

ACT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AGREEMENT 2019-2028

Delivering equitable outcomes for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

PHASE TWO FOCUS AREA ACTION PLAN

July 2022 – December 2024

FOCUS AREA:

Children and Young People

QUALITY LIFE OUTCOME:

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

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS OUTCOME BY FOCUSING ON:

- Taking every opportunity to maintain children and young people with family.
- Delivering quality services that support the positive development, health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Every child and young person having access to quality early childhood services to support learning.
- Fostering connection to a safe and strong community.
- Working to provide early support to children and their families.

CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

ACT HEADLINE INDICATORS

- Increasing enrolment of three year olds in a preschool program.
- Continued high enrolment of children in preschool in the year before full-time schooling.
- Decreasing number/proportion of children and young people entering out of home care.
- Increasing the number/proportion of children and young people exiting out of home care.
- Decreasing number/proportion of children and young people in out of home care.



PHASE-BASED QUALITATIVE STATEMENTS

Closing off on Phase One implementation

While some key actions have been completed, work towards many of the Phase One actions in the Children and Young People focus area are still in progress, and this work will continue to be advanced in parallel to implementation of the Phase Two Action Plan. In addition, some actions under Phase One represent commitments to ongoing work. Full detail on the status of the actions under Phase One is available on the Community Services Directorate website under the section on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Policy Development.

Successes of the Agreement that are evident at the end of Phase One include continued higher levels of preschool enrolments for children in the year prior to their first year of schooling, steady growth in the enrolment of three-year olds in preschool programs and some small but encouraging reductions in the number of children and young people in out of home care, and more importantly entering out of home care.

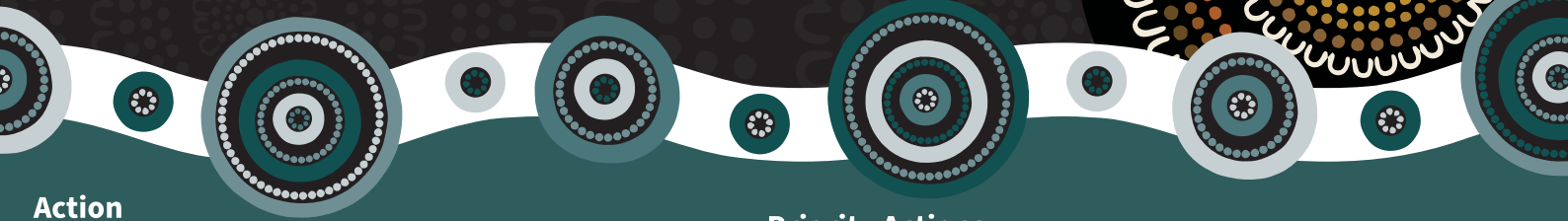
To be achieved in Phase Two implementation

By the end of Phase Two implementation:

- engagement with and partnering with the community to deliver improved policy, service responses and pathways for children and young people and their families.
- work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector to build capacity to develop and deliver culturally safe service responses to children, young people, and their families. This will include the co-design and establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Agency to initially provide diversionary services, and advice on improved policy, service responses and pathways for children, young people, and their families.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

New Priority Actions for Phase Two Implementation



Action Number	Priority Actions
1	A review of the Mandatory Reporting project needs to be undertaken to ensure alignment with Canberra Health Service and Education Directorate projects on mandatory reporting and policy changes.
2	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.
3	Implement actions from the Koori Preschool co-design process including the <i>Koori Pre-Cultural Safety Framework</i> and <i>Koori Pre-Curriculum</i> and associated professional learning for school staff.
4	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.
5	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.
6	Modernise the <i>Children and Young People Act 2008</i> 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.
7	Establish and implement the new position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner.
8	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 pediatric services, and community service sectors to better support children, young people, and their families.
9	Continue to implement the ACT Government’s 10-year plan for early childhood education, <i>Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT</i> , 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.

STATUS BAR | 10-YEAR PLAN

The status bar provides an at-a-glance timing of Agreement phases highlighting the current Phase.

Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
Feb 2019 – Jun 2022 Status: Complete	Jul 2022 – Dec 2024 Status: In progress	Jan 2025 – Dec 2027 Status: Not started	Jan 2028 – Dec 2028 Status: Not started