The Culture & Pathways Team in the Cultural Transformation Branch has developed a draft best practice recruitment guide for positions specifically identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be implemented across Whole of Government. The draft version was presented to CMTEDD Elected Body member in February 2025 for feedback. Consultation with the remainder of the Elected Body, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the Community and Public Sector Unions is due to commence February/March 2025.
Establish a whole of government Inclusion key performance indicator to ensure the ACT Public Service is consistently building and maintaining inclusive workplace cultures. Progress against this target will be measured objectively through All Staff Surveys.	Completed KPI has been set and will be utilised following the 2025 all staff survey.
Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action and Retention Plan, to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development. This will in turn provide greater opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to form and influence policy development and service delivery.	On track The Culture & Pathways Team in the Cultural Transformation Branch has developed a draft best practice recruitment guide for positions specifically identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be implemented across Whole of Government. The draft version was presented to CMTEDD Elected Body member in February 2025 for feedback. Consultation with the remainder of the Elected Body, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the Community and Public Sector Unions is due to commence February/March 2025.
Incorporate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans through conducting Wellbeing Impact Assessments for new budget, projects, and programs, with input from partners and community.	Completed The ACT Government uses Wellbeing Impact Assessments (WIAs) to ensure that proposals before Government consider the wellbeing impacts of decisions, which can support the development of policies and programs that lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and deliver on our commitments to Closing the Gap. WIAs have been a requirement for business cases since the 2021-22 Budget, and a requirement for all Cabinet submissions from the beginning of 2022. The WIA template includes questions to prompt consideration of a proposal's impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as how the proposal supports commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028. The template encourages appropriate engagement with the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the Aboriginal Service Development Branch, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. From 2023, collaborative work between Policy and Cabinet, Treasury, the Aboriginal Service Development Branch and the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has supported staff across the service to identify the impact of proposals on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and whether proposals will contribute to Closing the Gap targets and outcomes. This work has included information sessions, drop-in sessions for one-to-one support, and developing comprehensive resources for staff involved in drafting new proposals or developing business cases. As part of the Budget process, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body is invited to share their insights on the issues impacting the community through Budget consultation.



Economic Participation



Target 14: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (aged 15–24) who are in employment, education, or training to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australian youth.

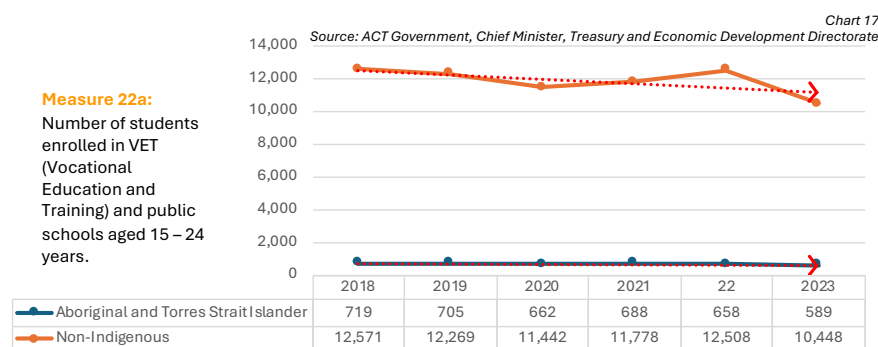
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

**Status
Unknown**



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown. While the indicator data on training and employment provides valuable insights, it is not sufficient on its own to fully indicate the likelihood of achieving the target.

Indicator 22: Increasing number of youth aged 15 – 24 are in education, training or employment.

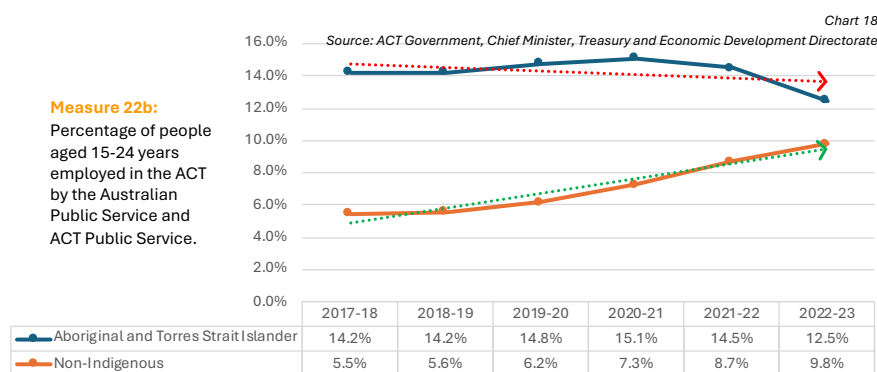


Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment:
 - Enrolment numbers steadily declined from 719 in 2018 to 589 in 2023, reflecting an 18% decrease over the six-year period.
 - Unlike the Non-Indigenous group, which saw minor increases in certain years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments have shown a steady downward trajectory with no signs of recovery. The small rise in 2021 (from 662 in 2020 to 688 in 2021) was not sustained, as numbers dropped again in subsequent years.
- > Non-Indigenous enrolment:
 - Non-Indigenous enrolments started at 12,571 in 2018 but experienced periodic declines, dropping to 11,442 in 2020 before recovering slightly in 2021 and 2022. The latest data from 2023 shows a sharp decline to 10,448, marking a 17% overall drop from 2018.
 - Unlike the steady downward trend observed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments, Non-Indigenous enrolment experienced some short-term gains in 2021 and 2022 (11,778 and 12,508 students, respectively).

Key Takeaways:

- > Non-Indigenous enrolments, are also declining, showing that VET participation is falling across both demographic groups.
- > If the current trajectory continues, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment rate will continue decreasing, potentially falling below 500 students by 2031.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth:
 - The employment rate remained steady at 14.2% in both 2017-18 and 2018-19, rising slightly to 14.8% in 2019-20 and peaking at 15.1% in 2020-21.
 - A noticeable drop occurred from 15.1% in 2020-21 to 14.5% in 2021-22, and further to 12.5% in 2022-23, marking the lowest point in the recorded period and indicating a downward shift in representation.
 - The red dotted trend line suggests an expected stable or slightly increasing trajectory, but actual figures have diverged downward.
- > Non-Indigenous Youth:
 - Starting at 5.5% in 2017-18, the percentage of Non-Indigenous youth employed in the ACT public service increased steadily each year reaching a high of 9.8% in 2022-23.
 - The green dotted line shows a consistent upward trend that aligns closely with the actual data, reflecting continuous growth in employment among Non-Indigenous youth in the ACT public service.

Key Takeaways:

- > Despite a strong starting point and early growth, the recent decline in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth employment in the ACT public service highlights a concerning reversal.
- > The consistent and steady increase in employment among Non-Indigenous youth suggests successful inclusion efforts or broader access to public service employment pathways for this group.
- > While the gap in representation was wide in earlier years, the recent trends show convergence — not due to rising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, but because of a drop in their rates and a rise among Non-Indigenous youth.



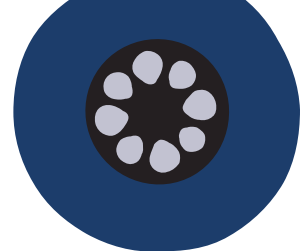
Target 15: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years who are employed to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australians.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

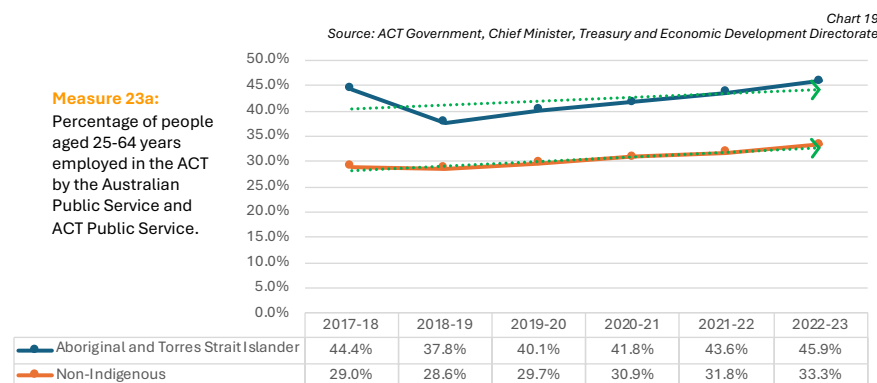
**Status
Unknown**



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown. While the indicator data on training and employment provides valuable insights, it is not sufficient on its own to fully indicate the likelihood of achieving the target. The available data reflects only public sector employment and does not capture overall employment across all sectors, which is necessary to assess true progress toward parity.



Indicator 23: Increase the proportion of people employed in the ACT by the Public Service.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:
 - Employment in the ACT public service dropped from 44.4% in 2017-18 to 37.8% in 2018-19, indicating a notable dip early in the period. However, this was followed by a consistent upward trend, 40.1% in 2019-20, 41.8% in 2020-21, 43.6% in 2021-22 and peaking at 45.9% in 2022-23, the highest across the six-year span.
 - The solid line closely follows the green dotted trend line, showing overall positive momentum and a strong recovery from the initial drop, ending above the trend projection.
- > Non-Indigenous:
 - Starting from 29.0% in 2017-18, the employment rate saw a slight dip to 28.6% in 2018-19, but has steadily increased each year since, 29.7% in 2019-20, 30.9% in 2020-21, 31.8% in 2021-22 and reaching 33.3% in 2022-23.
 - The data points mirror the orange dotted trend line closely, indicating sustained improvement without significant volatility.

Key Takeaways:

- > Despite a dip in 2018-19, this group has demonstrated significant growth in employment within the ACT public service, surpassing their 2017-18 levels by 2022-23 and showing strong upward momentum.
- > While both groups improved over time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation remains substantially higher across all years, suggesting strong engagement in public service roles but also highlighting the importance of sustaining support to maintain this level.
- > The upward trends for both groups indicate overall progress in workforce engagement within the ACT public sector, signalling inclusive employment practices and potential for continued growth.



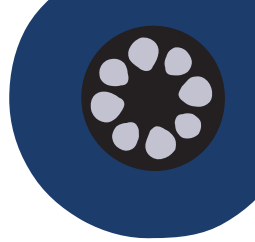
Target 16: Increase the proportion of high value contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

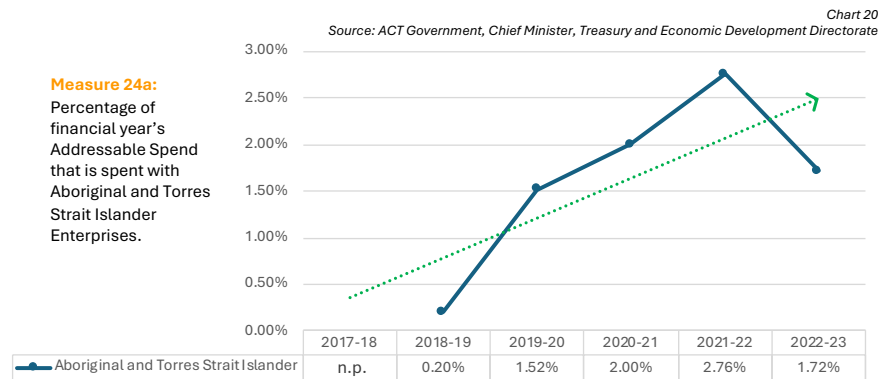
On track



Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and data, it appears that the target of increasing the proportion of high-value contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses is on track.



Indicator 24: Increase in the percentage of Addressable Spend that is spent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises.



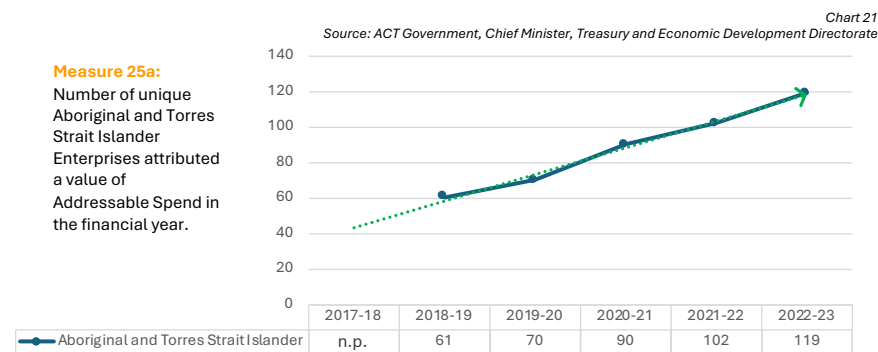
Key Trends and Observations:

- > No data available for 2017-18 financial year.
- > Starting at a mere 0.20% in 2017-18, the spend saw a remarkable jump to 1.52% in 2019-20 and further increased to 2.76% in 2021-22.
- > Despite steady growth in the earlier years, the percentage dropped from 2.76% in 2021-22 to 1.72% in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

- > The overall trend from 2017-2022 shows a strong push towards increasing investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises.
- > The decline in 2022-23 could be a temporary. Future years will be critical in determining whether spending will recover and continue on a positive trajectory.

Indicator 25: Increase in the number of unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises attributed a value of Addressable Spend in financial year.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > No data available for 2017-18 financial year.
- > It started at 61 enterprises in 2017-18, gradually increasing to 70 in 2019-20, then 90 in 2020-21, and reaching 119 in 2022-23.
- > Unlike the spending percentage (from the previous chart) which showed a drop in 2022-23, the number of unique enterprises engaged has continued to rise without any setbacks. This suggests that while the amount spent fluctuated, the outreach to businesses has remained a priority.

Key Takeaways:

- > The consistent increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises receiving addressable spend suggests that procurement policies are effectively broadening participation.
- > The data reflects a clear and sustained commitment to engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in procurement processes. This trend is promising for economic inclusion and capacity-building in these communities.



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Health and Wellbeing

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equity in health and wellbeing outcomes as any other members of the community.

The ACT Government is dedicated to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples achieve equity in health and wellbeing outcomes comparable to other community members. This commitment is reflected in a variety of health initiatives and programs designed to address the unique needs and challenges faced by Indigenous communities. Key focus areas include culturally safe community engagement, comprehensive health service planning, targeted mental health and suicide prevention efforts, and the development of specialised health facilities and services. These initiatives aim to create a supportive and inclusive healthcare environment that promotes self-determination and improves overall health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Recent Activities – Health and Wellbeing

Health Initiatives and Programs:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Roundtable

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Roundtable was held in Kaurna Country/Adelaide on 7 October 2022. The final report was released in late 2023, allowing formal implementation to begin. The 2022 Roundtable focused on four key areas: improving actions under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, understanding cultural determinants (including cultural safety and governance), ensuring representation in Australia's health workforce, and respecting data sovereignty.

Since the 2022 Roundtable, the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) has:

- › Represented the ACT on the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Collaboration, supporting a national work plan, including an independent review of health care for First Nations persons in correctional settings.
- › Collaborated with the Victorian Department of Health on a national resource for Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance, with principles set by Maïam nayri Wingara as the default standard.
- › Supported First Nations sector partners, with Winnunga Nimmityjah becoming the sector partner for the ACT.

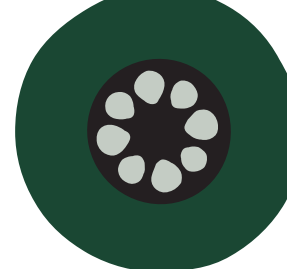
Community Engagement

Health and Wellbeing is a significant area in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028. However, the ACT Childhood Healthy Eating and Active Living Programs audit highlighted a lack of specific action areas in the Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preventive health. To address this, the Directorate engaged Curijo, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise, to facilitate culturally safe and strengths-based community engagement. This project aimed to understand local health priorities and cultural determinants to create supportive environments for self-determination.

A desktop review identified key themes and research questions for preventive health, guiding the consultation strategy. This work builds trust, enables truth-telling, and supports nation-building, informing policy realignment and contributing to the Health and Wellbeing focus area within the ACT Agreement Phase 2 Health Directorate Implementation Plan and the National Closing the Gap targets. The Directorate sought guidance from the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on implementing interim First Nations protocols for inclusive consultation.

Other examples of culturally safe community engagement include:

- › Establishing Thirrili Limited for suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and aftercare.
- › Forming the Maternity in Focus Advisory Group for community collaboration.
- › Developing a Birthing on Country model of care.
- › Reviewing ACT Government-funded mental health services in the Yulang Report (2023).



Immunisation

During 2023-24, the Directorate conducted community consultations to improve vaccination rates in the ACT after a decline. A total of 88 people participated through 4 face-to-face focus groups, 2 online discussion boards, and 10 in-depth interviews, including specific cohorts including as First Nations people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services Planning

During 2023-24, the Directorate engaged with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to understand their health service needs for future planning. Monthly data deep dives were conducted with the ATSIEB member for Health, following the presentation of the ACT and Region Indigenous Demographic Data report in late 2023. These consultations aimed to gather community feedback and raise awareness of projects like First Nations Data, Birthing in Community, NBHF programs, and Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance.

A major consultation event was held on May 27, 2024, at Commonwealth Park for Reconciliation Day, where Directorate and CHS staff, along with the Health Care Consumers' Association, hosted a stall to discuss health topics and promote employment opportunities. Information on the ACT Health Services Plan, ACT Child and Adolescent Health Services Plan, Birthing in Community, and the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) was provided. Visitors were encouraged to complete a survey on their health service experiences, with 88 surveys collected (18 online and 70 paper). The feedback will be used to align planning outcomes with community needs.

Consultation and Engagement on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Community Forum was held on March 15, 2024, at Exhibition Park. Open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from the ACT and surrounding regions, the forum was attended by the Minister for Mental Health. It was a partnership between the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, and Thirrili Limited.

Over 80 participants, including community members, government representatives, and mental health sector workers, attended the forum. Key themes raised included addressing systemic racism and poverty, ensuring self-determination in data, changing commissioning processes to meet holistic client needs, increasing support for the ACT ATSIEB, and improving relations between mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. The feedback will be incorporated into future health service planning.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perinatal Mental Health Research Design Workshop

On March 28, 2024, Elders, Leaders, and Community Members attended a First Nations Perinatal Mental Health Research Proposal Design Workshop. Organised by the

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Team, ACT Health, the workshop aimed to explore challenges faced by mothers in accessing comprehensive perinatal mental health care. Approximately 20 key stakeholders, including Elders and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, participated.

Winnunga Nimmityjah

Winnunga Nimmityjah continues to provide culturally safe, holistic primary health care services to the ACT and surrounding First Nations communities. The ACT Government has committed additional funding to support Winnunga Nimmityjah's full-time presence in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). They are working in partnership with the CHS' Justice Health Service and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to develop and implement the model of care at the AMC and the ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-24. Winnunga Nimmityjah has been commissioned \$3.9 million for 2022-23 financial year (with indexation for 2023-24) for primary health services, harm reduction, policy collaboration, community events, business administration, healthcare coordination for detainees at AMC, and mental health nurses.

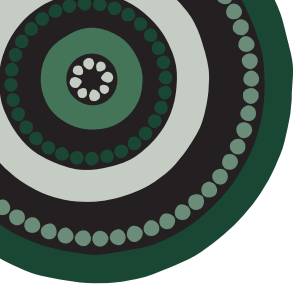
First Nations Alcohol and Other Drug Residential Rehabilitation Facility

The ACT Government is establishing the ACT's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific AOD residential rehabilitation service. The 2022-23 Budget allocated \$1.998 million over 2 years for Winnunga Nimmityjah for building design, project management, and AOD capacity building and training. Of this, \$945,000 has been provided, with the remaining \$1.053 million re-profiled to 2024-25.

The 2023-24 Budget included \$49 million over 3 years for redeveloping and expanding the Watson Health Precinct, including the new AOD facility and new facilities for the Ted Noffs Foundation. The development application (DA) was lodged in September 2023, with delays due to bushfire protection zone requirements. An amended DA was lodged on May 23, 2024. Planning authority approval was granted at the end of 2024.

Try Test Learn Initiative: Intensive First Nations Perinatal Case Management Support

Analysis and mapping of the perinatal mental health service landscape was completed in December 2023 to identify gaps in the existing perinatal mental health service system. This identified a need for greater perinatal mental health support for First Nations mothers. In June 2024, the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) provided a Deed of Grant to Clybucca Dreaming for a Try-Test -Learn initiative for Intensive First Nations Perinatal Case Management Support, to support First Nations mothers and their babies.



Community co-design specialised mental health service for young people

In 2023, the Directorate engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants, Yulang Indigenous Evaluation, to review ACT Government mental health services available to First Nations people, and to identify approaches to enhance culturally appropriate care. The Yulang Report highlighted significant gaps in mental health service provision for First Nations children and young people. To address this issue, the 2024–25 ACT Government Budget has allocated funding for a 2-year FTE position to coordinate a community co-design of a specialised First Nations led mental health service for young people that will support self-determination, agency and choice. This project is the first step in addressing the need to strengthen the mental health service sector to deliver culturally appropriate mental health services by and for First Nations young people.

Model of Care at the Alexander Maconochie Centre

The ACT Government has allocated an additional \$9.4 million over 4 years (2022–23 to 2025–26) to support Winnunga Nimmityjah services at the AMC, including services delivered by Canberra Health Services (CHS).

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

The Health Directorate funds Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to provide culturally appropriate health and wellbeing programs for First Nations children, youth, and their families. Gugan Gulwan has been commissioned for the 2023–24 financial year \$1.2 million for the StreetBeat Youth Outreach Program, AOD harm reduction, preventive health program, and Early Intervention Mental Health and Wellbeing Outreach Program.

Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF)

The ACT Government is committed to delivering residential community-controlled services at Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF), supporting self-determination in partnership with Traditional Custodians and First Nations people. The NBHF Advisory Board was reviewed in mid-2023, and the Directorate continues to support residential and day services.

For the residential project, a budget of \$1.8 million was allocated for 2022–24, with \$644,000 rolled over and \$158,000 expended in 2022–23. The strategic project focuses on establishing a First Nations-led governance mechanism for community control and residential services, while the operational project aims to enhance day programs for a smooth transition to residential services.

The 2023–24 operations budget is \$1.702 million, with \$1.104 million for staffing and programs and \$598,000 for infrastructure. Staffing includes 6 full-time equivalent positions, with a trial of a 7th casual peer support role. Day programs run for 10 weeks, 4 days per week, and include case management, trauma recovery, cultural activities, and more.

Participant outcomes from June to December 2023 included 15 participants, with 2 programs planned for January

to June 2024, expecting 30 participants. Outcomes vary, including program completion, employment, and family reunification.

The infrastructure budget for 2023–24 is \$600,000, with funding allocated for a new machinery and workshop shed, regular maintenance, and urgent upgrades, including road repairs and machinery shed replacement. Future infrastructure development depends on the endorsement of the residential model of care.

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention and Aftercare Service

The ACT Government has established a culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and aftercare service, provided by Thirrili Limited. In 2023, Thirrili, in collaboration with ABSTARR Consulting, conducted community engagement and co-design activities to ensure the service met the needs of ACT First Nations Communities. This included sessions with community members, stakeholders, and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Partnership Group.

Using feedback from these activities, Thirrili and the Partnership Group developed a service model, which was endorsed and commenced operations in late 2023. In early 2024, representatives from the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing and Thirrili met with the CEO of Winnunga Nimmityjah to establish a collaborative working relationship. Thirrili is now receiving referrals from and engaging with programs at Winnunga Nimmityjah.

On 15 March 2024, a community forum on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention was hosted by the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Thirrili, and Winnunga Nimmityjah. Thirrili presented an update on the service and received feedback from attendees, committing to improve connections with ACT First Nations communities.

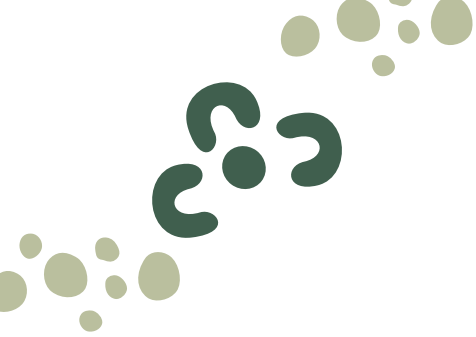
The ACT Government remains committed to ensuring self-determination is central to the service model, providing support and oversight to Thirrili. Due to the limited number of cases, data on suicide and self-harm among First Nations people in the ACT is currently limited.

The service is developed with principles from the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028, ensuring a community-led commissioning process. It aims to be the first in Australia to holistically incorporate suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and aftercare into a community-led, co-designed model, enhancing support for individuals, families, and communities after suicide attempts or completions.

Indigenous Allied Health Australia National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy

The Indigenous Allied Health Australia National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy in the ACT is crucial for increasing the First Nations health workforce and improving culturally accessible services. The 2023–24





Budget allocated \$1.25 million over three years for its continuation, with support from the Health Directorate.

In 2023, three of the four students graduated from the ACT Academy. In 2024, there are 22 students enrolled. The ACT Government offers placement opportunities within Canberra Health Services, Education Directorate, and Community Services Directorate. IAHA provides cultural responsiveness training for all placement supervisors.

The ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023–2032, launched on 4 May 2023, prioritises focusing on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and creating a culturally safe environment. Action plans for 2025–26, 2027–29, and 2030–32 will be developed. The 2025–26 Action Plan will be published in mid 2025.

Together, Forward - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Needs Assessment and Action Plan

The Together, Forward, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Needs Assessment and Action Plan outlines how CHS supports the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2023–24, CHS reviewed the 2020–22 plan and launched the 2023–25 plan with updated data and initiatives aligned with national and ACT-specific commitments.

Key initiatives and progress include:

- > Improving mandatory reporting processes for children and young people.
- > Developing a Child and Family Network and a draft Staff Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy.
- > Enhancing access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on outpatient waitlists.
- > Supporting the development of the ACT Disability Health Strategy.
- > Establishing an MoU with Winnunga Nimmityjah for care of pregnant detainees and detainees who are parents or carers.
- > Developing a strategy for health care delivery at AMC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees.
- > Installing artwork by Wiradjuri artist Rechelle Turner in the Radiation Oncology Change Rooms.
- > Implementing specialised training on trauma-informed care and practice including culturally specific trauma informed care.

These efforts aim to improve cultural safety, wellbeing, and access to health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Community Awareness and Support Programs:

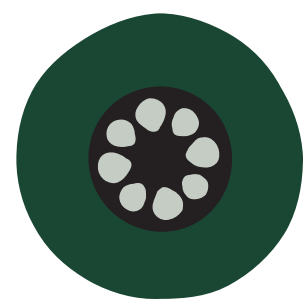
Raising Awareness of Gambling Harm in First Nations Communities

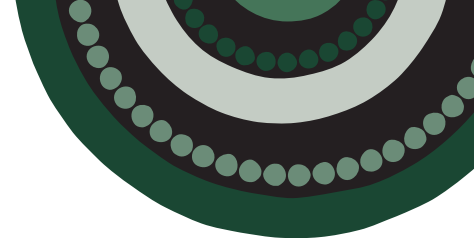
The ACT Gambling Support Service, funded by the Commission, has been engaging weekly with the Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation. A counsellor and lived experience worker visit Yeddung Mura to raise awareness of gambling harm and share stories at the yarning circle.

During Gambling Harm Awareness Week 2023, an awareness campaign targeted First Nations audiences through digital advertisements on specific websites and platforms. The campaign was scheduled during periods of high gambling activity: October–December (football finals, Spring racing carnival, Christmas), February–March (start of football seasons), and July–August (tax return period).

In 2023–24, Commission staff also engaged Gudan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to develop and implement a school education program tailored to First Nations young people and social workers supporting them and their families.

The ACT Government's comprehensive approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples demonstrates a strong commitment to equity and cultural safety. Through targeted health initiatives, community engagement, and the development of specialised services, the government is working to address the unique health needs of Indigenous communities. By fostering a culturally supportive environment and promoting self-determination, these efforts aim to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to the healthcare and support they need to thrive. The ongoing dedication to these initiatives highlights the importance of creating a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system for all.

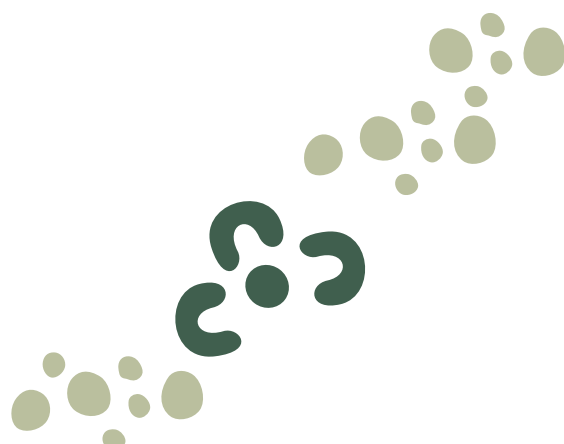




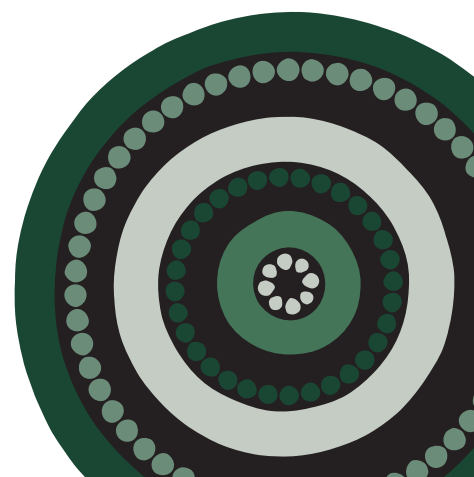
Action Plans Reporting – Health and Wellbeing

Action	Economic Participation
Develop systems and mechanisms that support the adoption of healing aware and Trauma Informed Care and Practice (TICP) in health, justice, and education service delivery.	Completed The ACT Government is integrating Trauma Informed Care and Practice (TICP) across health, justice, and education sectors to support trauma survivors. This approach involves training providers to recognise and respond to trauma, creating safe environments, and implementing supportive policies. By adopting TICP, the government aims to promote healing, resilience, and a compassionate service delivery system that enhances the well-being of individuals in these sectors.
Develop an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Action Plan, including the use of appropriately collated data to create pathways to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing workforce in the ACT. This plan will be iterated to ensure alignment with local responses to national implementation plans when they become available. This includes the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031 and the Health Sector Strengthening Plan.	On track Initial engagement planning has commenced and feedback from these initial engagements will form the themes for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Ideas Forum that will be held in the first half of 2025. The ACT Health Directorate participated in the National Allied Health Workforce Strategy Online First Nations Workforce Yarn in August 2024. The forum feedback aligns with early Community and stakeholder feedback in the ACT regarding recognition and representation in the workforce, workforce models co-designed with community and clearer pathways. These will contribute to themes that will be investigated at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Ideas Forum in 2025. The ACT Health Directorate attended the NAATSIHWP Scope of Practice Stakeholder Workshop in October 2024. Follow up engagement will include collaborating with NAATSIHWP, other jurisdictions and CHS to investigate approaches for increasing the Aboriginal Health Practitioner workforce in the ACT, including scope of practice and legislative alignment. In addition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce representatives (policy and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sectors) have been invited to join the Territory- Wide Health Workforce Planning Group, which reports to the ACT Health Systems Council. The Territory-Wide Health Workforce Planning Group supports the implementation of the ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032, including Strategic Priority 1, “A focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally safe environment”. The ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy Framework for Action 2023-2026, including 2024 Work Plan, was released on 27 November 2023, and includes an action to identify strategies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to increase participation in the mental health workforce, and an action to explore the use of scholarships and specialised training and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
Develop a Disability Health Strategy that includes a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a disability.	Completed The ACT Disability Health Strategy 2024-2033 and the First Action Plan 2024-2026 was launched on 7 December 2023. The ACT Disability Health Strategy supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities by ensuring culturally appropriate services, forming strategic partnerships with local health services, improving equitable access to healthcare, and engaging with communities to co-design effective solutions.

Increase cultural responsiveness for the whole of the ACT health system to reduce systemic racism and bias to improve culturally responsive design and delivery of all health services in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and the Capital Health Network.	Delayed or delays anticipated The Cultural Integrity Reference Group (Reference Group) completed the development of a Cultural Integrity Commitment Statement in December 2024. This was recommended to the Executive Board and endorsed by them in principle in December 2024. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who were not involved in the Reference Group will now be given the opportunity to review and comment on the document prior to its finalisation. The Commitment Statement outlines the organisation's understanding of cultural integrity, recognises the ongoing impact of colonisation, and acknowledges the responsibility that the directorate has to strengthen cultural integrity. The statement makes commitments to, for example, meaningful cultural integrity training for all staff and the embedding of cultural integrity improvement into existing business processes (for example business plans and PDPs). This statement will be supported by a program of work that will be considered in collaboration with plans in place in the Community Services Directorate.
Through co-design with the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm Board transition to the delivery of a residential program, as well as and community-based service delivery.	Delayed or delays anticipated The ACT Health Directorate has worked with Community, NBHF staff and external experts to develop an appropriate procurement to support the uplift of the NBHF day-program. This procurement was completed in January 2025, with Ngaimpe Consulting Pty Ltd securing the contract. Over the next 12 months Ngaimpe Consulting will work with NBHF staff, Government and Community to support service readiness for transition to Community-control, and into the future residential services. It is anticipated that in the first half of 2025 proposals will be sought from Community for transition of the NBHF to Community-control.
Continue to work with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation service.	On track Work is progressing on the Watson Health Precinct. Planning authority approval was granted at the end of 2024. Construction at the Watson Health Precinct, including the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug (AOD) residential rehabilitation service, is currently expected to be completed in the first half of 2026. ACTHD has collaborated with Winnunga Nimmityjah to finalise the Licence Agreement that will enable progress of the AOD residential rehabilitation project while land subdivision is underway. Concurrently, ACTHD collaborated with Winnunga Nimmityjah to finalise the second Deed of Grant funding. This enables the remaining component of construction funding to be transferred to Winnunga.
Increase the number and/or reach of culturally responsive preventive health and 'Healthy Lifestyle' and wellbeing programs that incorporate cultural models that connect with Country.	On track The ACT Health Directorate engaged Curijo, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise, to facilitate culturally safe and strengths-based community engagement. The purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the locally determined health priorities, and cultural and social determinants that support health, to identify how ACT Government programs, activities and policies can create supportive environments that enable First Nations people to exercise self-determination. The report is currently being reviewed and will provide future guidance on culturally responsive preventive health and 'Healthy Lifestyle' and wellbeing programs in the ACT.



Ensure reasonable adjustments are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability as part of the Canberra Health Services Disability Action and Inclusion Plan.	Delayed or delays anticipated CHS Disability Action and Improvement Plan (DAIP) Implementation Steering Group (ISG) has been convened to facilitate and monitor progress and implementation of the DAIP. Membership includes CHS Executives (or their nominated representative) with responsibilities identified under the DAIP, and CHS team member/s and consumer/s with lived experience of disability. One of the priority areas underway is a standardised way to capture data in relation to reasonable adjustments for all consumers accessing the service. There are some limitations to functionality in the Digital Health Record (DHR) to allow this, which CHS is working through. As implementation progresses, ISG will engage with the CHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group to ensure it is appropriately informed by and considers cultural considerations, and the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. A limited time working group has commenced to work through the requirements in DHR to allow the recording of reasonable adjustments.
Improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Related Research and Data	On track Community Forum The first Community Forum was held on Friday 29 November 2024 at Boomanulla Oval. The three aims for the forum were: 1. to increase Community understanding of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance (IDS/IDG); 2. increase understanding of the ACT Health Directorate IDS/IDG project; and 3. design elements of the IDG structure with community members. The outcome from the forum was the development of key elements concerning a self-determined ACT and region IDG structure. There will be follow up forums in early 2025 to firm up the details of the IDG structure and to confirm Community members for the structure.
ACTHD will work towards equity in health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through establishing and evaluating a pilot Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific stand-alone Suicide Prevention, Postvention and Aftercare Service in the ACT	Completed The ACT's culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, aftercare, and postvention service continues to be operated by Thirrili Ltd, from premises in Parramatta Street in Philip.



Health and Wellbeing



Target 17: Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

**Status
Unknown**



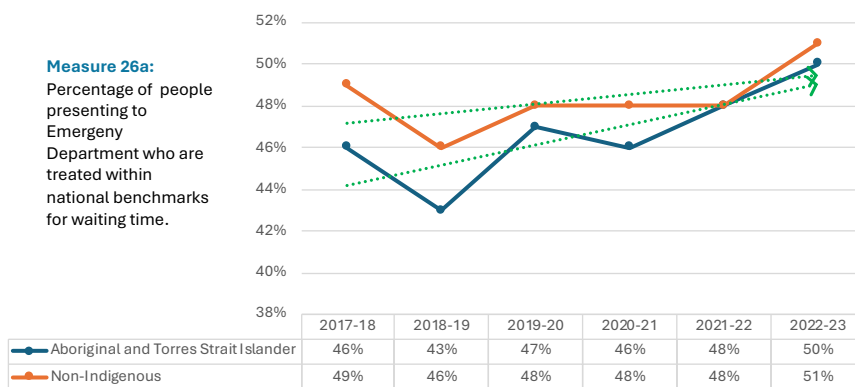
Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown - While the indicator data on healthcare access and delivery provides valuable insights, it is not sufficient on its own to fully indicate the likelihood of achieving the target.

Indicator 26: Increasing proportion of patients being seen on time.

Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Health, Public Hospitals, Table 12A.15 Chart 22

Measure 26a:

Percentage of people presenting to Emergency Department who are treated within national benchmarks for waiting time.



Key Trends and Observations:

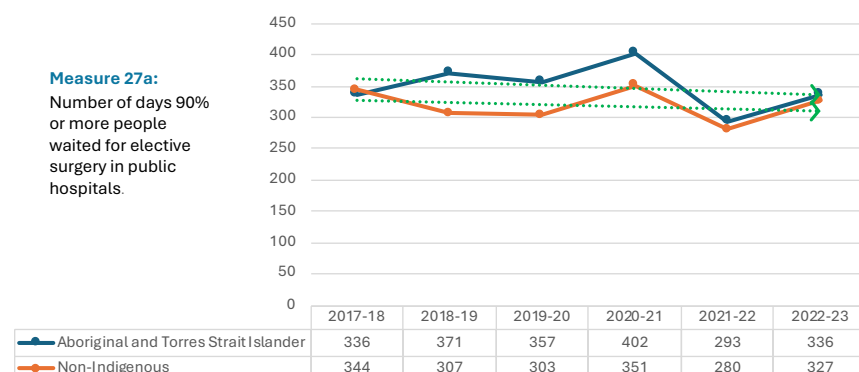
- > •Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients:
 - The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients treated within the national benchmarks for emergency department waiting times has increased from 46% in 2017-18 to 50% in 2022-23.
 - The percentage dropped from 46% in 2017-18 to 43% in 2018-19 but rebounded in 2019-20 (47%) and has shown a steady increase since then.
 - After recovering from the decline in 2018-19, there has been a gradual improvement, reaching 50% in 2022-23, showing a clear upward trend.
- > Non-Indigenous patients:
 - The proportion of Non-Indigenous patients treated within the benchmark has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 46% and 51% over the years.
 - The percentage has consistently been higher than that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, though the difference has diminished in recent years.
 - There was a slight increase from 48% in 2021-22 to 51% in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

- > The steady rise since 2019-20 suggests targeted efforts are having a positive impact.
- > The disparity in emergency wait times between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous patients has narrowed significantly, which is a positive sign.
- > Trajectory lines indicate that the gap in waiting times between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Non-Indigenous patients is progressing to reach the target to close the gap.

Indicator 27: Decrease in waiting times for elective surgery in public hospitals.

Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Health, Public Hospitals, Table 12A.24



Key Trends and Observations:

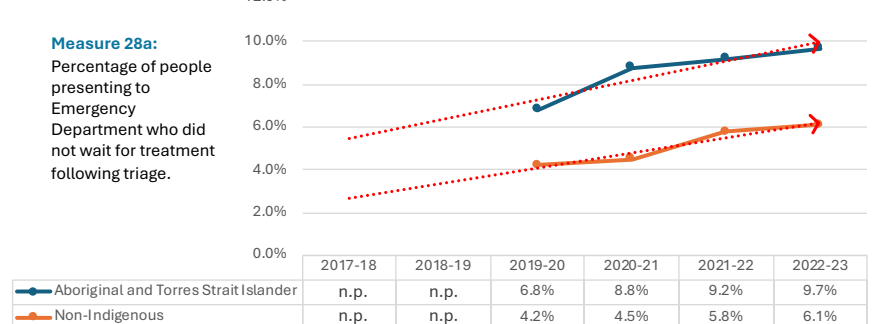
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients:
 - The number of days 90% or more people waited for elective surgery fluctuated over the years.
 - The wait time increased from 336 days in 2017-18 to a peak of 402 days in 2020-21, indicating a worsening trend before a significant decline.
 - The waiting period dropped sharply to 293 days in 2021-22, but then increased again to 336 days in 2022-23, suggesting some instability in waiting times.
- > Non-Indigenous patients
 - The waiting times for Non-Indigenous patients have been generally lower compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.
 - The wait time peaked at 351 days in 2020-21 but was consistently lower than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients' peak of 402 days in the same year.
 - 2021-22 saw a significant improvement, bringing wait times down to 280 days, but like Indigenous patients, the waiting period rose again to 327 days in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

- > Both groups have seen fluctuating wait times.
- > The peak in wait times in 2020-21 aligns with the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have exacerbated delays in elective surgeries.
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients continue to experience longer elective surgery wait times than Non-Indigenous patients.

Indicator 28: Decrease in the proportion of Emergency Department walk-outs.

Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Health, Public Hospitals, Table 12A.37



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients:
 - The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who did not wait for treatment increased from 6.8% in 2017-18 to 9.7% in 2022-23.
- > Non-Indigenous patients
 - The percentage of Non-Indigenous patients who did not wait for treatment also increased, though at a lower rate, from 4.2% in 2017-18 to 6.1% in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

- > The increase in walk-outs reflects the heightened demand placed on Emergency Departments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- > The data suggests rising pressures in Emergency Department services impact all patients, but non-Indigenous patients still experience lower rates of walk-outs.



Target 18: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91%.

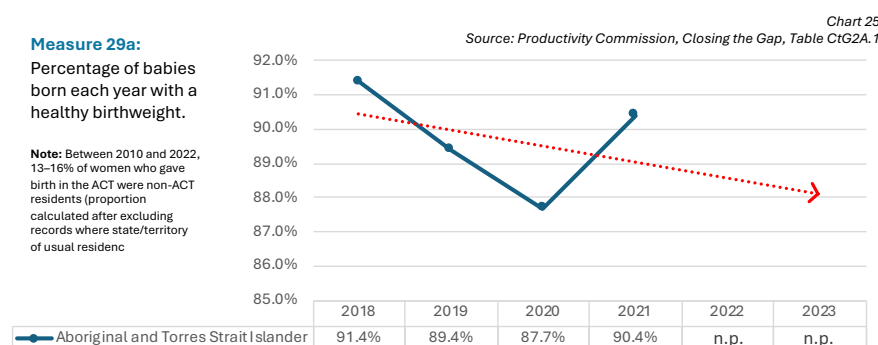
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and available data, achieving the target of increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91% by 2031 remains challenging. However, recent improvements suggest that with continued and strengthened efforts in maternal and infant health services progress toward the target is still possible.

Indicator 29: Increasing numbers of babies have a healthy birthweight.

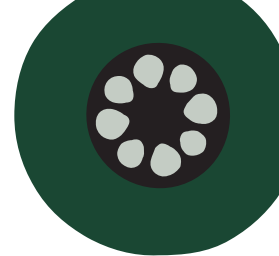


Key Trends and Observations:

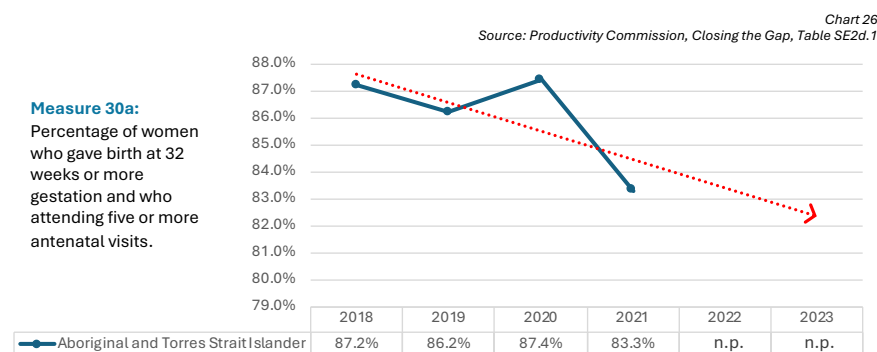
- > In 2018, the rate was 91.4%, but it declined to 89.4% in 2019 and further dropped to 87.7% in 2020, marking the lowest point in the dataset.
- > A recovery occurred in 2021, with the percentage rising to 90.4%, showing an improvement in birthweight outcomes.

Key Takeaways:

- > The declining trend between 2018 and 2020 suggests potential factors impacting maternal and infant health, such as access to prenatal care, nutrition, and broader social determinants of health.
- > The increase in 2021 indicates some level of intervention or improvement in maternal health services, but it is unclear whether this trend will be sustained.
- > Based on the available data and the target of increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91% by 2031, the current trend suggests that achieving this goal may be challenging. However, if the recent recovery (2021) is maintained and strengthened, there is potential to reach or exceed the target.



Indicator 30: Increasing numbers of pregnant women attend five or more antenatal visits.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > In 2018, the proportion was 87.2%, which decreased slightly to 86.2% in 2019 before increasing to 87.4% in 2020.
- > In 2021, there was a sharp decline to 83.3%, marking the lowest recorded value in the dataset.

Key Takeaways:

- > The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who gave birth at 32 weeks or more gestation and attended five or more antenatal visits has declined over time.
- > The steep drop between 2020 and 2021 suggests a significant disruption, due to healthcare accessibility challenges, due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

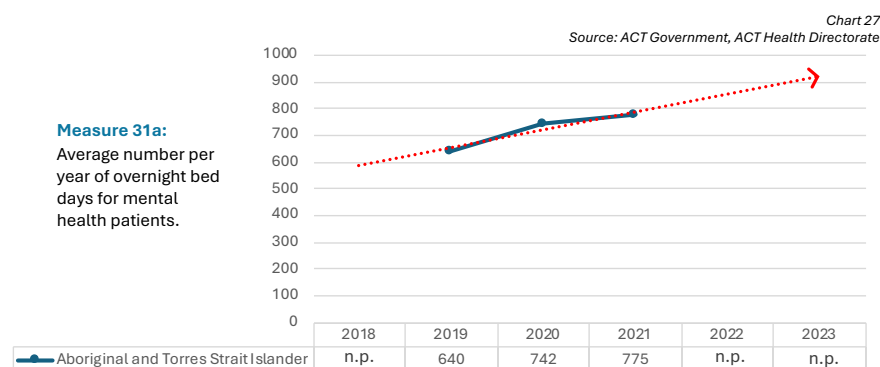
Target 19: Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Not on track

Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and available data, progress towards the target of a significant and sustained reduction in suicide rates remains challenging. However, due to COVID-19 impacts and limited data available, progress against the target should be interpreted with caution.

Indicator 31: Reducing number of overnight bed days for mental health patients.



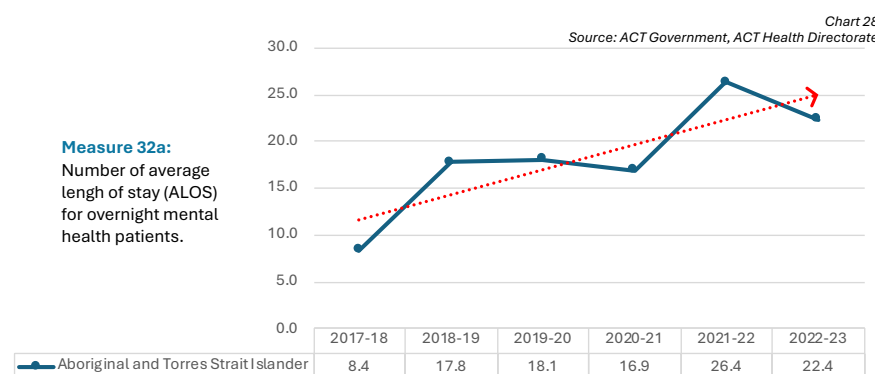
Key Trends and Observations:

- > From 2018 to 2019, there was a significant increase [640 to 742 days].
- > The growth continued at a slower rate from 2019 to 2021 but remained upward.

Key Takeaways:

- > The projection suggests this trend is likely to continue.
- > No data is available for 2022 and 2023. In 2021-22, the metric for total mental health overnight bed days of care was replaced by mental health accrued care days.

Indicator 32: Reducing number of average length of stay (ALOS) for overnight patients.

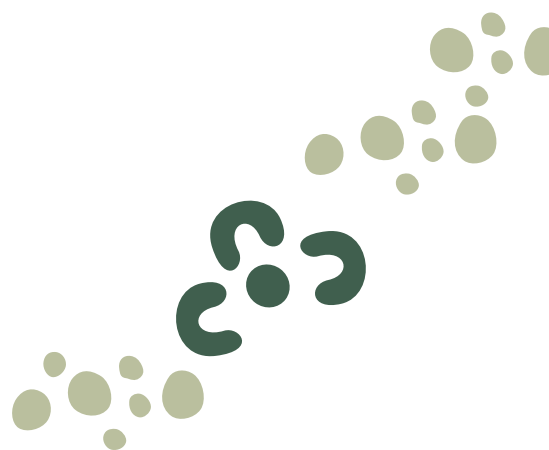
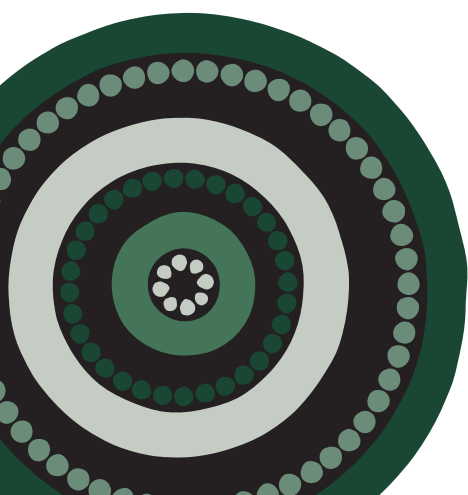


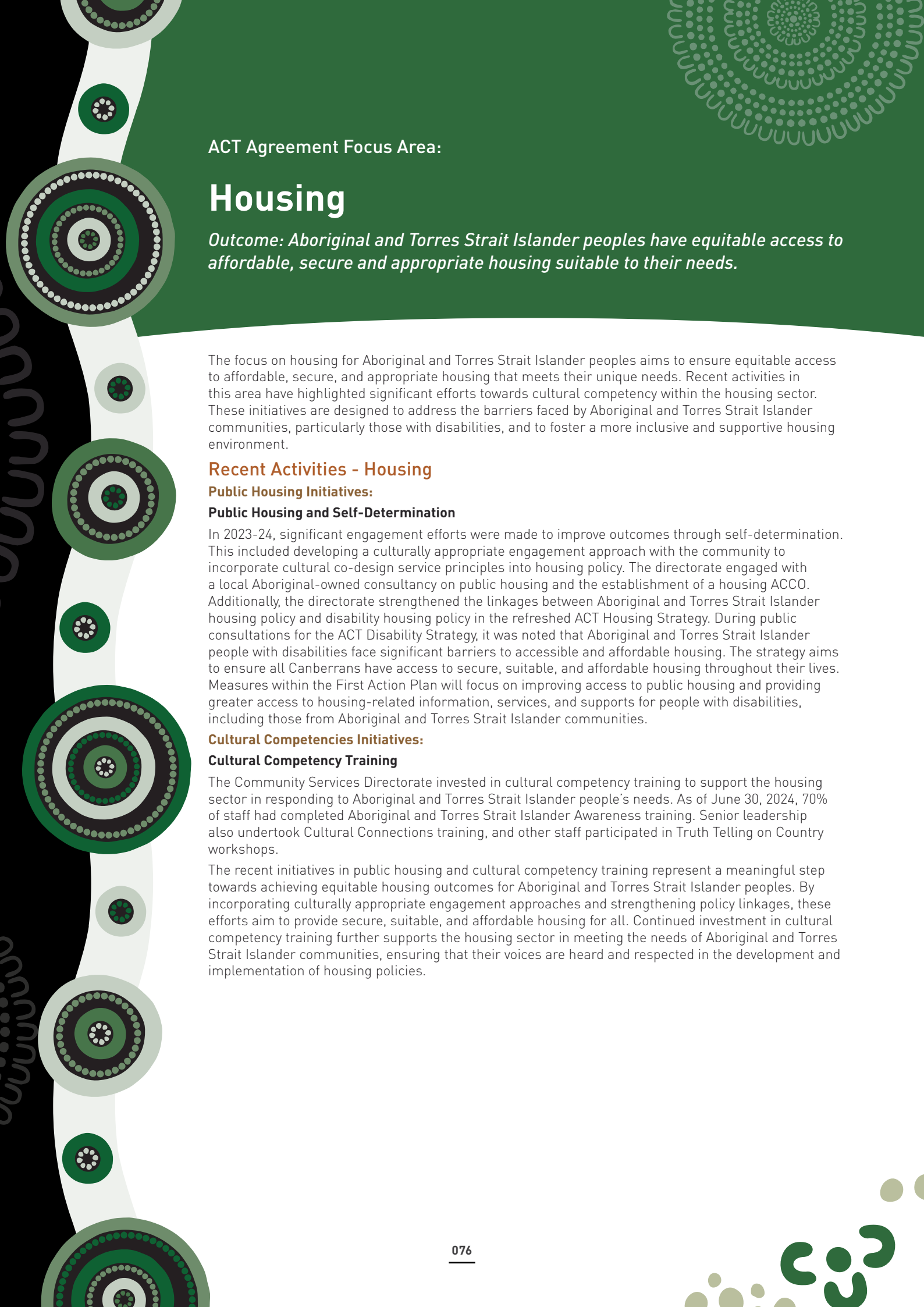
Key Trends and Observations:

- > There was a sharp increase from 8.4 days in 2017-18 to 17.8 days in 2018-19, nearly doubling in one year.
- > A moderate rise continued through 2019-20 (18.1 days) before a slight dip in 2020-21 (16.9 days).
- > A notable surge occurred between 2020-21 and 2021-22, where the ALOS increased from 16.9 to 26.4 days, the highest in the observed period.
- > In 2022-23, a decrease to 22.4 days was observed, though the ALOS remained higher than the earlier years.

Key Takeaways:

- > The sharp rise during 2021-22 could be associated with broader societal impacts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have contributed to longer hospital stays due to limited access to community care or increased mental health challenges.
- > The most recent data point (2022-23) shows a decline from the previous year's peak, suggesting a potential reversal or stabilisation after a period of consistent increase.





ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Housing

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equitable access to affordable, secure and appropriate housing suitable to their needs.

The focus on housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aims to ensure equitable access to affordable, secure, and appropriate housing that meets their unique needs. Recent activities in this area have highlighted significant efforts towards cultural competency within the housing sector. These initiatives are designed to address the barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly those with disabilities, and to foster a more inclusive and supportive housing environment.

Recent Activities - Housing

Public Housing Initiatives:

Public Housing and Self-Determination

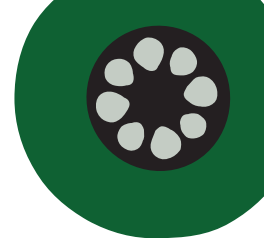
In 2023-24, significant engagement efforts were made to improve outcomes through self-determination. This included developing a culturally appropriate engagement approach with the community to incorporate cultural co-design service principles into housing policy. The directorate engaged with a local Aboriginal-owned consultancy on public housing and the establishment of a housing ACCO. Additionally, the directorate strengthened the linkages between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing policy and disability housing policy in the refreshed ACT Housing Strategy. During public consultations for the ACT Disability Strategy, it was noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities face significant barriers to accessible and affordable housing. The strategy aims to ensure all Canberrans have access to secure, suitable, and affordable housing throughout their lives. Measures within the First Action Plan will focus on improving access to public housing and providing greater access to housing-related information, services, and supports for people with disabilities, including those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Cultural Competencies Initiatives:

Cultural Competency Training

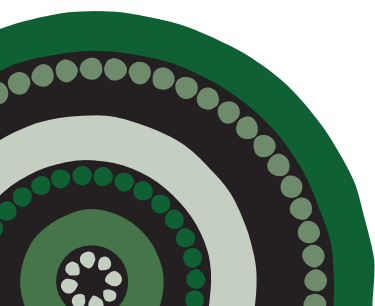
The Community Services Directorate invested in cultural competency training to support the housing sector in responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's needs. As of June 30, 2024, 70% of staff had completed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness training. Senior leadership also undertook Cultural Connections training, and other staff participated in Truth Telling on Country workshops.

The recent initiatives in public housing and cultural competency training represent a meaningful step towards achieving equitable housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By incorporating culturally appropriate engagement approaches and strengthening policy linkages, these efforts aim to provide secure, suitable, and affordable housing for all. Continued investment in cultural competency training further supports the housing sector in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ensuring that their voices are heard and respected in the development and implementation of housing policies.



Action Plans Reporting – Housing

Action	Economic Participation
Establish a baseline and regular reporting against the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Sector Strengthening Plan.	On track In line with the strong sector elements the ACT Government is ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Housing Organisations are in a position of strength and able to provide a viable, culturally appropriate community housing sector that meets the housing needs of tenants, families and communities while providing assurance for government and stakeholders. CSD is the jurisdictional representative on the Housing Policy Partnership (HPP) and has two representatives on the HPP IDC. By being involved in both partnerships, it allows the ACT to highlight and advocate its priorities for the three-year priorities plan and ultimately the Sector Strengthening Plan.
Finalise the recruitment of two identified positions to facilitate the development of a community-controlled housing provider, in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.	Completed The ACT Government has finalised the recruitment of these positions to support the development of a community-controlled housing provider as part of the Aboriginal Service Development Branch.
Develop a Disability Health Strategy that includes a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a disability.	On track Housing ACT took a Community Participation and Partnership approach to engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to better understand the communities views on housing. Learnings from this work are guiding Housing ACT's approach to cultural maturity.
Develop the ACT Disability Strategy, with a focus on housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a disability.	On track Housing ACT has engaged with community via a local Aboriginal owned and controlled consultancy on public housing and the establishment of a housing ACCO. This engagement with community has driven Housing Assistance's development of a Strategy for Culturally Safe and Responsive Public Housing in the ACT (2024-2028) (draft).
Invest in cultural competency training to support the housing sector to respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's needs.	On track Housing ACT is building on the high staff attendance (above 70%) previously achieved in 2023-24 to undertake Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness (SBS) training and other relevant training attendances. HA's focus in 2024-25 will be on cultural safety and improvements in the day-to-day delivery of housing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants and tenants.
Build strong governance across the housing and homelessness sector, as well as improving the capacity and skill of board members and senior staff. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing providers with dedicated and skilled workers to drive success across the sector.	On track Housing ACT has developed internal governance structures to enhance and support maturity levels across our 3 branches with robust reporting and communication lines that align with ACT and National targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within communities.





Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing providers with dedicated and skilled workers to drive success across the sector.	On track Housing ACT, as the largest housing provider in the ACT, is continuing work to develop its cultural maturity to ensure it is able to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Funding of \$256,000 was received in the 2023-24 Budget to deliver sector training to the specialist homelessness sector. Included in the package of training being delivered across 2025 is training on de-escalation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural responsiveness, Cultural and Linguistically Diverse cultural responsiveness, and trauma informed care. Training will be available to frontline staff in the specialist homelessness sector. In addition, there has been work undertaken to upskill and transition resourcing to Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations within the specialist homelessness sector. This included the transition of services and assets to ACCOs to deliver tenancy and property management support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
As part of the development of the ACT Disability Strategy, focus on strengthening the linkages between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing policy and disability housing policy. This should be considered key platforms for a refreshed ACT Housing Strategy.	Completed Development of the ACT Disability Strategy has been completed. The Strategy and First Action Plan 2024-2026 was released on 11 April 2024. In preparing the ACT Housing Strategy 5 Year Snapshot, consideration was given to housing for people with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement and the ACT Disability Strategy were featured as policies which had been developed since the ACT Housing Strategy was published in 2018. The ACT Housing Strategy is also supported by an Implementation Plan. A range of updates to the Implementation Plan were also proposed in early 2024, including identifying housing-related actions from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement and the ACT Disability Strategy. However, the draft updated Implementation Plan was not able to be finalised before caretaker period. Further updates to the Implementation Plan will be considered in the next term of Government. https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/2511430/ACT-Housing-Strategy-Snapshot.pdf



Housing

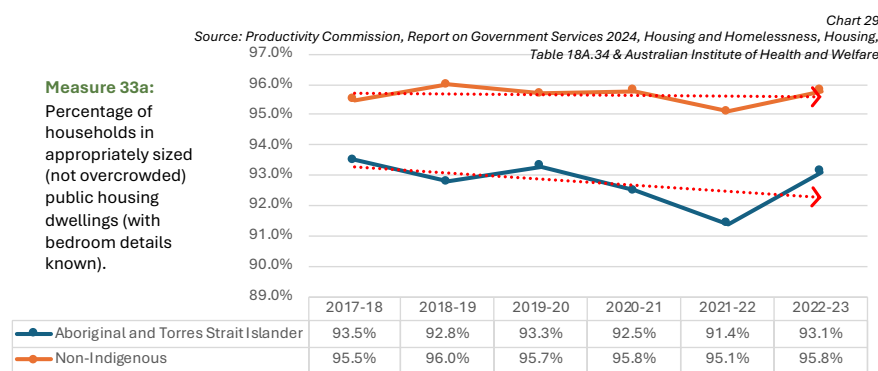
Target 20: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australians.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Unknown - While the indicator data on healthcare access and delivery provides valuable insights, it is not sufficient on its own to fully indicate the likelihood of achieving the target.

Indicator 33: Increase the proportion of people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households:
 - The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) public housing has fluctuated over the years.
 - The percentage declined from 93.5% in 2017-18 to a low of 91.4% in 2021-22, suggesting worsening overcrowding issues.
 - However, there was a small recovery in 2022-23, rising to 93.1%, indicating potential improvement.
- > Non-Indigenous Households:
 - The proportion of Non-Indigenous households in appropriately sized housing has remained relatively stable, ranging from 95.1% to 96.0%.
 - The lowest recorded percentage was 95.1% in 2021-22, but this is still significantly above the Indigenous household figures.
 - 2022-23 saw a positive increase [93.1%] for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households.

Key Takeaways:

- > The percentage of appropriately sized public housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households has been lower and more volatile compared to Non-Indigenous.
- > Improvement from 91.4% in 2021-22 to 93.1% in 2022-23 suggests potential progress, with historical fluctuations indicating an unstable trend.
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household figures would need to continue improving at 0.5 to 1% per year, to reach approximately 96% by 2031, closing much of the gap to achieve parity.



ACT Agreement Focus Area:

Justice

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and communities thrive in a safe environment and have equitable access to justice and culturally safe restorative justice, prevention and diversion programs.

Recent Activities – Justice

The ACT Government is committed to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. By focusing on culturally safe and community-driven approaches, they aim to lower incarceration rates and support successful reintegration. These efforts highlight the ACT Government's dedication to creating a safer and more equitable environment, ensuring that First Nations peoples, their families, and communities can thrive and access justice in a culturally respectful manner. Additionally, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) supports youth justice initiatives, focusing on high-quality care and support for young people in detention and fostering meaningful connections for reintegration into the community.

Justice and Community Safety Initiatives:

Initiatives under the ACT Agreement

The ACT Agreement focuses on ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, and communities thrive in a safe environment with equitable access to justice and culturally safe programs. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate lead this work to provide adult correctional services to people in custody and to people serving community based orders.

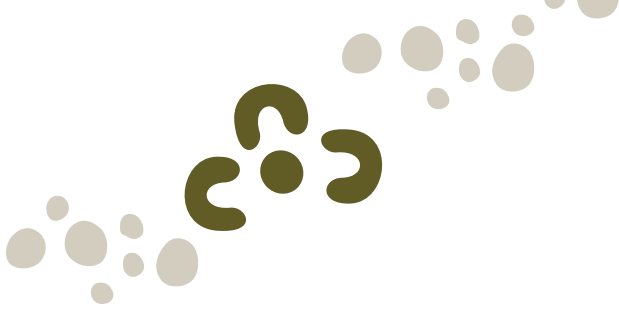
The directorate is part of a justice policy partnership under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This partnership unites representatives from the Coalition of Peaks, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts, and various Australian governments to collaboratively address justice policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The directorate collaborates with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop and implement new programs and services, while strengthening existing ones. The directorate is taking several priority actions to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. These include increasing accessibility to crime and justice data, developing an evaluation framework for Justice Reinvestment programs, implementing intensive case management post-release, consulting on the ACT Disability Justice Strategy, raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, implementing Ombudsman recommendations, engaging with community-controlled organisations, increasing adherence to community-based orders, improving healthcare access for detainees, and providing early support for justice diversion services for young people.

Cultural Programs and Services

The directorate continues to support a range of cultural programs and services, delivered by Aboriginal community controlled organisations which contribute to addressing the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the ACT criminal justice system, including:

- > **Yarrabi Bamirr** provides a family-centric model of support for First Nations families to reduce or prevent contact with the criminal justice system and consequently improve life outcomes. This program is provided through Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal and Community Health Ltd, Yeddung Mura (Good Pathways) Aboriginal Corporation (Yeddung Mura) and Clybucca Dreaming Inc.
- > **Throughcare support** is a client-centred program designed to enable First Nations clients successfully transition from prison to living back in the community. This service is currently provided by Yeddung Mura.
- > **Empowerment Yarning Circles** support the reestablishment of links to community and culture. This engagement helps restore relationships with family, friends and peers, and supporting clients to manage their own lives through a series of yarning circles both in custody and the community. The Yarning Circles focus on helping detainees close to release prepare for life back in the community, and ex-detainees to stay in the community and rebuild their lives. This program is also provided by Yeddung Mura.



Independent Review into Overrepresentation

In February 2024, the ACT Government announced an independent review into the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system, led by the Jumbunna Institute of Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology, Sydney. The review will recommend actions to government to help achieve our target to reduce incarceration rates of First Nations peoples to match non-Indigenous rates by 2031. The Jumbunna Institute has previously worked in the ACT, leading the co-design work to establish the territory's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner. The Jumbunna Institute will work closely with First Nations people in the ACT, including those who have lived experience of the ACT justice system.

Through the first half of 2024, the Jumbunna Institute prepared a first report to provide an assessment of the ACT's implementation of the Australian Law Reform Commission's (ALRC) recommendations in its pathways to justice report – inquiry into the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This included initial consultation with both community and government stakeholders. The second stage of the review, to identify strategies and approaches prioritised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT likely to reduce overrepresentation in the justice system, commenced in the second half of 2024. The Jumbunna Institute undertook consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations, non-Aboriginal organisations with First Nations programs and ACT Government. Consultations also incorporated insights from people with lived experiences of the criminal justice system, including those currently detained in the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. The final report of the Independent Review is due in 2025.

The ACT Government is committed to addressing the recommendations of the report and addressing key issues and drivers such as intergenerational trauma, poverty and unemployment rates, higher levels of family separation and violence, and strives to provide culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults through its Cultural Services Unit.

First Nations Justice Branch (FNJB)

The directorate, via the First Nations Justice Branch (FNJB), continues to provide a central team within JACS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community consultation in the development and contract management of justice-related programs and services delivered to the ACT First Nations community. By working with the First Nations community in developing programs and services and providing support to the community organisations in delivering them, the directorate seeks to:

- > reduce the overincarceration of First Nations people in the ACT and the rate at which First Nations people encounter the criminal justice system
- > partner with Aboriginal community controlled organisations to facilitate self-determination Justice

and Community Safety Directorate 166 Annual Report 2023–24

- > improve the ACT Government's ability to hear and respond to justice related concerns of the community
- > provide positive cultural influence across the JACS directorate.

The FNJB collaborates closely with the community to build capacity and achieve meaningful reforms quickly leading to greater wellbeing for the community. The branch liaises with other areas of JACS and other directorates in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice issues.

Commissioning

An initiative introduced to the ACT Government in 2021 through the ACT Health and Community Services directorates. It represents a new approach to designing, funding, and delivering a fit-for-purpose human services system within the ACT. The goal is to ensure that the directorate's system, and the services and programs within it, meet the needs of the ACT community. Commissioning is a 10-year reform cycle that includes the following phases: discover, strategise, design, invest, deliver, and integrate.

A new structured commissioning consultation and engagement process will enhance consultation efforts. This process will enable the local community to further inform the work and ensure that the justice support journey is viewed holistically.

In embarking on a commissioning process for these programs, the First Nations Justice Branch (FNJB) will work with the ACT First Nations community to examine four identified phases of the justice cycle: diversion from the justice system, diversion from custody, staying out of custody, and breaking the cycle. This examination will help strengthen existing programs and collaborate effectively on the development of new programs according to identified needs and gaps in current services.

The FNJB currently funds and monitors seven justice support programs and is trialling two additional programs for First Nations people at various stages of their justice journey. The FNJB will start its discovery phase with a commissioning workshop in July 2024. This workshop will bring together relevant government, non-government, and First Nations community stakeholders to focus on programs and services that will most effectively divert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from custody.

Justice Support Programs

- > **Ngurrumbai Bail Support:** This program provides court-based, outreach, AMC, and after-hours bail support to reduce the number of First Nations people on remand. It helps them apply for, gain, and adhere to bail conditions. Provided by the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited.
- > **Front Up Program:** Offered by the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, this program supports First Nations people with outstanding warrants or breached bail/community-based sentences. It helps them present to court and negotiate resolutions without custody.

- > **Trial Advocate and Duty Lawyer Service:** Delivered by the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), this service provides advice, representation, assistance, and referrals. The trial advocate handles complex cases in the ACT Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and Magistrates Court, while the duty lawyer is the primary contact for first court appearances.
- > **Mulleun Mura Access to Justice Program:** Run by the Women's Legal Centre, this program provides specialist legal assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women affected by domestic and family violence, relationship breakdowns, and child protection issues. It offers free legal advice and representation to women in the ACT and surrounding regions.
- > **Dhurrawang Program:** Operated by Canberra Community Law, this program offers culturally appropriate legal advice, assistance, and representation to First Nations people in areas such as social housing, tenancy, social security, race discrimination, and human rights. It has been funded by the ACT Government since its commencement in 2017.

These programs reflect the ACT Government's commitment to providing culturally appropriate legal support and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

JACS Justice Caucus

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Caucus contributes to justice-related policy and monitors the directorate's progress on the phase 2 justice implementation plan under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28. Meeting quarterly, the caucus includes government and nongovernment stakeholders who support the plan's initiatives and targets. Outcomes are reported to the JACS Justice Advisory Group.

JACS Justice Advisory Group (JAG)

The JAG oversees and monitors the directorate's justice implementation plans as part of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28. Comprising senior executives from key agencies, the JAG meets at least three times a year and is co-chaired by the Deputy Director-General of Community Safety and the justice representative on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected body.

Community Collaborations:

Clybucca Dreaming Inc – Aunty Tanya Keed

In collaboration with Aunty Tanya Keed and supported by the crime prevention fund, FNJB will trial the Yurwan Bullan (Strong Women) program in 2024. This On-Country program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women at risk of encountering the criminal justice system through cultural activities and ongoing social and emotional support.

Less Jails, More Cultural Rehabs – Jeff Amatto

Partnering with Wiradjuri leader Jeff Amatto, FNJB will introduce the 'Less Jails, More Cultural Rehabs' program in the ACT. Targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men recently released from custody, this 6-month On-Country program promotes cultural connection, reduces trauma, and provides a safe space for men to connect and heal. Funded

by the crime prevention fund, it aims to help participants develop cultural pride and make positive decisions.

ACT Policing reducing over-representation of first nations peoples

ACT Policing is working to reduce the over-representation of First Nations peoples in the criminal justice system. They collaborate with the ACT Government, First Nations communities, non-government organisations, and the public to create supportive programs. These programs are culturally appropriate and involve dedicated First Nations Liaison Officers.

These officers help with Galambany and Warrambul Circle Sentencing when needed. ACT Policing aims to provide fair and culturally safe justice, focusing on prevention and diversion programs.

The First Nations Cultural Literacy Training Program was developed with input from the First Nations community and is mandatory for police officers and public-facing staff. The training covers the history of First Nations peoples, the impact of displacement and trauma, and cultural safety practices. It was delivered in three rounds from November 2023 to July 2024.

ETMP, a First Nations owned company, helped implement the training program and the ACT Policing Strategy for Engagement with First Nations peoples. This strategy, set to start by late 2024, focuses on building respect, trust, and partnership between police and First Nations communities.

ACT Policing is committed to ongoing engagement and improving outcomes for First Nations peoples. They are grateful to the First Nations community for sharing their stories and insights, which have shaped the training program and engagement strategy.

Making Proof of Identity/Age Cards easier

Access Canberra partnered with the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Yeddung Mura – Good Pathways to provide Proof of Identity/Age cards for detainees before their release, aiding their transition back into the community.

Circle Sentencing Courts

The Galambany Circle Sentencing Court and Warrumbul (Youth) Circle Sentencing Court allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have sentencing matters heard by a Magistrate and a panel of respected community members. A pilot program has extended this process to the ACT Supreme Court for more serious matters, with support provided by Yeddung Mura (Good Pathways) Aboriginal Corporation.

Youth Justice Initiatives:

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

In 2023–24, the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre (Bimberi) undertook several large projects to ensure a high quality of care is provided to young people in detention and to bolster the safety of young people and staff at Bimberi. These included:

- > continued review and restructure of Bimberi's Behaviour Management Framework to ensure a therapeutic and best practice approach to supporting change in young people's behaviour



- > focus on improving and building relationships with community service providers and agencies to deliver programs in custody which foster meaningful connection and supported pathways for young people back into the community
- > improving practice, culture, governance and data driven decision making capability through reforming the directorate's Youth Justice Branch. Thematic Review of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and Pilot National Preventive Mechanism visit A thematic review of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre was conducted by the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services (the Inspector). The review focused on isolation of children and young people at Bimberi and served as a pilot National Preventative Mechanism visit under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). As part of the review the Inspector recommended changes to segregation practices at the centre, particularly the practice of health segregation on admission introduced in response to Covid. The review report tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2023, was the Inspector's first thematic review of Bimberi since the Inspector's role expanded to include Bimberi in 2019. The report contains 13 recommendations for government of which 8 are agreed and 5 are agreed-in-principle. The Inspector found no contraventions of the OPCAT at Bimberi. The report can be found [here](#).

Raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR)

The ACT has led the way in Australia to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility, by being the first jurisdiction to raise the age to 14-years in 2 stages. The age is currently 12 years and will raise to 14 years on 1 July 2025. Raising the MACR involves a new service response including the establishment of a Therapeutic Support Panel for Children and Young People (TSP), established in early 2024, to work directly with children, young people and families and improve outcomes through therapeutic plans and coordinated service responses.

Legal Support Services:

Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services in the ACT

The Legal Aid Commission remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within the ACT. In the 2023-24 period, the Commission provided 2,197 services to these clients, an increase from 1,926 in 2022-23. Additionally, grants of legal assistance rose significantly from 310 to 643. This upward trend in demand and assistance is attributed to the appointment of a full-time liaison and support officer in 2017, underscoring the Commission's dedication to delivering accessible and culturally safe services.

Case Study:

Client Liaison Unit Assisting an Aboriginal Client: A client in their 20s, struggling with mental health and substance dependency, was referred to the Client Liaison Unit (CLU) through the Family Law Duty service. The client, who had their three children removed by their partner, required assistance with contacting police, applying for a Family Violence Order, Recovery Orders, and initiating family court proceedings.

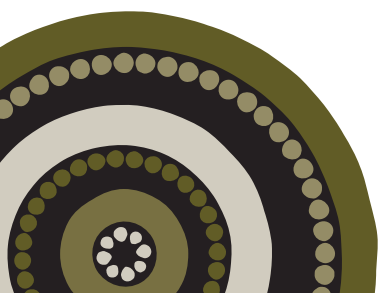
The CLU helped the client fill out application forms and connect with Legal Aid Lawyers for Family Law matters and a Family Violence Order. They provided communication alternatives, appointment reminders, and advocated for longer appointment times and breaks. When a conflict emerged, the CLU assisted the client in transitioning to an external Family Law Solicitor and continued to support them through ongoing family court proceedings. The final Family Violence Order was obtained during the Return Conference stage.

Support services included referrals to AOD services, mental health services, FV services, and culturally appropriate services such as DVCS, Victim Support ACT, and Gudan Gulwan. The CLU maintained contact with the client, providing continuity of care.

Outcomes: Legal Aid assisted the client in accessing and communicating with legal professionals, provided emotional support during court dates, and connected the client to culturally appropriate services to prevent further isolation and contact with the justice system. Safety planning was ongoing throughout the process.

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate, along with the Community Services Directorate, is committed to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. By focusing on culturally safe and community-driven approaches, they aim to lower incarceration rates and

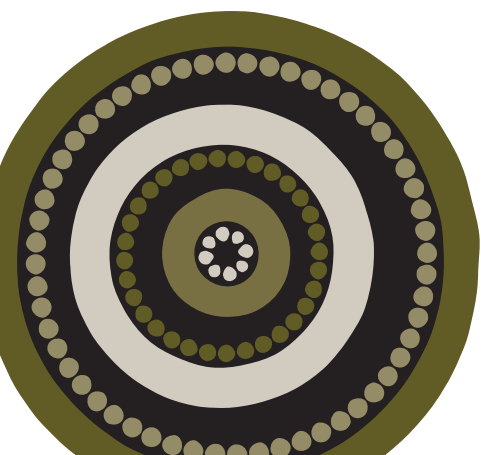
support successful reintegration. These efforts highlight the ACT Government's dedication to creating a safer and more equitable environment, ensuring that First Nations peoples, their families, and communities can thrive and access justice in a culturally respectful manner.



Action Plans Reporting – Justice

Action	Economic Participation
Increase the accessibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crime and justice data for use by the local community and other interested persons, to provide evidence for informing programs and facilitate monitoring of outcomes for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.	On track A preliminary data access project is underway that proposes to provide access to existing data sets and aggregated data sheets to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.
Deliver an Evaluation Framework of the impact of Justice Reinvestment / Reducing Recidivism by 25% by 2025 (RR25by25) programs; with a focus on programs to reduce overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system.	Completed ANU delivered a completed Evaluation Framework for the RR25by25 Plan in June 2022. ANU is currently developing a set of data collection tools and an outcomes framework to support program evaluation - this is additional to the evaluation framework. These products are being refined and expected to be finalised by the middle of 2025 at the latest.
Implement Intensive Case Management to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' post-release; to increase successful rehabilitation and reintegration into their community and enable access to appropriate housing, healthcare, education, and employment.	Completed An Intensive Case Management Program has commenced through ACT Corrective Services. Yeddung Mura is delivering the new service as a trial for 12 months following a procurement process. The program will then be evaluated to determine whether further funding will be sought to continue.
Introduce legislation and identify the scope of services required to support raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility for young people from 10 years of age, to reduce the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the criminal justice system and provide better support services.	Completed Legislation has been introduced and has commenced.
Implement agreed recommendations from the Ombudsman report on ACT Policing's administrative framework for engagement with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	On track ACTP has accepted 6, partially accepted 2 and noted 1 of the 9 recommendations. ETM Perspectives was engaged to deliver strategic and training package of work the first comprising an engagement strategy, a monitoring and evaluation framework and a review of the ACTP First Nations Liaison Officer role. This is complete and the engagement strategy will be socialised with ACT First Nations communities and the broader community once the cultural literacy training is complete. The training package is a First Nations Cultural Literacy program which is mandatory for all ACTP police members and for professional members with public facing roles. 754 members have been trained to date. Recommendation 9 is to seek First Nations community members to identify themselves when making a complaint about police. After consultation with community, ACTP implemented this by involving AFP PRS and WICR members who investigate complaints about ACTP, to attend the cultural literacy program. The final implementation report was provided to the Ombudsman on 4 November 2024.

Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations regarding the delivery of a suite of justice programs to reduce overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system.	On track FNJB funds a suite of 9 programs, 7 programs of which are ongoing. All programs address overrepresentation in focussing on different stages of a person's justice journey. Over the next 18 months these programs are being systematically reviewed with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community through a 3 phase Commissioning process. Two workshops have been held in July 2024 and February 2025 and the final workshop will be in June 2025.
Increase the capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders to adhere to their Court-appointed Community Based Orders.	Completed ACT Corrective Services has partnered with Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) to establish alternative reporting sites for people who are subject to community-based sentences. While the reporting sites were initially established to provide a culturally supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and help establish their linkages with other important support services, their function has expanded in January 2024 to include bailees currently supervised by ACTCS. Further expansion of the program through a pilot program which commenced on 1 July 2024, permits accused persons with requirements to report to ACT Policing multiple times per week, to report to one of the external reporting sites as an alternative on at least one reporting occasion.
Increase access to Health Care Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees in Alexander Maconochie Centre.	Ongoing/BAU CHS, in partnership with Winnunga and ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS), has developed a strategy, governance process and key performance indicators for health care delivery at AMC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The strategy and governance support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees. The ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, and other relevant stakeholders, and includes explicit embedding of culturally responsive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Justice Health Services (JHS), Forensic Mental Health (FMH), Winnunga, ACTCS have monthly operational meetings as well as fortnightly meetings regarding Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) to ensure processes are consistent across the services. Justice Health Services (JHS) have initiated an ongoing annual preventative health screening assessment to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees with health conditions that were not identified on admission to the AMC are detected and managed appropriately. These forms are based on the Community 715-Health Check and adapted for use within a correctional environment. The forms are currently out for consultation with Winnunga and the MHJHADS Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALO) team. In collaboration with the MHJHADS ALO team, JHS have developed a culturally appropriate self-referral form which provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees a direct referral to engage an MHJHADS ALO. The form is currently out for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees.



Provide early support to deliver more timely access to justice diversion services for young people before crisis intervention is required.

On Track

FNJB commenced Yurwan Ghuda in February 2024, an On-Country trial program delivered by a local Aboriginal cultural service provider, in partnership with EPSDD and ACT Education. It addresses over-representation by supporting 9-12 year olds disengaging from school and at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system with the opportunity to participate in On-Country activities. The program continued through 2024 and recommenced on 13 February 2025. The program follows the ACT school year.

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office to establish a service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women where a range of legal, advocacy, practical and healing activities can be delivered (consistent with We Don't Shoot Our Wounded report, recommendation 4.

On Track

Since April 2023, the ACT Government has committed \$4 million to 5 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led DFSV initiatives. This includes:

- > Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation - funded from June 2023- January 2026 to deliver the Nara-Gana-Wali Strengthening Families Program. This is a community led Aboriginal initiative to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly women and children affected by DFSV with legal, advocacy, practical and healing activities, and intensive case management.
- > Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation (Sisters) - funded from April 2023- December 2024 to deliver advocacy and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in the ACT. The DFSVO is currently working with Sisters to finalise funding arrangements until June 2026.
- > Yhurwun Bullan (au spiced by Yerrabi Yurwang) - funded from May 2023- June 2026 to deliver crisis and case management supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.
- > WhlSPers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Softball Corporation (WhlSPers) - funded from April 2023- June 2025 to deliver Community Healing Our Way, improving access to services and safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. The DFSVO is currently working with WhlSPers to finalise funding arrangements until June 2026.
- > Yeddung Mura - funded from April 2023- June 2026 to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families affected by family, domestic and sexual violence. Activities include early intervention and diversion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at risk of perpetrating domestic and family violence, healing camps and yarning activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Justice

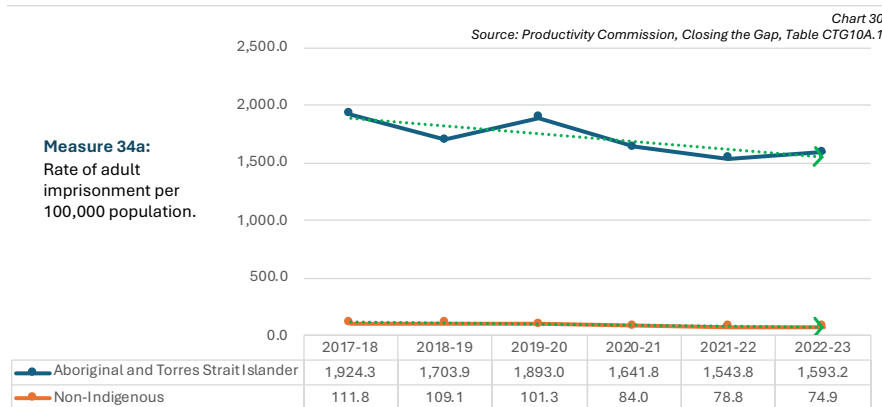
Target 21: By 2031, reduce the rate of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve parity with the rate of incarceration of non-Indigenous people.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Although some positive results, based on the current trends and data, it appears unlikely that the target of reducing the rate of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve parity with non-Indigenous people by 2031 will be achieved without significant and sustained efforts.

Indicator 34: Reduction in the rate of adult imprisonment.



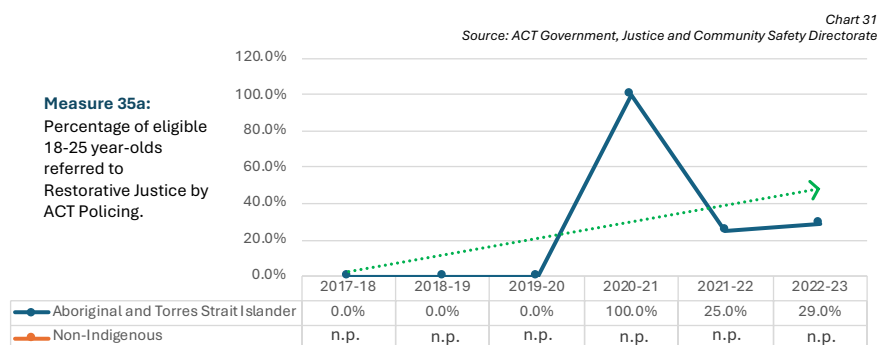
Key Trends and Observations:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult imprisonment:
 - The rate of imprisonment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults decreased from 1,924.3 per 100,000 people in 2017-18 to 1,593.2 in 2022-23.
 - The trend shows fluctuations, with a notable drop to 1,703.9 in 2018-19, followed by an increase to 1,893.0 in 2019-20, before continuing a steady decline from 2020-21 onward.
 - Most recent data from 2022-23 shows a slight increase in the rate of imprisonment compared to 2021-22 (1,543.8).
- > Non-Indigenous adult imprisonment:
 - The imprisonment rate for Non-Indigenous adults has remained consistently low, decreasing from 111.8 in 2017-18 to 74.9 in 2022-23 per 100,000 population.
 - Unlike Indigenous imprisonment rates, the Non-Indigenous rate has shown a steady and uninterrupted decline.
 - The disparity remains significant, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults being imprisoned at a rate more than 20 times higher than Non-Indigenous adults in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

- > Although the rate is falling, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are still imprisoned at rates far higher than Non-Indigenous adults, indicating that systemic inequalities remain.
- > If this rate of decline continues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates could drop to approximately 1,250-1,350 by 2031, still far from the target of parity with Non-Indigenous Australians by then.
- > At the current trajectory, achieving parity by 2031 is highly unlikely. The pace of decline is too slow, and the gap remains too large for the target to be met under existing trends.

Indicator 35: Increase in the proportion of 18-25 year-olds referred to Restorative Justice (to 25% over the life of the Agreement).



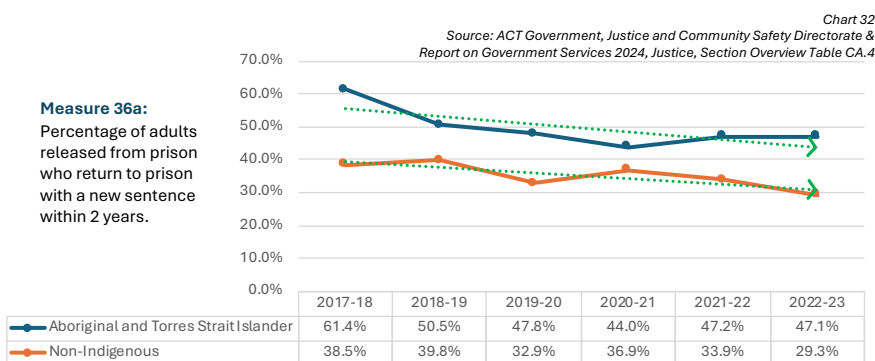
Key Trends and Observations

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Referrals:
 - Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, there were no referrals (0%), indicating that eligible individuals from this group were not directed to Restorative Justice during this period.
 - In 2020-21, referrals surged to 100%, suggesting a significant policy shift or targeted intervention to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals in the program.
 - The referral rate dropped sharply to 25% in 2021-22 but saw a slight increase to 29% in 2022-23.
- > Non-Indigenous Referrals
 - No data available at time of reporting.

Key Takeaways

- > The significant increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander referrals in 2020-21 likely reflects a policy or procedural shift that prioritised their engagement in Restorative Justice.

Indicator 36: Decrease in the rate of return to custody for adults.



Key Trends and Observations

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults returning to prison within two years has decreased from 61.4% in 2017-18 to 47.1% in 2022-23.
 - While there was a significant drop between 2017-18 and 2020-21 (from 61.4% to 44.0%), the rate has since remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 47.2% and 47.1% in the last two reporting periods.
 - Despite improvements, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still experience recidivism rates 17.8 percentage points higher than non-Indigenous Australians in 2022-23.
- > Non-Indigenous people
 - The recidivism rate for non-Indigenous Australians has steadily declined from 38.5% in 2017-18 to 29.3% in 2022-23.
 - Unlike Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the non-Indigenous recidivism rate has fluctuated over the years, with increases in some periods (e.g., 39.8% in 2018-19) before continuing a downward trajectory.

Key Takeaways

- > While both groups have seen improvements, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recidivism rates remain significantly higher than non-Indigenous.
- > While progress has been made in reducing recidivism, parity by 2031 remains an ambitious target.
- > While progress has been made, the gap in recidivism rates has narrowed by about 1 percentage point per year over the past five years. The current trajectories indicate to achieve the 2031 target, an accelerated decline in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recidivism rates is required.



Target 22: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17) in detention by at least 30%.

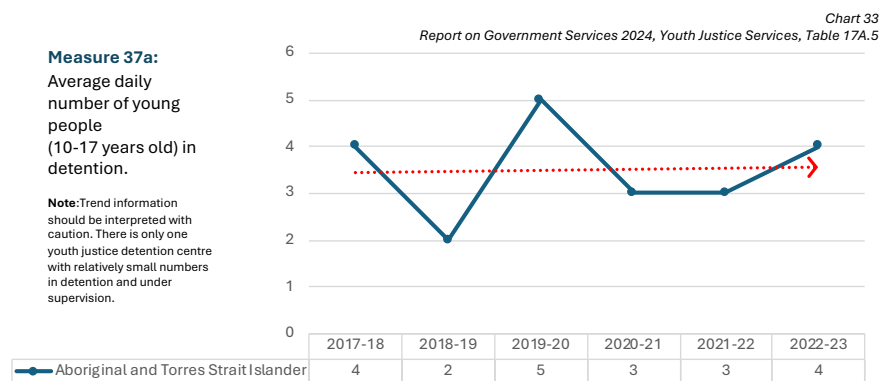
Note: This is also a National Closing the Gap target.

Not on track



Likelihood of Achievement - Based on the current trends and data, it appears unlikely that the target of reducing the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17) in detention by at least 30% by 2031 will be achieved without significant and sustained efforts.

Indicator 37: Reduction in the detention of young people (10-17 years old).

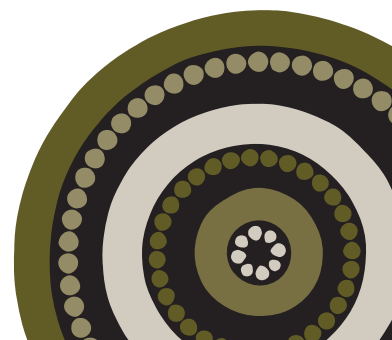


Key Trends and Observations:

- > The number started at 4 in 2017-18, dropped to 2 in 2018-19, peaked at 5 in 2019-20, and then decreased again to 3 in 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- > 2022-23 shows an increase to 4, suggesting that previous reductions have not been sustained.
- > The low total numbers (ranging from 2 to 5) indicate that even small changes in individual cases can significantly impact the average, making year-to-year variations difficult to interpret.

Key Takeaways

- > With only one youth justice centre, a small number of individual cases can significantly impact the data to cause large fluctuations.
- > The trajectory appears relatively flat, indicating that there is neither a strong negative nor positive trajectory.
- > At the current trajectory rate, achieving the target of a 30% reduction by 2031 is uncertain due to fluctuations and a lack of a clear downward trajectory.



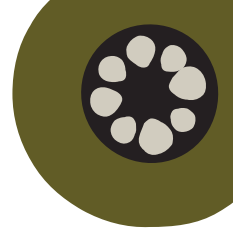
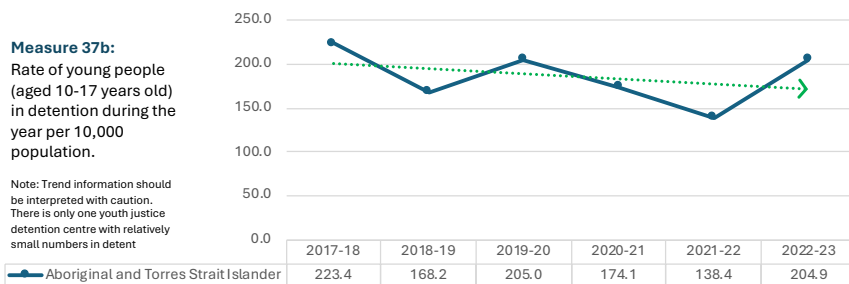


Chart 34
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Youth Justice, S72 to S125, Data Tables S83

Measure 37b:

Rate of young people (aged 10-17 years old) in detention during the year per 10,000 population.

Note: Trend information should be interpreted with caution. There is only one youth justice detention centre with relatively small numbers in detention.



Key Trends and Observations:

- > The rate started at 223.4 per 10,000 in 2017-18, dropped to 168.2 in 2018-19, then rose again to 205.0 in 2019-20.
- > After another decline to 174.1 in 2020-21 and a low of 138.4 in 2021-22, the rate spiked again to 204.9 in 2022-23.
- > The low of 138.4 in 2021-22 suggested potential progress but then increased to 204.9 in 2022-23.

Key Takeaways:

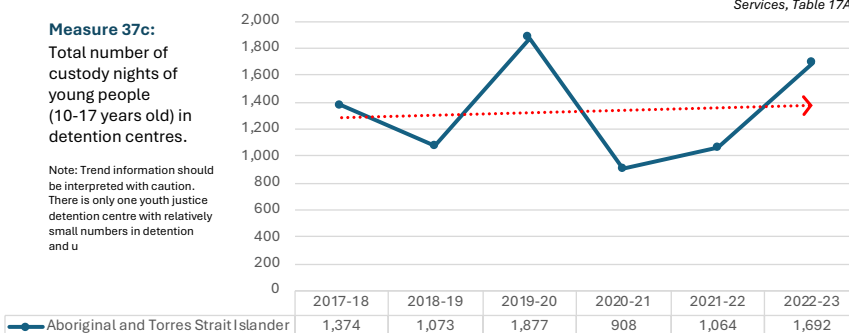
- > With only one youth justice centre, a small number of individual cases can significantly impact the data to cause large fluctuations.
- > The fluctuations in detention rates indicate that reductions in previous years have not been sustained, making long-term progress uncertain.
- > A 30% reduction from the 2017-18 baseline (223.4 per 10,000) would mean bringing the rate down to around 156 per 10,000 by 2031. Without stronger and sustained trends achieving the target of 30% reduction by 2031 remains uncertain. However, the trajectory remains in a positive direction.

Chart 35
Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Community Services, Youth Justice Services, Table 17A.18

Measure 37c:

Total number of custody nights of young people (10-17 years old) in detention centres.

Note: Trend information should be interpreted with caution. There is only one youth justice detention centre with relatively small numbers in detention and u



Key Trends and Observations:

- > The total number of custody nights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years old) has fluctuated significantly over the years.
- > The highest number of custody nights was recorded in 2019-20 (1,877 nights), while the lowest was in 2020-21 (908 nights), indicating a dramatic decrease.
- > 2022-23 shows an increase to 1,692 nights, reversing the previous decline.

Key Takeaways:

- > With only one youth justice centre, a small number of individual cases can significantly impact the data to cause large fluctuations.
- > A 30% reduction from the 2017-18 baseline (1,374 custody nights) would mean lowering it to around 962 custody nights per year by 2031. If fluctuations continue rather than a steady decline, reaching the 2031 target is uncertain.

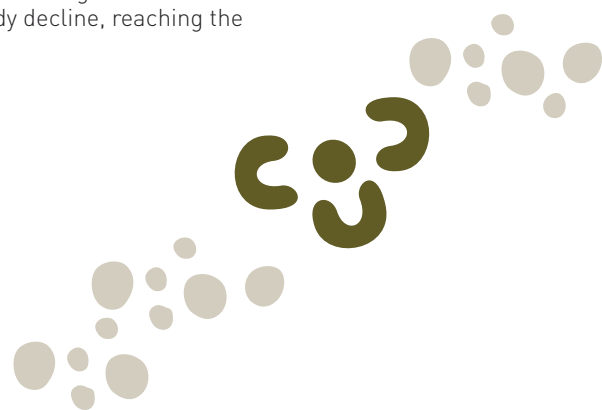


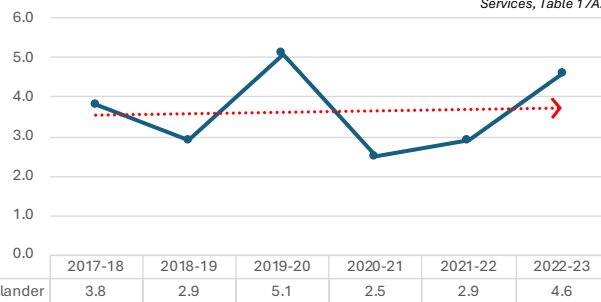


Chart 36
Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Community Services, Youth Justice Services, Table 17A.18

Measure 37d:

Average nightly population of young people (10-17 years old) in detention centres.

Note: Trend information should be interpreted with caution. There is only one youth justice detention centre with relatively small numbers in detention and under

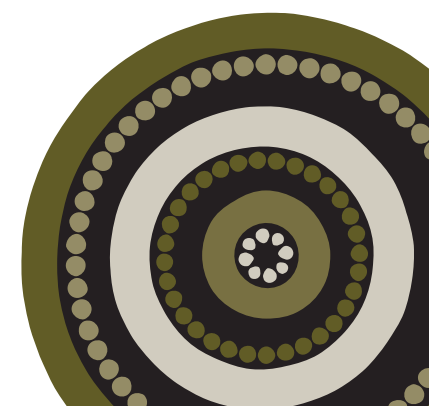
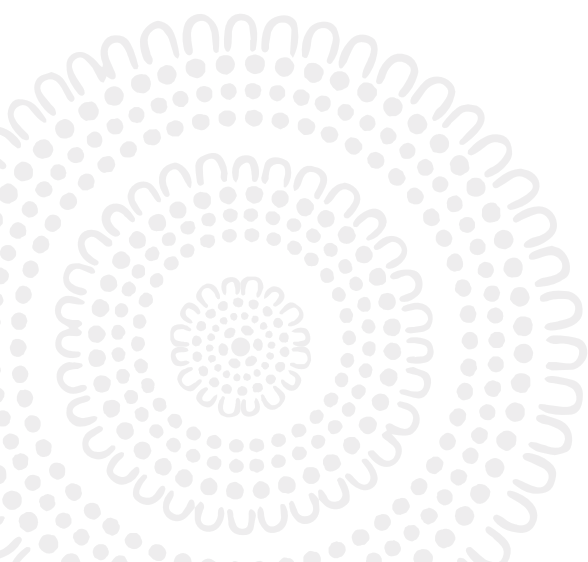


Key Trends and Observations:

- > The average nightly population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years old) in detention has fluctuated significantly over the years.
- > The number started at 3.8 in 2017-18, dropped to 2.9 in 2018-19, then spiked to 5.1 in 2019-20 before falling again to 2.5 in 2020-21.
- > The significant drop in 2020-21 (2.5) suggested progress, but this was not sustained, as numbers increased again.
- > In the past two years, the number rose from 2.9 in 2021-22 to 4.6 in 2022-23, suggesting an upward trend in recent years.

Key Takeaways:

- > With only one youth justice centre, a small number of individual cases can significantly impact the data to cause large fluctuations.
- > A 30% reduction from the 2017-18 baseline (3.8 per night) means lowering the average to around 2.7 per night by 2031. If fluctuations continue rather than a steady decline, reaching the 2031 target is uncertain.



Implementation of the ACT Government Response to the ATSIEB Reports

Below is a summary of the ACT Government’s progress on the implementation of response to recommendations from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) reports:

Report and Recommendation	Government Response	Progress status update
12th Report – April 2024 hearing: Understanding of partnerships	The Elected Body noted partnerships can have multiple parties and encouraged the ACT Government to consider establishing limited-term partnership vehicles to work with community on specific issues. The Elected Body highlighted Housing, Boomanulla and child protection as examples where a multi-directorate and multi-community representation vehicle could accelerate change and focus consultation processes.	Below are some partnerships which highlight ongoing efforts and progress in fostering partnerships between the ACT Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes. The Aboriginal Service Development Branch (ASD) worked with Yerrabi Yurwang through a partnership approach to support the ACCO become the first Aboriginal Care and Protection Organisation (CAPO) registered provider in the Act. While the services provided are under contract with a dedicated schedule of services, the approach to engage the ACT’s first ACCO CAPO was done through partnership working together to navigate the process and support their participation. This will have further benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the out-of-home-care system. Boomanulla Oval is being developed as a central cultural and sporting hub for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Canberra. The principles of this are the establishment of a strong partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, through the Elected Body and other key stakeholders from across the community. The Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (OBOWIOC) is an independent committee made up by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, that works with and monitors the Community Services Directorate’s implementation of the recommendations in the Our Booris, Our Way report. The key purpose of this is to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people dealing with the out-of-home-care by ensuring: > the number of children entering care continues to reduce > children’s experiences in care improves > pathways to leave care improve > children are restored to their family where it is safe to do so The OBOWIOC continues to work in partnership with the ACT Government and strengthening engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In relation to housing, ACT Housing collaborates with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to operate supported living and accommodation programs. These programs are designed to provide culturally appropriate housing solutions and support services tailored to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. By working together, we can ensure that the services provided are culturally appropriate, effective, and sustainable.

12th Report – April 2024 hearing and 11th Report – August 2023 hearing:

Proportional funding

Government Response to 12th Report:

The Elected Body identified proportional funding as where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access particular services that the funding for those services reflects the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it serves.

The ACT Government agrees the recommendation to review and establish proportional funding across the areas housing, justice reinvestment and systemic discrimination to ensure that funding is proportional to the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using the services.

The ACT Government agrees to explore opportunities across other areas and directorates, acknowledging this is a critical component of investing in the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO) sector in line with commitments under Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Undertaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expenditure Reviews in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap will allow us to review and track this across directorates.

Further, the development of Phase Three (3) of the ACT Agreement provides an opportunity to embed proportional funding into the delivery of programs across each directorate.

Government Response to 11th Report:

The ACT Government acknowledges the Elected Body's recommendation that all directorates review their funding arrangements to ensure that funding is proportional to the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using the services.

The ACT Government has made progress in implementing proportional funding across various areas, including housing, justice reinvestment, and systemic discrimination, to ensure that funding reflects the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using these services.

Children, Youth and Families Panel: The first program to set a policy position to transfer the commensurate level of funding to match the level of over representation in the child protection and out of home care system from non ACCO's to ACCO's over time. This investment approach has supported the establishment of Yerrabi Yerwang as the first ACCO and work with other ACCO's is in train to support greater level of ACCO delivery across the whole continuum.

Housing: The ACT Government is actively working with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to ensure that housing services are adequately funded and meet the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This includes providing culturally appropriate housing solutions and support services.

Justice Reinvestment: The ACT Government is allocating funding proportionally within the justice system to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This involves initiatives aimed at reducing incarceration rates and supporting community-led justice programs.

Systemic Discrimination: The ACT Government is reviewing funding allocations to address systemic discrimination. This includes directing resources towards programs that support equality and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The review process involves consultations with community stakeholders to ensure that the funding is effectively targeted.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expenditure Reviews:

The ACT Government is conducting expenditure reviews to track and evaluate spending across directorates. These reviews help ensure that funding is aligned with the needs of the community and supports the goals of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

12th Report – April 2024 hearing:

Systemic discrimination

The Elected Body noted work on a framework for identifying and approaching systemic discrimination across the ACT Government. However, they advised the presence of systemic discrimination needs a systemic response including education, training, cultural immersion, revision of legislation and policies, understanding of service access, delivery and experience, recruitment and employment experience. It needs to be across every aspect of the ACT Government responsibility and service delivery.

This response will continue to be prioritised across government, particularly within the development of Phase Three (3) of the ACT Agreement.

The Cultural Transformation Branch (CTB), specifically the Culture and Pathways team, provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to enhance cultural safety through systemic change. The team focuses on eliminating racism and improving cultural safety via strategic changes, workforce capability uplift, and interventions that enhance the employee experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The CTB works in collaboration with the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) and other directorates to promote a joined-up whole-of-government approach.

Below are targeted resources and development opportunities the CTB has produced to address systemic discrimination:

- > Inclusions of Cultural load as psychosocial risk
- > Cultural Integrity Professional Learning Database
- > Cultural immersion in the Garma Festival
- > Professional training and career development Programs:

Other Work in progress:

- > **Cultural Advisory Network:** The CTB is establishing a Cultural Advisory Network within the ACTPS, to address systemic discrimination and enhances cultural safety. It supports governance and initiatives aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement. The Network improves cultural integrity and capability, benefiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and enriching the ACTPS as an employer-of-choice.
- > **Cultural Safety Care Plans:** The Cultural Transformation Branch has developed draft cultural safety care plan templates and has partnered with CSD to pilot these within the directorate. CSD will independently pilot the plans on a smaller scale and feedback outcomes to the CTB for future iterations. The Cultural Safety Care Plans aim to identify and reduce cultural load as well as embed cultural safety measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- > **ANZSOG First Nations Public Administration Conference:** The Cultural Transformation branch is coordinating participation of 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members to attend the 2025 ANZSOG First Nations Public Administration Conference, focused on Closing the Gap: Priority Reform three. This conference will support our commitment to build cultural capability of the workforce and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in their own cultural and professional journeys.
- > **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identified Recruitment Guide:** Supporting the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, the Identified positions guide will support a culturally safe and consistent approach for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff applying to work with the ACTPS.

12th Report – April 2024 hearing: Consistency in language	The Elected Body pointed out the inconsistency and misuse of the terms 'Indigenous,' 'First Nations' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' when referring to the ACT community. The ACT Government agrees to use the term proposed by the Elected Body 'ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community' in a consistent way across directorates.	The ACT government understands the impacts of inconsistency and misuse of terms such as "Indigenous," "First Nations," and "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" when referring to our diverse ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This has been identified as a significant issue. These inconsistencies can lead to confusion and a lack of respect for the cultural identities of the community members. We, recognise the importance of respectful and accurate language in Government and are encouraging consistent use of the term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across all directorates.
12th Report – April 2024 hearing: Adopt leading practices in relation to sharing of Indigenous knowledges intellectual property	The Elected Body recognised the need to adopt best practices on Indigenous Intellectual Property and for these practices to be applied across all directorates. The Hearings Report 2024 noted seminal work currently being undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law-experts in the field of Indigenous Intellectual and Cultural Property. This work, being led by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and will inform best practice and culturally safe protocols and processes for commissioning and licensing. The ACT Government agrees with the recommendation to continue this work and extend findings for best practice across all directorates.	artsACT is working with Terri Janke and Co to finalise a 'Protocol for the Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork.' To accompany the Protocol document artsACT is developing a handbook which will provide best practice guidance for ACT Public Service officials when procuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art including consideration of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property. artsACT has consulted with the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and CMTEDD Communications and Engagement on this approach. This provides an initial step toward protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural intellectual property rights across the ACTPS. Once completed, further work will be undertaken to ensure its application across directorates and additional work that may be required across other key areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural intellectual property rights.
12th Report – April 2024 hearing: Improve collaboration within Government	The Elected Body recommended strengthening the way directorates collaborate. This recommendation is in line with the overarching recommendations 'work together' provided in the previous Hearing Report from August 2023 hearings (Eleventh Report to ACT Government). This recommendation is also broadly consistent with recommendations made by the Auditor General's Report into the Implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement (No. 6/2023). The ACT Government agrees to enhance collaborations and coordination between directorates to ensure a holistic approach is undertaken for each Focus Area under the ACT Agreement. This will be embedded within Phase Three (3) of the ACT Agreement, through the Directorate Implementation Plans.	In the last 12 months CMTEDD, in collaboration with OATSIA, have initiated steps to provide a collaborative approach to reporting on ACT Agreement Whole of Government actions. This has included initial consultation with directorates to determine an approach that would fit for Whole of Government. A collation of input where directorates have been working towards the completion of the actions with the intention of directorates to meet to discuss how best to modify these individual actions to formulate a pathway for implementation across Whole of Government.

12th Report – April 2024 hearing: Engagement to support a resilient and capable community	The Elected Body recognised the need for better engagement practices with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Elected Body recommended creating specific partnerships in core areas underpinned by the principles set in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The ACT Government agrees with the need to strengthen formal partnerships to support a resilient and capable community, built on the principle of self-determination. The ACT Government remains committed to work in with the Elected Body to identify opportunities of partnership and is already working with several groups to facilitate this. Phase Three (3) of the ACT Agreement provides an opportunity for the ACT Government to work in partnership with the Elected Body to develop the strategies for how this will be applied, targets for accountability within the Directorate Implementation Plans.	CMTEDD received DG approval in February 2025 for the creation of a Steering Committee to ensure CMTEDD is working cohesively towards achieving actions identified in the ACT Agreement and National Agreement. The Steering Committee will consist of members from all key business areas. The purpose of the Steering Committee will be to bring business units together to improve coordination and the sharing of learnings for the progress of actions under these agreements. Crucially, the Steering Committee would include the Elected Body's CMTEDD representative to improve dialogue and collaboration while also increasing transparency and accountability. The idea of the Steering Committee was shared with CMTEDD's Elected Body member during February 2025 Reconciliation Working Group meeting and has the support of the Elected Body member. CMTEDD Policy and Cabinet will be the secretariate for the Steering Committee and will be arranging a meeting with the Elected Body member to discuss the workings of the group. Once this meeting has taken place the Steering Committee will meet monthly.
12th Report – April 2024 hearing: Data analysis, reporting and insights	The Elected Body observations echoed the previous findings on aspects related to data and reporting and the challenges for community. This included the 2023 findings that all directorates as a matter of urgency need to build, adjust or utilise data that provides the ability to track progress against the ACT Agreement. This also aligns with findings from the Productivity Commission's Review into the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The ACT Government agrees to strengthen the mechanisms progress monitoring and reporting, including addressing data gaps and how information is reported. In accordance with this recommendation and findings from the Audit Report NO.6/2023 into the implementation of the ACT Agreement, we have been progressing work to: > Review and strengthen governance arrangements for actions under implementation phases. > Review data governance to put in place new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting guidelines for faithful representation of the progress under both Agreement. > Develop an Actions Register for the ACT Agreement. The Action Register will support timely, accurate and transparent progress updates and reporting under each implementation phase. Further, Phase Three (3) of the ACT Agreement will provide an opportunity to embed this across directorates under the Directorate Implementation Plans.	Action Plan Register has been developed and made live in time for Phase 3 commencement. Action Plan Register consists of a list of Actions the Government will undertake to influence the outcomes of particular Focus Areas. This forms the basis of this Impact Statement Report, aligned to commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Action Plans Register is a SharePoint list dedicated to the tracking of all Actions stated within each Action Plan. The register will be used to facilitate the coordination of WhoG Quarterly Reporting on Action statuses. Throughout the delivery of Actions, it is advised that Directorates consult with ATSIEB members for cultural advice, to gain understanding of community priorities, and to seek endorsement of works. Data Governance has been enhanced through leveraging the MaGS area of the Directorates to collate the reporting information. Sharepoint List has been developed for quarterly reporting. Established clear leading Directorates for actions and supporting directorates. Relevant ATSIEB portfolios are also identified, while also including fields to indicate ATSIEB consultation. Previous quarterly reporting is available at any time for reflection. Clear accountability for executives as either leads or supports for Action Plans.

11th Report – August 2023 hearing: Child Protection	The ACT Government acknowledges the Elected Body’s concerns that there has been a lack of change in the level of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the child protection system. Significant reform is being implemented, including a dedicated First Nations Support Team, an increase in quality and timeliness of cultural plans, and active efforts on building the family connection needed for successful restoration. It will take time for these changes to start to impact the headline figure for over-representation. The ACT Government continues to work with the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee in the development and oversight of system reform to address this. This is complemented by the recent commencement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner. The ACT Government acknowledges there is much more to do and will continue to work with the community to strengthen formal partnerships to improve outcomes for children and young people.	CSD continues to strengthen community and cultural care for child protection by deepening its relationship with OBOW. A meeting occurred on 18 October 2024, where strategies to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle were discussed. The ATSICPP is a framework designed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system remain connected to their families, communities, cultures, and country. It aims to prevent the over-representation of these children in out-of-home care and to avoid repeating the harmful practices that led to the Stolen Generations. UNEC and OBOW have committed to meeting regularly around the release date of the biannual OBOW Review. Additionally, significant reforms have been made to the Children and Young People Act (CYP Act) to align with the Next Steps for Our Kids 2022–2030 strategy. These reforms focus on promoting shared responsibility for child protection, empowering children by strengthening their rights and voices in decision-making and addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.
11th Report – August 2023 hearing: Justice	The ACT Government acknowledges the Elected Body’s recommendation that the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) work with ACT Housing to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people held at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) on remand due to a lack of housing. The ACT Government is actively exploring options to increase the supply of housing, which will help to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The ACT Government agrees that diversion programs need to be managed through a whole-of-government approach, while being genuinely accessible and measurable. While the ACT Government has much further to go, there are foundations being established in terms of diversion programs that operate holistically. This includes activities that are based in community, supporting the connection with community as a foundation for addressing the challenges that people interacting with the justice system face.	The First Nations Justice Branch (FNJB) have engaged Yeddung Mura for a variety of cultural services to be offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders having contact with the Justice System. These services include: Galambany Circle Sentencing Support: providing transport to the court and to support services. Yarning Circles for Men and Women: This provides a series of empowerment yarning circles which aim to help detainees prepare for release. These yarning circles aim to also restore relationships with family, friends and peers while enabling service receivers to better manage their daily lives. Throughcare Support: A client-centred program designed to enable First Nations clients to succeed as they transition from prison to living back in the community. The program works with the ACT Corrective Services Reintegration Unit to provide individualised and intensive case management and trauma informed support. Throughcare provides support such as mobile phones, medicine, identification documents and assistance with services such as housing, Centrelink and other providers and programs.

11th Report – August 2023 hearing: Community assets and community control	The ACT Government acknowledges the call to support the transition of community assets to Aboriginal and Community Control, while ensuring that appropriate resources for facilities maintenance is provided in an ongoing way. The ACT Government recognises the leadership of the Elected Body in progressing community engagement on the future of Boomanulla Oval. The ACT Government is committed to working with the community to identify appropriate mechanisms for community control over the assets, recognising the need to ensure that assets are accessible and provide support for the whole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The ACT Government has been working actively to support the development of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) offering housing services. The support to ACCOs has included access to establishment grants, assistance with registration processes, assistance with securing premises for service delivery and investigating delivery options and funding opportunities across the continuum of housing services in the ACT.	The ACT government through the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation Establishment and Expansion Fund is aiming to prioritise among other things, the following: Transition of Community Assets: The AEEF will support the transition of community assets to Aboriginal and Community Control by providing funding to help Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) establish and grow. This includes building organisational capacity and capability, which is essential for managing community assets effectively. The focus of this is being directed to the transition of Boomanulla Oval and the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm to community control. Community Control Mechanisms: The AEEF will work with the community to identify appropriate mechanisms for community control over assets. This includes ensuring that assets are accessible and provide support for the entire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This can be seen in the ASD EBM seeking consultation on the AEEF from UNEC in November 2024.
11th Report – August 2023 hearing: Early childhood education and health	The ACT Government acknowledges the Elected Body's concerns with the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results. We share the Elected Body's concern and acknowledge that when children fall behind in their learning, they stay behind and the educational gap continues to widen. The ACT Government recognises and supports the Elected Body's calls to work in a whole-of-government manner to understand and redress the influences that are impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's development, to identify and implement actions that are required to better support children and their families.	The "Set up for Success" initiative provides culturally safe early learning for up to 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-5 years. The Koori Preschool expansion in 2024 added 66 places, increasing total spots to 176 across five sites. The "Think Big for Our Mob" report emphasised cultural safety and integrity, recommending co-educators at each site. The Education Directorate supports Koori Preschools with curriculum implementation, cultural safety frameworks, and staff induction. Free 3-year-old preschool began in January 2024, with over 5,000 eligible children. By Quarter 2, 2024, 3,183 children were enrolled, including 61 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children. The Education Directorate engaged Children's Early Learning Australia to develop culturally inclusive training for non-government early childhood services. Waruga Yardhura supports disengaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning plans and case management. A Community Reference Group oversees the program's strategic direction. The Directorate also collaborates on developmental and health checks for 3-year-olds to ensure a strong start at school. The ACT Government has initiated a pilot program for developmental checks for 3-year-olds. This program aims to identify developmental delays early and provide necessary interventions. The pilot includes comprehensive health and developmental assessments conducted by trained professionals, ensuring that children receive the support they need to thrive in their early years.

Conclusion

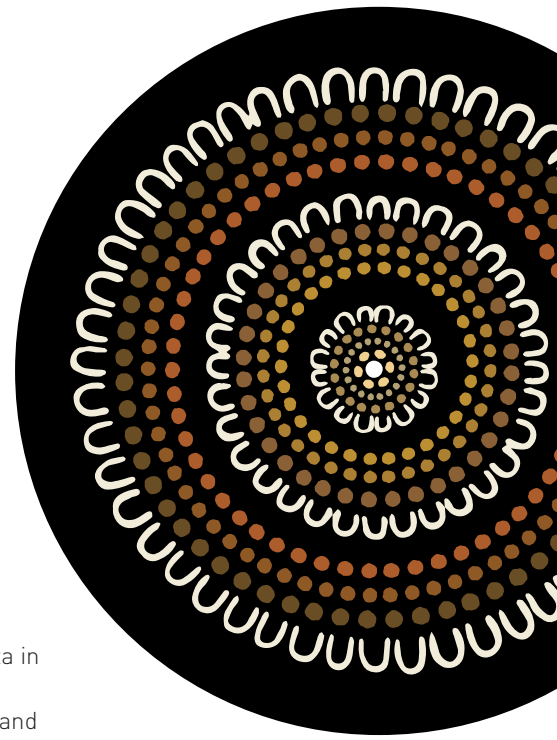
The 2024 Annual Impact Statement under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 highlights our progress in enhancing the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. This report demonstrates our commitment to addressing the community's unique needs through culturally responsive initiatives.

Significant advancements have been made across various focus areas, including Children and Young People, Cultural Integrity, Inclusive Community, Community Leadership, Connecting the Community, Life-long Learning, Economic Participation, Health and Wellbeing, Housing, and Justice. These efforts have promoted empowerment, cultural safety, and self-determination within the community.

While we celebrate these achievements, we recognise that challenges remain. The data in this report provides valuable insights to refine our strategies and continue our efforts.

We extend our gratitude to all contributors, including partners, community members, and government staff. Together, we are working towards a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to our vision of a society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples thrive, have equitable access to opportunities, and are empowered to lead fulfilling lives. We will continue to collaborate with the community to achieve these aspirations and uphold the principles of cultural integrity, respect, and self-determination.





Data sources

1. The information presented in this report has been sourced from various ACT Government Annual Reports and directly from ACT Government Directorates and agencies. These reports and direct contributions provide comprehensive insights into the activities, initiatives, and achievements of government directorates and agencies.
2. **Chart 1** - [Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap, Table CtG3A.1](#)
3. **Chart 2** - ACT Government, Education Directorate
4. **Chart 3** - ACT Government, Community Services Directorate
5. **Chart 4** - ACT Government, ACT Health Directorate
6. **Chart 5** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Child Protection Services, Table 16A.2](#)
7. **Chart 6** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Child Protection Services, Table 16A.4](#)
8. **Chart 7** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Child Protection Services, Table 16A.4](#)
9. **Chart 8** - ACT Government, Community Services Directorate
10. **Chart 9** - ACT Government, Community Services Directorate
11. **Chart 10** - ACT Government, Community Services Directorate
12. **Chart 11** - [Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime - Offenders, Family and Domestic Violence, Table 42](#)
13. **Chart 12** - [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, SHSC demographics \(2011-12 to 2021-22\) & \(2022-23 to 2023-24\) Data Cubes](#)
14. **Chart 13** - ACT Government, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
15. **Chart 14** - [ACT Government, Education Directorate, Annual Report 2023-24](#) & ACT Government, Education Directorate
16. **Chart 15** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
17. **Chart 16** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
18. **Chart 17** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
19. **Chart 18** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
20. **Chart 19** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
21. **Chart 20** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
22. **Chart 21** - ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
23. **Chart 22** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Health, Public Hospitals, Table 12A.15](#)
24. **Chart 23** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Health, Public Hospitals, Table 12A.24](#)
25. **Chart 24** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Health, Public Hospitals, Table 12A.37](#)
26. **Chart 25** - [Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap, Table CtG2A.1](#)
27. **Chart 26** - [Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap, Table SE2d.1](#)
28. **Chart 27** - ACT Government, ACT Health Directorate
29. **Chart 28** - ACT Government, ACT Health Directorate
30. **Chart 29** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Housing and Homelessness, Housing, Table 18A.34](#) & [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)
31. **Chart 30** - [Productivity Commission - Closing the Gap - Table CTG10A.1](#)
32. **Chart 31** - ACT Government, Justice and Community Safety Directorate
33. **Chart 32** - ACT Government, Justice and Community Safety Directorate & [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Justice, Section Overview Table CA.4](#)
34. **Chart 33** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Youth Justice Services, Table 17A.5](#)
35. **Chart 34** - [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Youth Justice, S72 to S125, Data Tables S83](#)
36. **Chart 35** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Community Services, Youth Justice Services, Table 17A.18](#)
37. **Chart 36** - [Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2024, Community Services, Youth Justice Services, Table 17A.18](#)



ACT
Government