



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Public
Accounts and Administration

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission number: 09

Submitter: St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn

Date authorised for publication: 29 September 2025



The Secretariat
Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

LACommitteePAA@parliament.act.gov.au

19 September 2025

Dear Committee,

RE: SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC SECTOR (CLOSING THE GAP) AMENDMENT BILL 2025

The St. Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn (the Society) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission as part of the Inquiry into Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025ⁱ.

CONTEXT: CLOSING THE GAP (NATIONAL AGREEMENT)

The objective of the Closing the Gap (National Agreement)ⁱⁱ is to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This will ensure to a large extent, that their life outcomes are equal to that of all other Australians.

Developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the process and outcome reflected a successful model of how the Government should engage with the Community to achieve positive results. The National Agreement, which came into effect on July 27, 2020, marked a significant milestone in the partnership between all Australian Governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

WHY WE SUPPORT THE PUBLIC SECTOR (CLOSING THE GAP) AMENDMENT BILL 2025

The Society has continuously at national, state and territory levels advocated for improvements to the co-development and co-design of policy and funding of services and programs. We believe that real change can only be achieved by empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, groups and individuals to contribute to the important policy making decisions that impact on their lives.

The Society notes that the Amendment seeks to “legislate the ACT Government’s commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) and to acquit essential actions 3.5 and 4.3 of the Productivity Commission’s 2024 Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Productivity Commission Review) in the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and the Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004.”ⁱⁱⁱ

As a registered charitable not for profit organisation, we seek to shape a more just and compassionate society by working to address the causes of poverty and injustice, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. Individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness are referred to our specialist homelessness services, where our specialist teams provide case management, support services, and referrals to other support agencies.

Our frontline teams provide support to many individuals and families who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We are well aware of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice systems in the ACT as evident in the high representations in prison populations to the higher numbers engaging with other corrective services in comparison to non-indigenous Australians in the Territory.

CONCLUSION

As an organisation, we believe that this amendment will demonstrate the Government's commitment to delivering and transparently reporting on its obligations under the National Agreement. While the ACT Government is already familiar with this agreement, the amendment provides an opportunity to solidify its stance on the National Agreement. It is crucial that all levels of Government are seen taking actions towards achieving the targets they have committed to.

We thank the Standing Committee for the opportunity and for considering our submission.

Kind regards,



Lucy Hohnen | Chief Executive Officer
St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn



ⁱ Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration. [Inquiry into Public Sector \(Closing the Gap\) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025](#). Legislative Assembly for The Australian Capital Territory. Accessed on September 18, 2025.

ⁱⁱ Closing the Gap "[National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)" July 2020. Accessed on September 18, 2025

ⁱⁱⁱ ACT Legislation Register. [Public Sector \(Closing the Gap\) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025](#). Explainer Statement. Page 2 ACT Legislation Register Website. Accessed on September 18, 2025.