

2021

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

ACT Implementation Plan: National Agreement of Closing the Gap

**Presented by
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Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
September 2021**



ACT
Government

Closing the Gap

Jurisdictional Implementation Plan



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Opening statements

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Gulanyin dhuniang, ngalawirinyin, dhunayinyin, Ngunnawal dhawra

In recognition of our First Nations Elders, Leaders and communities, I pay my respect to our oldest living cultures. It is through your stories, echoing our nation's history, experiences and policy practices that we, as government, understand the need to embrace our responsibility to create a generational change that will support equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I extend this respect to the Ngunnawal people as Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region and their continuing culture and acknowledge the region remains a significant meeting place.

The ACT Government acknowledges the strong voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body), which is the ACT Coalition of Peaks representative, and other key community leaders, representative groups and community-controlled organisations. The ACT Government also recognises the valuable contribution these groups and organisations make on behalf of the community to government decision-making. It is through these partnerships that we can deliver success.

While there remains much to do, we celebrate our achievements and how these milestones have contributed to setting the future directions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in the ACT. Some highlights include:

- signing a 10-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement with the Elected Body as key partners in 2019;
- revising the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act* to include its national role in Closing the Gap;
- committing to a \$20 million Healing and Reconciliation Fund to support the ACT commitments to Closing the Gap and deliver on community priorities identified through the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028*; and previously
- amending the *ACT Human Rights Act* to recognise the distinct cultural rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples obligating public authorities to support the exercise of those rights ; and
- amending the *ACT Heritage Act* to enable greater protection for heritage values, including Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values.

These milestones demonstrated the opportunities that come from strengthening our efforts to work across government. We know that we must work together, focus on outcomes, measure for impact and be flexible to change course if necessary. Moving forward, the ACT Government will continue to partner with the Elected Body to achieve positive life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* (ACT Agreement) in 2021 and beyond.

We are aware there is so much still to be done and we will continue to focus our efforts on improving our ways of working by incorporating the four overarching recommendations from the Elected Body Hearings Reports 2020:

- **Work together** - directorates will need to work together in a spirit of collaboration to achieve outcomes.
- **Focus on outcomes** - be clear on the program intent and this will achieve the desired outcome set out in the ACT Agreement.
- **Measure it** - reasonable baselines and data as evidence of progress and change, and

- **Co-design** - work collaboratively with the appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and remunerate fairly in recognition of the cultural knowledge and expertise being brought to the table.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for structural reform, and the ACT Government sees our continued work with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) and the ACT Agreement as an opportunity for us to heed this call. We urge the Commonwealth to join this invitation to commit to actions.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that this important work cannot be done in silos. Partnerships are key to success and the ACT Government recognises the need to ensure strong partnerships are underpinned by practicing honestly and truth telling. Truth telling exposes the past as experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and enables Australians to fully understand the extent of this history, paving the way towards authentic reconciliation.



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
4 August 2021

Katrina Fanning PSM, Chairperson of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (also the ACT Coalition of Peaks representative)

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (the Elected Body) has played an active role in the development and negotiations for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap as a member of the Coalition of Peaks.

The Coalition of Peaks is a representative body of around fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations and members. The Coalition of Peaks came together on their own as an act of self-determination to be formal partners with Australian governments on Closing the Gap. Members are either national, state or territory wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak bodies including certain independent statutory authorities. Their governing boards are elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and / or organisations.

The National Cabinet, the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations have agreed the historic National Agreement on Closing the Gap, taking the country in a new direction to substantially improve life outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The new National Agreement is a pledge from all governments to fundamentally change the way they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations through four Priority Reforms that were overwhelmingly supported during the community engagements led by the Coalition of Peaks late last year.

The Priority Reforms commit governments to new partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country; strengthen community-controlled organisations to deliver closing the gap services; address structural racism within government agencies and organisations; and improve sharing and information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support shared decision making.

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The ACT and National Agreements are a 10-year commitment with transparent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusive processes in monitoring, accountability and reporting. It is our expectation that over the course of the agreement this will include in the ACT:

- The preservation and possible expansion of the Public Hearings Processes.
- That the evidence base on impact is enhanced (data development), measures regular progress on impact and is central to new policy and program development.
- The Elected Body will be central and embedded in decision making forums at Directorate, Inter Departmental Committee and Strategic Sub-committee levels.
- That Director-Generals and Agency senior staff have built in performance measures for delivering on the targets in the agreements.
- That the Budget processes are further enhanced to ensure opportunities for delivery against the agreement commitments are optimised and that the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations are included.
- That engagement with, and reporting to, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is accessible, timely and appropriate.

The two agreements provide a long-term framework for improving the lives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT and beyond. It provides flexibility for each term of the Elected Body to prioritise, develop and enhance key policy and program areas to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our community. Ultimately these representatives are chosen by our community based on the areas they feel most important and represents genuine opportunities for self-determination.

We have achieved much in this current term, most notably a shift in the way of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations in the ACT. This implementation plan is critical in building this momentum and most importantly ensuring we are actually making a positive difference in the experiences and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.



Katrina Fanning PSM
Chairperson
08 June 2021



Working in partnership

The ACT Government's contribution to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is demonstrated through its commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Canberra region and in establishing, under legislation, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

More recently, this commitment was further reflected in the ACT Agreement which commits the ACT Government and community partners to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services and working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address matters that are important to them.

The ACT Agreement includes five Relationship Principles aimed at strengthening the relationships between the community, service partners and the ACT Government including to improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using services. This includes working collaboratively across government and with other jurisdictions to deliver tangible results.

Relationship Principles

- **Respectful interaction with the community.** People appreciate being recognised, listened to and understood. Relationships develop when we interact.
- **Work with different communities differently.** Avoid one size fits all solutions. Tailor a response that meets the needs of the individual.
- **Increase value for the community.** Building relationships increases value for the community, ACT Government and service providers.
- **Continuously improve the level of service delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.** Seek and follow up on both positive and negative feedback we receive from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Enable information sharing and interaction across the ACT Government and service partners.** Simplify the experience for the community by developing a holistic view of each client's relationship with government, organisations and services.

Purpose of this Implementation Plan

ACT's contribution to the National Agreement is led by this Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan is a local response that can drive impact at a national level through the ACT Agreement. Specifically, this Implementation Plan supports a whole of Government approach to meeting the objectives and achieving the outcomes under the National Agreement by outlining existing ACT Government commitments and actions developed in the context of Phase One of the ACT Agreement.

ACT Agreement has four phases of implementation and these align with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (also the ACT Coalition of Peaks representative) elections. This allows for the incoming Elected Body to work together with the ACT Government in setting priorities for the next phase. The ACT Agreement supports generational change, and the phases allow Government to keep pace with changing priorities that reflect the growth in Community. The Implementation Plan works with and aligns itself to these phases.

Closing the Gap Partnership

As active partners in Closing the Gap, the ACT Government acknowledges that equal participation in the implementation and ongoing monitoring of the National Agreement is essential to accelerate improvements in the life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Making a difference

The ACT Agreement Outcomes Framework will measure the impact actions in the ACT and National Agreements are having on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the Canberra region. The Outcomes Framework includes all targets in the National Agreement, some with increased aspirations reflecting baseline data in the ACT. Progress against the Framework will be reported annually by the ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The ACT Government has benefited from more than a decade of working in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and their advocacy on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. It is our shared responsibility to ensure our efforts are of value to the local ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

In the Tenth Hearings Report to Government, the Elected Body emphasised the importance of making a difference to the local community and being able to measure those outcomes accordingly. The ACT Government recognises the need to continue to strengthen its focus on achieving outcomes that are of value to the community. This in turn enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to be heard at a national level, and again, confirms the importance of the ACT Agreement.

Priority Reform

The ACT Government is committed to developing long-term sustainable relationships based on trust, awareness and understanding of experiences with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and community partners. A demonstration of this commitment comes from the Government’s response to the Elected Body Hearings in March 2020 where the Government strongly supported the overarching recommendations arising from the Hearings.

The Government also reiterated its commitment to partnering with the Elected Body to achieve equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Canberra region over the life of the Agreement. It is through this commitment to partnership and collaboration that reform can occur.

Embedding the Priority Reforms in the way government works

It is critical all partners in the National Agreement are focused on the systemic changes that the Priority Reform Areas will deliver over the next 10 years. The Priority Reforms align with the ACT Agreement, support self-determination and contribute to the achievement of key outcomes across all Focus Areas. The strongest alignment between Priority Reforms and Focus Areas in the ACT Agreement are identified below:

National Agreement – PRIORITY REFORMS	ACT Agreement – FOCUS AREAS
<p>PR1 <u>Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making</u> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.</p>	<p><u>Community Leadership</u> 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</p> <p><u>Cultural Integrity</u> 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</p>



<p>PR2 <u>Building the Community-Controlled Sector</u> There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.</p>	<p><u>Inclusive Community</u> 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.</p> <p><u>Connecting the Community</u> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are connected to strong families, social and support networks building upon the foundation of community leadership.</p>
<p>PR3 <u>Transforming Government Organisations</u> Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.</p>	<p><u>Inclusive Community</u> 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.</p> <p><u>Cultural Integrity</u> 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.</p>
<p>PR4 <u>Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level</u> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.</p>	<p><u>Community Leadership</u> 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</p>

Together with the remaining Core and Significant Focus Areas in the ACT Agreement: Children and Young People (Core); Life Long Learning; Economic Participation; Health and Wellbeing; Housing; and Justice, this completes the framework to support fostering *Strong Families* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT and surrounding region.



Priority Reform One: Partnership and shared decision-making

Outcome: People are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

Target: There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in place 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.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong voice within government decision making, including through the Elected Body, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the ACT Reconciliation Council and other representative bodies.

In the co-design of initiatives that address the need for systemic reform, the sharing of cultural knowledge and a commitment to learning more culturally appropriate and responsive ways of working occur. This is central to improving the delivery of government services that support building strong and sustainable communities. An important factor for government to recognise is the responsibility Traditional Custodians have to care for Country and the role they play sharing knowledge and practices. The ACT Government is implementing a range of initiatives that seek to listen, learn and improve approaches to shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Partnership Actions

The ACT's contribution to supporting Priority Reform One Partnership Actions is reflected in the ACT Agreement under two Core Focus Areas of the ACT Agreement:

Cultural Integrity: 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; and

Community Leadership: 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 will continue to engage with the Elected Body in shared decision-making and review the support government provides the Elected Body in performing its national role on the Coalition of Peaks.

Jurisdictional Actions

The key feature supporting local decision-making in the ACT is the democratically elected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. This year, 2021, is an election year for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the ACT Government is enabling the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the ACT in the election of their representative body.

The ACT Agreement demonstrates the shared commitment and partnership of the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to work together to improve life outcomes and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT.

Self-determination is the underlying principle of the ACT Agreement, which is an ongoing process of choice to ensure the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can meet their social, cultural and economic needs.



The ACT is committed to working with the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure that priorities are developed and driven by community. The ACT Government recognises the need for a shared and collective approach to achieving quality life outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

ACT Government is applying the Partnership Health Check model to the ACT Agreement governance to provide accountability and a mechanism for continuous improvement.

The ACT Government is also embedding the principles and approaches outlined in *Dhawura Ngilan: A vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage in Australia* and the *Best Practice Standards* in Indigenous cultural heritage management to conserve and protect cultural heritage of the world's oldest living cultures.

PRIORITY REFORM ONE – FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS AND SHARED DECISION-MAKING				
Priority Reform One Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.				
Priority Reform One Target: There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in place 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.				
Action	Is this action: • existing, or • changed/new	Does this action include specific funding?	What is the timeframe for this action to be completed?	Who is the Minister/s responsible for this action?
Establish a \$20 million Healing and Reconciliation Fund (over 10 years) to be administered in partnership with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to deliver on the priorities identified through the <i>ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028</i> . The Government will work with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to develop a governance structure. This initiative will also support facilitation of community conversations about the opportunity for and implications of a Treaty process for the ACT, an early project to be supported by the Healing and Reconciliation Fund.	New	The ACT Government allocated \$317,000 in 2020-21 over two years to develop a governance structure for the Healing and Reconciliation Fund and to progress work on Treaty.	December 2021	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Undertake a review of remuneration arrangements that support community members' participation in ACT Government consultative mechanisms and governance bodies.	New	To be delivered within existing resources	December 2021	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. All other ACT Ministers, including the ACT Chief Minister.
Prepare guidance material for ACT public servants to support appropriate engagement with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultative mechanisms and representative bodies.	New	To be delivered within existing resources	December 2021	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs ACT Minister for Heritage
Prepare for and conduct the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body elections in July 2021 and support onboarding of the new Elected Body.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources	December 2021	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Caucus and JACS Advisory Group is continued and utilised as a strategic resource in policy and program development	New	To be delivered within existing resources	November 2021	ACT Minister for Corrections ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs



Priority Reform Two: Building the community-controlled sector

Outcome: Building the community-controlled sector: There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.

Target: 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.

The ACT Government recognises and respects the important contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the ACT make to our community. In demonstration of this commitment, the ACT Government has invested in a range of community-led organisations and specialist services, while also strengthening recognition of new and emerging organisations, services, local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Priority Reform Two is strongly aligned with one Core and one Significant Focus Area of the ACT Agreement:

Inclusive Community: 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, and

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

Partnership Actions

The ACT is contributing to the National Agreement partnership actions under this Priority Reform by investing in our emerging and existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations. For example, the ACT Government has provided more than \$10 million to the construction of a purpose-built facility that increases the service capability for Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services.

The ACT is also working with Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation on the development of a purpose-built facility.

In the 2020-21 Budget the ACT committed \$4.86 million to progressing reforms set out in the *Our Booris, Our Way Report*. This includes \$1.709 million to support the development of a child and family community-controlled organisation for the ACT. Further investment has been provided to support the establishment of a community-controlled housing organisation in the ACT.

The ACT Government is also supporting several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are exiting or being diverted from the justice system through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Justice Programs. The ACT is the only jurisdiction to have an Aboriginal community-controlled health service embedded in a prison.

Jurisdictional Actions


Under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028*, the ACT Government has committed to establishing community managed organisations and arrangements to support improved community connections.

Through the \$20 million Healing and Reconciliation Fund, we have committed to supporting the development of sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in areas such as child and family services, justice, housing and disability – which meets the priorities of the local First Nations community and the priorities in the Closing the Gap Agreement.



The New and Emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations (NEO) Support program has previously supported several newly established ACCOs to provide culturally appropriate services to the community. Up to \$25,000 was available for organisations to use for start-up costs to establish their organisation.

Under the 2020-21 NEO support program, Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation received funding of \$25,000 to support the establishment of the organisation which will deliver direct family support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT.



Progress the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific housing strategy and begin work on an establishing a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled housing organisation.	Existing	\$375,000 was allocated to support this work in 2020-21.	December 2021	ACT Minister for Housing and Suburban Development ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
CMTEDD will continue to make available funding to support eligible traineeships, apprenticeships, and Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASBAs) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed under the Employment Inclusion Program. This includes subsidising the cost of the training delivered by the Registered Training Organisation and funding additional learning support to ensure the successful completion of the training.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources.	Ongoing	ACT Chief Minister
artsACT will implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation Action Plan, including ongoing support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Officer in artsACT.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources.	Ongoing	ACT Minister for the Arts
Drawing on the work to support the establishment of more ACCOs, CSD will work in partnership with other directorates (mainly Health and Education) to develop a Policy Paper that outlines our approach to genuinely partner with ACCOs and business to deliver better services and capability.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources	December 2021 Phase one	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Further develop our Strengthening Partnerships – Investing for Social Impact (Commissioning Framework) to continue to create partnerships with the sector and business to support delivery of services and new initiatives.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources	December 2021 Phase one	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs ACT Minister for Families and Community Services
CMTEDD will implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) to maximise opportunities for growth within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community service organisations, driving economic participation and development.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources.	Ongoing	ACT Chief Minister



Priority Reform Three: Transforming government organisations

Outcome: Improving mainstream institutions: Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.

Target: By 2031, reduce experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within government systems by at least 80 per cent as progress towards zero (ACT Agreement).

Priority Reform Three is strongly aligned with two Core Focus Areas of the ACT Agreement:

Inclusive Community: 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.

Cultural Integrity: 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.

Each phase of the ACT Agreement implementation provides an opportunity to strengthen outcomes across the life of the Agreement by focusing attention on the way we work, including improving collaboration across government.

The ACT Government is accelerating effort around actions that are cross cutting and with the potential to demonstrate impact for individuals and families. This includes a dedicated group of Senior Officials tasked with leading each priority and responsible for delivering the work on addressing systemic racism, mandatory reporting, cultural integrity, recruitment and retention, procurement and supporting the growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations.

Partnership Actions

The ACT Government recognises the importance of implementing the transformational elements from the National Agreement. These transformational elements will be embedded under the ACT Agreement Focus Area of Cultural Integrity. ACT Public Service Strategic Board Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee will drive this work and report to the ACT Public Service Strategic Board.

In recognition of this Priority Reform target, the ACT has moved to increase its own focus in this area and set a target to reduce experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within government systems by at least 80 per cent by 2031 as progress towards zero.

Jurisdictional Actions

In 2020, there were some real threats such as bush fires and the COVID pandemic to the safety of community members and preservation of areas of cultural significance. The response to these threats by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and Government coming together and take appropriate action is a practical demonstration of Clause 64 outlined in the National Agreement. At the Tenth Elected Body Hearings and subsequent Report to Government recognised Government's efforts to engage with representatives to achieve this.

The Tenth Hearings Report and its recommendations has initiated change within Government and, coupled with the signing of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, is driving a culture to embody self-determination. This Report is timely for the future of the Agreement and changes made now in response to its recommendations will strengthen the partnership between the ACT Government, the Elected Body and the Community and support the jurisdictional actions under this Priority Reform.



The ACT Government strongly supports the overarching recommendations in the Report and looks forward to working in partnership with the Elected Body to achieve equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in the Canberra region over the life of the Agreement.

A practical example of the Priority Reform in action comes from the ACT Government commitment to reducing experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working within the public service or engaging with our services. An ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Framework for Addressing Systemic Racism is being developed and initially working on a common measure for identifying instances of systemic racism.

The Framework will address behaviours, identify and address systemic racism in processes and systems to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, customers and community feel safe when employed within the public service and interacting with our services.

Preliminary work to support the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Children and Young People Commissioner in line with Recommendation 7 of the <i>Our Booris, Our Way</i> Report.	New	To be delivered within existing resources.	December 2021	ACT Minister for Human Rights ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
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Priority Reform Four: Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

Target: 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.

Priority Reform Four is reflected in the Relationship Principles in the ACT Agreement: Enabling information sharing and interaction across the ACT Government and service partners. The goal is to simplify the experience for the community by developing a holistic view of each client's relationship with government, organisations and services.

Priority Reform Four is also strongly aligned with a Significant Focus Area of the ACT Agreement:

Community Leadership: 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 committed to delivering equitable life outcomes through self-determination and understands the need to go beyond co-design processes. As a government and member of the Closing the Gap reforms we are listening and learning from our existing work in the current range of governance/advisory group and co-design processes. Directorates are being guided by these groups and the Elected Body on better understanding the barriers to embedding self-determination in the way we engage with Community.

Partnership Actions

The ACT recognises our current data issues as a small jurisdiction and will look for ways to share data with Community representatives in a way that keeps integrity and enables informed decision making. This will be the ACT Government's contribution to the partnership actions under Priority Reform Four.

Given the size of the ACT in comparison to other jurisdictions and our unique government structure, the ACT will explore opportunities to work with other jurisdictions to share the benefits that will flow from other place-based partnerships.

Jurisdictional Actions

The ACT is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop partnerships to share data and information. Particularly important is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a seamless service model where they only need to tell their story once and all services are able to access the information they need.

The ACT is a single region for the purposes of the National Agreement.



PRIORITY REFORM FOUR – SHARED ACCESS TO DATA AND INFORMATION AT A REGIONAL LEVEL				
Priority Reform Four Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.				
Priority Reform Four Target: 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.				
Action	Is this action: • existing, or • changed/new	Does this action include specific funding?	What is the timeframe for this action to be completed?	Who is the Minister/s responsible for this action?
Finalise and report against the ACT Agreement Outcomes Framework to provide a measure of community impact and progress on Closing the Gap targets.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources.	November 2021	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. All other ACT Ministers, including the ACT Chief Minister.
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.	Existing	To be delivered within existing resources.	December 2021	All ACT Ministers, including the ACT Chief Minister.



Targets

[The ACT Agreement](#) incorporates socio-economic targets from the National Agreement grouped under the ten Focus Areas as detailed in the table below. These Focus Areas and related targets are interconnected and holistic in nature and together contribute to Strong Families, the central theme of the ACT Agreement. This interconnectedness between Focus Areas is reflected in the artwork commissioned for the Agreement.

The ACT Government will use policy levers available to the jurisdiction to achieve these targets recognising there are areas where the ACT and Federal Governments will need to work together to make progress. The Outcomes Framework identifies an annual reporting strategy for each target aimed at providing an indication of progress against each target.

The ten published [Focus Area Action Plans](#) detail the actions being taken by the ACT Government to achieve the Quality Life Outcomes and targets relevant to each Focus Area. Each directorate has an agreed implementation plan which reflects the actions and timelines appropriate to that directorate.

From January 2022, the Outcomes Framework will underpin changes to implementing the ACT Agreement when Phase Two commences. These changes include a stronger focus on measuring impact for the community and a refresh of all Focus Area Action Plans to reflect the updated national targets. There will be a clearer line of sight between the actions to be undertaken in Phase Two and the Closing the Gap targets. A new Elected Body will advise on the community priorities for this phase.

The table below maps National Closing the Gap Agreement Targets against ACT Agreement Focus Areas, indicating where targets have been raised to reflect the ACT context.

National Closing the Gap Targets by ACT Agreement Focus Areas

Focus Area (core): Children and Young People			
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people growing up safely in their families and communities			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.	Maintain parity between the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education.	3 Increased to parity for ACT	Minister for Early Childhood Development Minister for Education and Youth Affairs
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.	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 to 55 per cent.	4	Minister for Early Childhood Development
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are not overrepresented in the child protection system.	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 per cent	12	Minister for Families and Community Services.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.	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 per cent, as progress towards zero.	13	Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services Minister for Police Attorney-General
Focus Area (core): Cultural Integrity			
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			
<i>No socio-economic targets. PR 1 and PR 3 relate</i>			

Focus Area (core): Inclusive Community			
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.			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.	By 2031, there is a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.	16	Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Minister for Education and Youth Affairs
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.	a: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.	17	Chief Minister
	b: Significant and sustained increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the media, in particular community-controlled media.		Chief Minister
<i>PR 2 and PR 3 relate</i>			
Focus Area (core): Community Leadership			
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.			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical, and economic relationship with their land and waters.	By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.	15 Sea target not included	Minister for Planning and Land Management Minister for Environment Minister for Heritage Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
<i>No socio-economic targets. PR1 and PR 4 relate</i>			
Focus Area (significant): Connecting the Community			
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are connected to strong families, social and support networks building upon the foundation of community leadership.			
<i>No socio-economic targets. PR2 relates</i>			
Focus Area (significant): Life-Long Learning			
Respect is given to preserving the oldest living culture which enhances social inclusion and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fully engage in lifelong learning and positive generational experiences.			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (aged 20-24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.	5	Minister for Education Minister for Skills
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways.	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.	6	Minister for Education Minister for Skills

Focus Area (significant): Economic Participation			
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.			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australian youth.	7 Increased to parity for the ACT	Minister for Education and Youth Affairs Minister for Skills Minister for Economic Development Minister for Business
Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 – 64 years are employed to achieve parity with non-Indigenous Australians.	8 Increased for the ACT	Minister for Skills Minister for Economic Development Minister for Business
Wealth is created through growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporate sector.	Increase the proportion of high value contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	n/a	Minister for Economic Development
Focus Area (significant): Health and Wellbeing			
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equity in health and wellbeing outcomes as any other members of the community.			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives.	Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.	1	Minister for Health
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong.	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.	2	Minister for Health Minister for Early Childhood Development
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.	Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.	14	Minister for Mental Health
Focus Area (significant): Housing			
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equitable access to affordable, secure, and appropriate housing suitable to their needs			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.	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.	9 Increased to parity for the ACT	Minister for Housing Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services



Focus Area (significant): Justice			
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.			
Outcomes	Targets	National Closing the Gap Target	ACT Minister Responsible
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.	By 2031, reduce the rate of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve parity with the non-indigenous incarceration rate.	10 Increased to parity for the ACT	Minister for Police and Emergency Minister for Corrections Attorney General
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.	By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17) in detention by at least 30 per cent.	11	Assistance Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services Minister for Police and Emergency Attorney General



How this Implementation Plan will work in practice

Given the strong alignment between this Implementation Plan and the ACT Agreement, monitoring and reporting arrangements currently in place for the ACT Agreement will form a strong basis for accountability for commitments in the Implementation Plan.

Changes to this Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan will be reviewed and updated in conjunction with each phase of implementation of the ACT Agreement as follows:

Phase One	February 2019 – December 2021
Phase Two	January 2022 – December 2024
Phase Three	January 2025 – December 2027
Phase Four	January 2028 – December 2028

Annual Reporting

In 2021, the ACT Government will report on the progress made under the ACT Agreement and the ACT National Agreement Implementation Plan. This report will focus on impact on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Canberra region. Annual reports for each directorate will include information on the actions being taken under the ACT Agreement. All annual reports will be tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

In 2022, the ACT Government will further strengthen the alignment between the ACT and National Agreements, including in relation to reporting requirements.

Accountability

Existing accountability mechanisms for the ACT Agreement will be strengthened to ensure they are fit-for-purpose. In particular to support responsiveness to Joint Council feedback and consideration of outcomes from the Productivity Commission and Indigenous-led reviews.

ACT Agreement Governance Bodies

Two governance bodies oversee the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement:

- The Strategic Board Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee provides strategic leadership and oversight across the ACT Public Service driving policy, program, and service delivery reform to enable self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Inter-Directorate Committee (IDC) supports the Strategic Board Committee and drives the implementation of the ACT and National Agreements. In 2020, the IDC introduced Co-Chairing arrangements between the Elected Body and the ACT Government to acknowledge the importance of shared decision making and the strong voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Elected Body Hearings

The Elected Body will monitor progress against the ACT and National Agreements through its Annual Hearings process. The annual Elected Body Hearings is an important accountability mechanism for Government and is an important way to keep Government focused on delivering the intent and measuring the impact of actions committed to in the Agreement.

Communicating about this Implementation Plan

The ACT National Agreement Implementation Plan will be published on the ACT Government's Strong Families website and communicated to all internal stakeholders.

The ACT Government will work closely with the Elected Body to develop, promote and distribute materials (when required), including face to face community forums and community days to build awareness and engagement with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and broader Canberra region.

Meeting our commitments

As per the National Agreement, jurisdictional Implementation Plans will:	Checked
Be fully aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and state that their purpose is to implement the Agreement (cl96)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Respond to the differing needs, priorities, and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia (cl96)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate a commitment to undertake all actions in a way that takes full account of, promotes, and does not diminish in any way, the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (cl 21 and 107)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Be whole of government plans, covering government agencies and statutory bodies (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Be developed and delivered in partnership between governments, the Coalition of Peaks, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Set out how existing policies and programs will be aligned to the Agreement (cl 104 and 108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Set out actions to achieve the Priority Reforms and partnership actions (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Set out actions to achieve the agreed outcomes and targets (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For transparency, include information on funding and timeframes for actions (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Include the approach to annual reporting, including when they will release their public report (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Include information on how the states and territories will work with local government to implement this Agreement (state and territory Implementation Plans only) (cl108)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Include data development actions identified in the Data Development Plan (cl106)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Be published on the jurisdiction's website (cl111)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Glossary of terms

Abbreviation	Name
ACT Agreement	ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028
ACCOs	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations
ACTPS	ACT Public Service
Committee	Strategic Board Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee
Elected Body	ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
GGYAC	Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
IDC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Inter-Directorate Committee
Minister	ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
National Agreement	National Closing the Gap Agreement
NEOs	New and Emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations
WhoG	Whole of Government