

# ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019-2028



## ACT Impact Statement 2021







## Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document or website content and would like to receive the information in an alternative format, such as large print or audio, please call the Community Services Directorate's General Enquiry line on **133 427**.

If English is not your first language and you require the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National, contact us through the TIS phone interpreting service on **131 450**.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS):

- TTY (telephone typewriter) users phone **13 36 77** then ask for **133 427**;
- Voice Relay users' phone **1300 555 727** then ask for **133 427**;
- For other relay calls, see the NRS website then ask for **133 427**.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from Territory Records Office, ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

Enquiries about this publication should be directed to:

The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs,  
Community Services Directorate  
GPO Box 158 Canberra City, ACT 2601  
Phone **(02) 6207 9784**  
Website: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

Phone: Access Canberra **13 22 81**

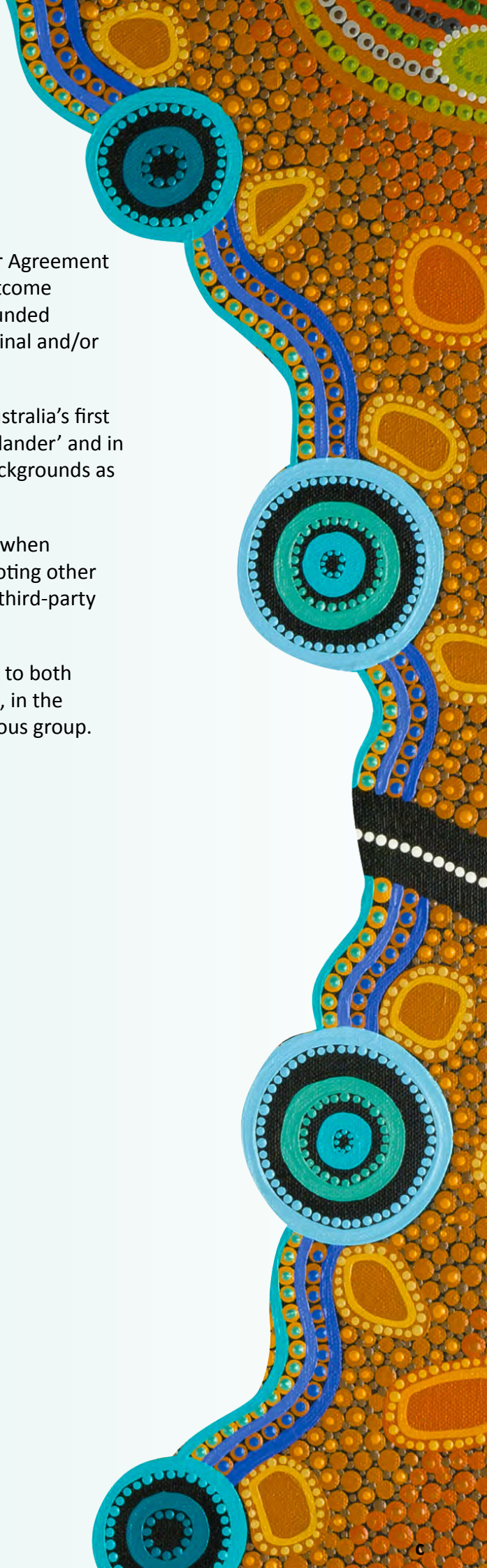
## **Terminology**

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 Annual Report 2019 provides outcome reporting, and describes ACT Government funded initiatives, for people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the ACT.

The ACT Government generally describes Australia's first peoples as 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander' and in this report describes Australians of other backgrounds as 'non-Indigenous'.

This report also uses the terms 'Indigenous' when discussing data in text or in tables, when quoting other sources, specific program or policy titles, or third-party data.

The term 'Indigenous' is understood to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in the understanding that they are not a homogenous group.







*Strength in Community*

## Acknowledgements

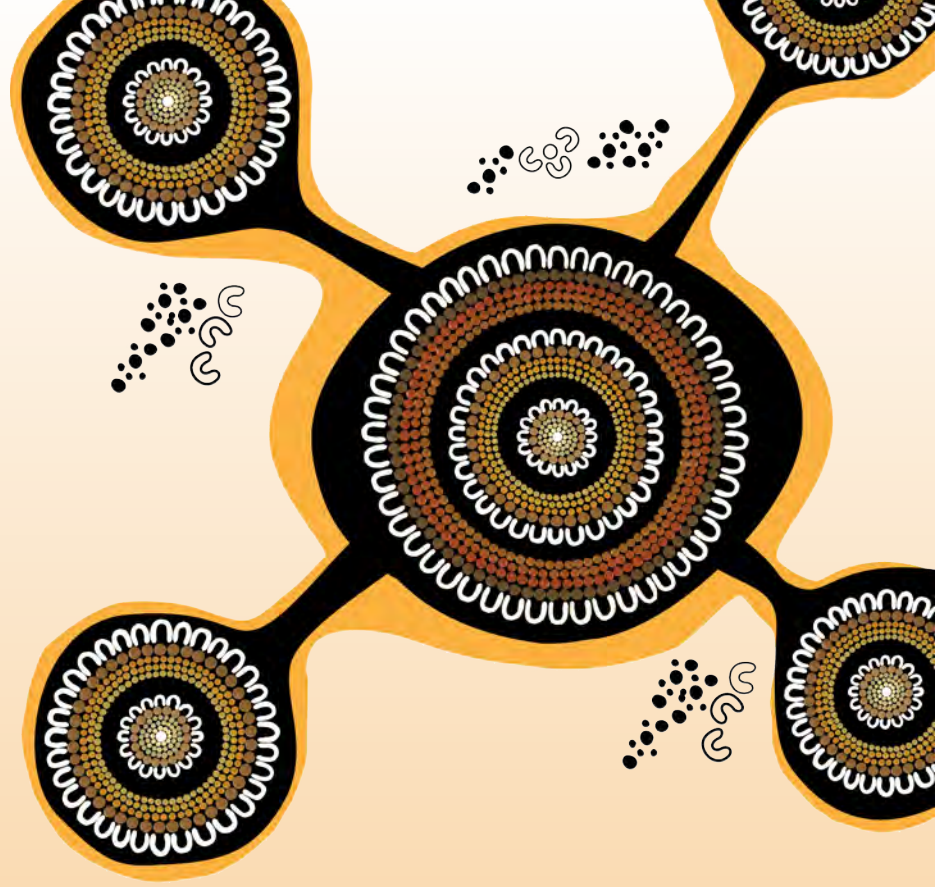
### Indigenous artwork and graphic elements

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. A detailed description of *Strength in Community* is included on the Agreement.

### Document & graphic design

IB.Creative ([www.impressionbay.com](http://www.impressionbay.com))  
Graphic design: Conan Fulton (IB.Creative)





***G***ulanyin dhuniang,  
***n***galawirinyin, dhunayinyin,  
***N***gunnawal dhawra.

***We acknowledge that we are  
on the lands of the Ngunnawal.***

# ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019-2028

# ACT Impact Statement 2021

## Minister's foreword


I am pleased to present the first Impact Statement that tracks the ACT's performance against the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2018 (the ACT Agreement) and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (the National Agreement).

The ACT Agreement includes a commitment to develop an Outcomes Framework and present an annual statement of performance. The Outcomes Framework was finalised in 2021 and this report responds to the commitment to provide a statement of performance for the 2020-2021 financial year.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected body has stressed the importance of measuring impact against the ACT Agreement, despite the many challenges. The Government agrees, and our commitment is reflected in this report.

As this is the first Impact Statement, I look forward to working with Agreement partners to strengthen future reports and embed the principles of data sovereignty.

For much of the 2020-21 reporting period our lives were impacted by the COVID pandemic. All parties to the Agreement and our service providers gave priority and worked tirelessly to support the safety and wellbeing of the community. Work on implementing Agreement commitments was impacted during this time.



Given this context I am particularly pleased to see measurable progress made in several areas, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT experiencing:

- continued high preschool enrolment for children in the year prior to fulltime schooling;
- steady growth in enrolment of three-year-olds in preschool programs;
- signs of improved readiness for school reflected in the ACT Kindergarten Health Check;
- some small but encouraging reductions in the number of children and young people in out of home care, and also entering out of home care;
- a reduction in the rate of people returning to incarceration;
- more students achieving year 12 certificates;
- an increase in patients starting emergency department treatment on time; and
- an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and proportion of budget being contracted by ACT Government directorates.

I acknowledge the need to continue to work with the Elected Body and other community leaders on key priorities to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT to achieve equitable outcomes.

The Government appreciates that publication of large amounts of data can be confronting. Our aim is to share the data we have in a way that informs and empowers the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, government agencies and non-government partners to focus our efforts on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.

I look forward to continuing to improve the way we measure and report on impact during Phase Two of the Agreement.

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





## Head of Service's foreword Working in Partnership

As Head of Service, I am proud that the ACT Public Service continues to work in collaboration with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to achieve the priority of equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ACTPS is committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services to the community and we will continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to address matters that are important to them.

It is important that we take time to reflect each year and track our performance and identify where we need to do more. Through this Impact Statement we have an opportunity to measure our performance and see the difference our Service is making as we collectively work to meet commitments and targets under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* and *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.


I am particularly pleased to see an increase the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the ACTPS. We need to keep improving our offer as an employer of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who add significant strength to our Service as we deliver services and programs on behalf of our Ministers to our community.

Data also shows that we are improving our support of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses as we implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy across the Service.

Our commitment to working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners is strong including with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and many community groups and providers. Key achievements delivered over the past year through these partnerships include:

- Canberra Health Services and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group have worked to improve access to treatment for children requiring ear, nose and throat surgery. This partnership resulted in an end to the long-wait list in 2021. However, we know we have more to do when it comes to accessing specialist health care.
- Health Directorate and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Working Group developed a community-led commissioning process to support the establishment of a culturally appropriate suicide prevention and aftercare service for the ACT region.



- 
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate, ACT Policing, the Justice Caucus and Yedjung Murra, have delivered more opportunities for young people to participate in culturally safe, restorative justice practices.
  - Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee have established 'Namarag', the first special purpose reserve in the Molonglo River Reserve, with its design and construction directed by the Ngunnawal community to celebrate and share Ngunnawal culture.
  - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and the ACT Reconciliation Council successfully delivered the 2021 Reconciliation Day event, one of the most successful on record.
  - Community Services Directorate with guidance from the Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee has worked to strengthen the cultural proficiency of staff working in Child Youth Protection Services, embed the Child Placement Principle and provide culturally appropriate support to families.
  - Education Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers and Cultural Integrity Coordinators strengthened the cultural integrity of ACT Public Schools and met the needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by creating learning environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are nurtured, celebrated, and shared with the broader community.
  - Major Projects Canberra engaged with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on the Canberra Hospital Expansion project to support employment opportunities and ensure a culturally appropriate and welcoming facility.
  - Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Ngunnawal communities, has identified public spaces at the Lyneham shops, Greenway Park, John Knight Park and Narrabundah shops for the installation of Aboriginal cultural art. There are plans for future sites across the city.

On behalf of the ACT Public Service, I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to build on these achievements and deliver outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT.

**Kathy Leigh**, *Head of ACT Public Service*



# At a glance

## This Report

- presents information under the 10 focus areas in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028;
- includes socio-economic targets and the four priority reform areas from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020;
- focuses on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, identifying other populations where appropriate;
- provides data against ACT indicators that signal the ACT's progress against targets;
- compares data available on 31 December 2021 against a baseline to assess the status of progress made; and
- highlights areas where progress has been made and identifies those areas where further work may be needed

## Additional Information

- Sources of data and multiple years of data are included in the Impact Statement Dashboard on the Strong Families and CSD websites:

[www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/impact-statement](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/impact-statement)

- National Agreement Closing the Gap target information and data is on the National Agreement and Productivity Commission websites:

[www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement](http://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement)  
[www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data](http://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data)

- Strategies, achievements and activity taking place under the ACT and National Agreements is available in ACT directorate Annual Reports



# How to read this document

The following tables show performance against the four core focus areas and six significant focus areas in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Agreement 2019-2028 (the ACT Agreement).

Each table shows:

- targets in each focus area;
- ACT data reported for the National Agreement;
- the indicators and data we use to measure and track progress;
- how we performed in the reporting year; and
- the status of our progress.

## Targets

Targets are taken from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (the National Agreement) and many extend for a few years beyond the current 2028 end date of the ACT Agreement. The ACT Government increased a small number of national targets (see for example targets 14 & 15) and added a target on wealth creation (see target 16). The four priority reform areas in the National Agreement have also been endorsed by the ACT Government and are reflected in the Cultural Integrity, Inclusive Community, Community Leadership and Connecting the Community focus areas of the ACT Agreement.

## National Agreement data

ACT data reported for the National Agreement has been included where it is available. Sometimes this is baseline data where it is relevant to the target. In other cases, the most recently reported data is included. Data relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population appears in black text and data for the non-Indigenous population appears in grey text.

## Indicators and data

Indicators are a statement of the change required in the activity being measured for each target. For example: *Increase in patients starting treatment on time* (Target 17). Indicators have been selected based on their ability to signal the ACT's likely progress against targets on an annual basis.

This Impact Statement uses data available at 31 December 2021. Where data is reported as 2021 data this refers to the financial year 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. Where data is reported as 2020 data this refers the calendar year 1 January to 31 December 2020. Any exceptions are identified.

For more details on the data mix and limitations, see *Interpreting the data below*.






## Measuring performance

This report focuses on the movement of data against indicators, comparing the most recent data against the baseline. This data movement reflects a longer-term trend, in contrast to short term, year by year movement. This is important for understanding progress on targets that are over a 10 year period.

# How to read this document

## Status of progress

Five categories are used to describe the assessment of progress towards closing the gap against indicators, by comparing the first year of data (baseline) to the most recent year.

-  **Positive change:** data suggests improvement in community outcomes
-  **Negative change:** data suggests a movement away from achieving community outcomes
-  **No significant change:** unable to assess change in community outcomes, or movements are not statistically significant compared to the baseline year
-  **Unclear:** unable to assess change in community outcomes, due to either variation in results across a set of metrics, small data samples which have a high variance, or the first year of data so no change is able to be determined
-  **No data:** no data currently available for this Indicator for the reporting period.

## Interpreting the data

All data reported in the Impact Statement relates to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community unless otherwise stated. The ACT's small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population means a very small change in the number of people can appear to be significant change when expressed in percentage changes.

For example, in *Health and Wellbeing*, there is a relatively small number of babies born each year and just a few more babies born with healthy birthweights in one year can appear to be a much more significant positive change when expressed as a percentage. Equally, a small reduction in the number of healthy birthweight babies can appear to be a more significant negative change when expressed as a percentage.

Care should be taken in assessing movements in some data.

For example, in *Children and Young People*, a drop in the number of people seeking support in relation to domestic and family violence could reflect fewer people experiencing this form of violence. Alternatively, just as many or even more people could be experiencing domestic and family violence and a smaller proportion is seeking support. There has been considerable national debate on this issue and the development of more effective data in this area is being considered.

The measurement of progress against ACT indicators is not a precise measurement of progress against targets. Some indicators have a high predictive value while others only measure one aspect of an indicator and target.

For example, in *Economic Participation*, employment data available on an annual basis is limited to public service employment for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. A more complete picture of employment in the ACT will be provided through the 2021 Census of Population and Housing data due to be published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2022.

Much of the data in this report is publicly available in other reports including through the Productivity Commission's annual Report on Government Services (ROGS) and Closing the Gap dashboard, various Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare publications and Territory data sources like the Community Services Directorate Step Up Snapshot Report.

More information on sources of all data as well as additional years of data is available online in the Dashboard referred to in *Additional Information above*.

The Impact Statement and supporting Dashboard are based on the same information, however they differ slightly due to the way information is displayed.

Additional data notes and caveats should be taken into account when interpreting the data contained in this report and covered by the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap website referred to in *Additional Information above*.



# Example Focus Area - Economic Participation

This section provides an explanation of the information reported in the focus area tables below.

## Information reported

### 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 community.



**Target 14 – 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.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 73.7 % / 86.1 % (non-Indigenous) in 2016

### **X** Increase in youth aged 15–24 in education, training or employment

The number of students (15–24) enrolled in VET and public schools was 748 in 2020, a decrease from 1139 in 2018.

The proportion of people (15–24) employed in the ACT by the Australian Public Service and ACT Public Service was 5.57% in 2021, a decrease from 7.25% in 2018.

## Explanation

### Focus Area from the ACT Agreement

This is the Quality Life Outcome from the ACT Agreement.

The diagram shows the status of progress made against the four Indicators relating to Economic Participation targets.

For example: Positive change has occurred for three indicators and negative change has occurred for one Indicator.

Based on A National Agreement on Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Target.

Note that the ACT has set a higher level of ambition for some National Agreement targets (in this case raising the target from 67% to achieving parity by 2031).

Data reported against the National Agreement (please see Additional Information above for links to websites).

For example: In 2016 in the ACT, 73.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 15–24-year-olds and 86.1% of non-Indigenous 15–24-year-olds were in employment, education or training.

**ACT Indicator** measured each year to provide a status of ACT progress.

For example: There has been a negative change in the data reported against this indicator.

There are two pieces of data used to measure the above indicator. Indicators may use data that is not complete due to data limitations.

For example: This data item only includes students in public schools and VET and is a partial measure. Data on students enrolled in private schools in the ACT in 2020 was not available.

The second data item relates to employment in the public service in the ACT and is also only a partial measure of employment in the ACT. There is no other employment data available on an annual basis for the ACT.

## Children and Young People

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

### Children and Young People



5 out of 9 Indicators

No Significant Change

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 115.4%\* / 96.7% (non-Indigenous) in 2020

- ✓ **Continued high enrolment of children in the year before full-time schooling.** In 2020, estimated enrolments of children in a preschool program continued to exceed 100%\*.  
\*(Note: Proportions greater than 100% due to numerator and denominator being drawn from different sources).
- ✓ **Increase in the enrolment of 3-year-olds in a preschool program.** 75.1% of eligible 3-year-olds were enrolled in 2020, an increase from 35.2% of eligible children in 2018.

**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 to 55%.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT: 26%/ 50% (non-Indigenous) in 2018

- ✓ **Increase in young children developmentally on track in the ACT Kindy Health Check.** 76.8% of children were assessed at the lowest risk category in the ACT Kindy Health Check Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire in 2020, an increase from 68.4% of children in 2018.

**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%.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT: 199 children and young people aged 0–17 or 68.5 (per 1,000) in year ending 30 June 2019 (the baseline year)

- ⊖ **Decrease in children and young people in out-of-home care.** 243 (30%) children and young people (aged 0–17) were in out-of-home-care in 2020, a decrease from 260 (31%) in 2018.~
- ✓ **Decrease in children and young people entering Out-Of-Home care.** 35 (28%) children and young people entered out-of-home care in 2020, a decrease from 52 (34%) in 2018.~
- ⊖ **Increase in children and young people exiting Out-Of-Home care.** 24 (20.8%) children and young people exited out-of-home care in 2020, a minor increase from 22 (17%) in 2018.~
- ⊖ **Increase in children and young people aged 0-17 years supported to stay with, or return to, their family and kin environments.**
  - 8 (11%) children and young people reunified in 2020, compared to 10 (9%) children and young people in 2018.
  - 29 (100%) of children and young people reunified who did not return to out-of-home care within 12 months in 2019, an increase from 7 (64%) children and young people in 2018.~

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT data not available, currently being developed.

- ⊖ **Decrease in people needing crisis support in relation to domestic and family violence.** People presenting to Domestic Violence Crisis Support services for support per month (crisis and legal support) was 62 in 2021, a minor decrease from 63 in 2018.
- ⊖ **Decrease in people experiencing homeless as a result of domestic and family violence.** People homeless or at risk of homelessness citing domestic and family violence as the main reason was 120 out of 671 (17.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2020, a minor increase from 116 out of 693 (16.7%) in 2018.~



## 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.

### Cultural Integrity

1 out of 1 Indicators



No Data

National Priority Reform Three: Transforming Government Organisations

**Target 5 - 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.**

**National Agreement Data:** Not available. Work currently underway to determine nationally consistent approach to measuring progress.

☐ The national approach will inform ACT data development.

The ACT Government is focusing effort on a number of key priorities to ensure government agencies and the services they provide are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2020 senior government officials progressed six whole-of-government projects:

- *Addressing Systemic Racism:* scoping conversations identified priorities: finalise ACTPS Framework for Addressing Systemic Racism, identify measures to be used across ACTPS, develop guidelines to identify racist and discriminatory systems and processes throughout ACTPS.
- *Cultural Integrity:* draft Cultural Integrity Guide for Senior Executives being developed to support an ACTPS-wide Cultural Integrity Framework and 'best practice' guide.
- *Mandatory Reporting:* frontline workers' insights shared with ACTPS leaders on possible opportunities and solutions to improve mandatory reporting processes and increase and strengthen pathways to early support for families.
- *Recruitment and Retention:* 6% increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in ACTPS, consultation on Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Agenda, recruitment guidelines reviewed, ACTPS supported to undertake SBS Inclusion training.
- *Procurement:* more businesses and budget contracted (see Economic Participation) creation of an online Practical Tendering workshop; virtual business showcases, guide for working with the ACT Government, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy eLearning Module.
- *Support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled (ACCO) Sector:* actions to build the sector and support existing ACCOs, including through the Healing and Reconciliation Fund, are detailed under Community Leadership (below).

An example of the government's commitment to transform the way we work is reflected in the establishment and support for the operation of an independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Implementation Oversight Committee.

Resources have also been provided to improve frontline services, including embedding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and cultural expertise within Child and Youth Protection Services to achieve recommendations from the *Our Booris, Our Way* Report.

Work is also underway to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Children and Young People Commissioner in line with Recommendation 7 of the *Our Booris, Our Way* report.

## 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 (three indicators).

### Inclusive Community



2 out of 3 Indicators

No Data

National Priority Reform Four: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** Not available. Work currently underway to determine nationally consistent approach to measuring progress.

❌ The national approach will inform ACT data development.

The ACT Government works with the Elected Body to continually strengthen ways to share data and information through the Impact Statement, supporting the community to identify and monitor priorities under the ACT Agreement.

- In 2021, the Agreement Outcomes Framework was finalised and work on the first statement of progress, or impact statement, commenced. Completion of the impact statement for 2020–21 was delayed until 2022 due to the COVID pandemic.

Other data projects progressed during 2021 include:

- Canberra Health Services (CHS) published Together Forward in collaboration with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group, incorporating national, territory and organisational level data to identify priority areas for reform.
- the ACT Government also committed resources through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Project to establish a good understanding of the population, demographics, likely health and wellbeing needs in the next 10 years and the location and nature of the services required

**Target 7 – By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.**

**National Agreement Data:** Nationally in 2019, there were 123 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken, with 14 considered strong. No data available for states and territories.

❓ **Increase in the visibility and use of Aboriginal languages of the Canberra region:** This is the first year data has been collected. In 2021 there were at least 15 initiatives supporting the revitalisation of languages of the Canberra region, including workshops, courses and the naming of Namarag - Molonglo River Reserve and Budjan Galindji Grasslands Nature Reserve.

**Target 8 – By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.**

**National Agreement data:** Nationally in 2015, 73.5% of people aged 15 years and over accessed the internet in their home

❌ ACT data development required.





## Community Leadership

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

### Community Leadership

2 out of 2 Indicators 




No Data

National Priority Reform One: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** Not available. Work currently underway to determine nationally consistent approach to measuring progress.

 The national approach will inform ACT data development.

The ACT Government is committed to continuing to support the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in government decision making, including through existing partnership arrangements with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (the Elected Body), United Ngunnawal Elders Council, ACT Reconciliation Council and Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee.

The ACT Government benefits from more than a decade of working in formal partnership with the Elected Body and its advocacy on behalf of communities in the ACT. The Elected Body is represented at the ACT Public Service Strategic Board Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Inter-Directorate Committee. These are whole-of-government senior executive and officials' committees with responsibility for providing strategic leadership on all aspects of the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement.

The Elected Body is also a member of the national Coalition of Peaks and together with the ACT Government, as members of the Joint Council, works to implement the National Agreement.

2021 was an election year and the fifth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body took office in July 2021.

Also in 2021, work commenced on establishing a \$20 million Healing and Reconciliation Fund (over 10 years) to be administered in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The fund will support priorities identified through the ACT Agreement with an initial focus on a language centre and community conversation about a Treaty process for the ACT.

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

**National Agreement Data:** In 2020, 3,907,141 square kilometres of the land mass of Australia were subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights or interests

 **Increase in decision-making role on parks and reserves which make up 70% of the ACT land mass.**

Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians (Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee) meet monthly with government (Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate) to make decisions on the management of Country. These decisions are captured in an action plan co-designed and jointly delivered by government and Traditional Custodians.

A joint management agreement is being developed in 2022.



## Connecting the Community

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

### Connecting the Community

1 out of 1 Indicators 




No Data

National Priority Reform Two: Building the Community-Controlled Sector

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** Not available. Work currently underway to determine nationally consistent approach to measuring progress.

 In 2021 the ACT Government invested in the establishment of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). Two specific areas of focus are the creation of a community-controlled housing organisation and a community-controlled services sector focusing on children, young people, and families. The *Our Booris Our Way* Implementation Oversight Committee is collaborating with government to develop the approach to working with community to establish more child and family services through the next stage of *A Step Up for Our Kids* Strategy.

The ACT Government has also provided support or undertaken work to:

- construct a purpose-built facility to increase the service capability for Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services;
- design a purpose-built facility in collaboration with Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation;
- support Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation as a new and emerging organisation;
- work towards transitioning Boomanulla Oval and Yarramundi Cultural Centre to sustainable community control;
- establishing ACCOs providing support to people exiting or being diverted from the justice system;
- support existing ACCOs to support families and young peoples through the COVID pandemic; and
- develop Sector Strengthening Plans under the National Agreement. These plans focus on Early childhood care and development; Housing; Health; and Disability detailing how we will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in these sectors to develop their Workforce; Capital infrastructure; Service provision; and Governance.



## Life-long Learning

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

### Life-Long Learning



1 out of 2 Indicators 

Negative Change


**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%.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT: 77.4 % in 2016. New data will be available from the Census in 2022.

- Increase in young people completing year 12 or equivalent qualification.
  - 77 students in public schools achieved a Senior Secondary Certificate in 2020 representing 69% of students who commenced year 12 in that year. This compares to 66 public school students in 2018, again representing 69% of students who commenced year 12 in that year.
  - The number of students completing a VET qualification at year 12 or equivalent was 277 in 2020, a decrease from 298 in 2018.

**Target 13 – 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%.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 62.1% in 2016. New data will be available from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing in 2022.

-  **Increase in adults completing a tertiary qualification:** The number of students completing a VET qualification at Certificate III and above was 37 in 2020, a decrease from 95 in 2018.

## 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 community.

### Economic Participation



3 out of 4 Indicators ✓

Positive Change

**Target 14 – 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.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 73.7% / 86.1% (non-Indigenous) in 2016

- ✗ **Increase in youth aged 15–24 in education, training or employment.**
- The number of students (15–24) enrolled in VET and public schools was 748 in 2020, a decrease from 1139 in 2018.
  - The proportion of people (15–24) employed in the ACT by the Australian Public Service and ACT Public Service was 5.57% in 2021, a decrease from 7.25% in 2018.

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 70.1% / 81.7% (non-Indigenous) in 2016

- ✓ **Increase in people aged 25–64 years employed in the ACT by the Public Service.** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 2564 were 2.09% of all people aged 25-64 employed in the ACT by the Australian Public Service and ACT Public Service in 2021, an increase from 1.9% in 2018.

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

**National Agreement Data:** N/A This is an ACT-specific target

- ✓ **Increase in ACT Government spending with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises.** The percentage of the Addressable Spend spent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises was 2% in 2021, an increase from 0.20% in 2019.
- ✓ **Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises contracted by the ACT Government.** The number of unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises attributed a value of Addressable Spend was 90 in 2021, an increase from 61 in 2019.



## Health and Wellbeing

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equity in health and wellbeing outcomes.

### Health and Wellbeing



3 out of 7 Indicators

No Significant Change

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

**National Agreement Data:** ACT data not published due to population size.

- ✓ **Increase in patients starting treatment on time.** 46.4% of patients started emergency department treatment on time in 2021, an increase from 43% in 2019. This compares to 48.4% in 2021 and 46.5% in 2019 for non-Indigenous patients.
- ? **Increase in patients receiving elective surgeries on time.**
  - Category 1: 98.1% (98.5% non-Indigenous) in 2021, an increase from 94.9% (96.4% non-Indigenous) in 2019.
  - Category 2: 55.8% (63.0% non-Indigenous) in 2021, a decrease from 66.1% (75.5% non-Indigenous) in 2019.
  - Category 3: 61.1% (74.0% non-Indigenous) in 2021, a decrease from 67.3% (78.7% non-Indigenous) in 2019.
- ⊖ **Decrease in patient walk-outs in emergency departments.** In 2021, 8.6% of patients did not wait to be seen in emergency departments, a minor increase from 7.7% in 2019. This compares to 4.5% in 2021 and 4.6% in 2019 for non-Indigenous patients.

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

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 91.4% / 94.5% (non-Indigenous) healthy birthweight babies in 2018.

- ? **Increase in babies with a healthy birthweight.** The proportion of babies born each year with a healthy birthweight was 87% in 2019, a minor decrease from 90.5% in 2018.~
- ⊖ **Increase in women attending five or more antenatal visits.** The annual rate of women attending at least five antenatal care visits was 86% of pregnant women in 2019, a minor decrease from 87.3% in 2018.~

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

**National Agreement Data:** Currently being developed

- ✗ **Mental health overnight bed days of care remain similar over time.** The total number of mental health overnight bed days was 775 in 2021, an increase from 664 days in 2019. (Note: evidence shows a rise in use of mental health services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021).

\*(Note: work is currently underway to improve social and emotional wellbeing indicators.)

- ⊖ Parity is maintained for mental health total average length of stay for overnight patients. The total average length of mental health stay for overnight patients was 16.9 days in 2021, a minor decrease from 18.1 days in 2020 and 17.8 days in 2019. For non-Indigenous patients length of stay was 18.1 days in 2021, a minor increase from 17 days in 2020 and 16.1 days in 2019.

\*(please see note above)

## Housing

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

### Housing


1 out of 1 Indicators 



No Significant Change

**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.**

**National Agreement Data: ACT 91.6% / 95.1% (non-Indigenous) in 2016**

-  **Increase in public housing households living in appropriately sized housing.** In 2020, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public housing households living in appropriately sized housing was 93.3%, no significant change from 93.5% in 2018. This compares with 95.2% of all public housing households in 2020, and 95.5% in 2018.~

~ financial year data



## Justice

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

### Justice



1 out of 4 Indicators

Positive Change

**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.**

**National Agreement Data:** ACT 1,891.1 / 99.8 (non-Indigenous) per 100,000 in 2020

- Decrease in adult incarceration.** The rate of adult incarceration was 1,500.5 per 100,000 adults in 2020, a minor increase from 1,471.5 in 2018. 2020 data reflects some improvement over the 2019 result where the rate was 1602.50 per 100,000 adults.  
(Note: A different data source is used to measure the National Agreement target which reflects a small positive change for the same period).~
- Increase in 18–25-year-olds referred to restorative justice.** This is the first year data has been available. In 2021 one out of four eligible people was referred meeting the target of 25% of eligible people being referred to restorative justice by ACT Policing.  
(Note: eligibility in 11 cases not determined at time of reporting)
- Decrease in return to custody for adults within two years.** 47.8% of adults returned to custody in 2020, a decrease from 61.4% in 2018.~

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

**National Agreement Data:** ACT data last reported in 2011-12 (at 52.6 per 10,000) and not reported in following years due to small numbers.

- Decrease in the detention of young people:** ~
  - The number young people in detention on an average day was 5 in 2020, a minor increase from an average of 4 young people in 2018.
  - The number of young people in detention during the year was 23 in both 2020 and 2019.
  - The total number of custody nights was 1,877 in 2020, an increase from 1,374 in 2018.

~ financial year data



**ACT**  
Government



**CLOSING THE GAP**

**This product was co-designed with  
100% Aboriginal owned company**



**IB.Creative**  
— LET US TELL YOUR STORY —

**[www.ibcreative.agency](http://www.ibcreative.agency)**