



National Agreement on Closing the Gap

ACT Annual Report

2024–2025



ACT
Government



Acknowledgement of Country

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

We respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and their continuing culture and contribution they make to the Canberra region and the life of our city.

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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. Ms Brideson was born in Canberra and is a descendent of the Kamilaroi people from her grandmother's country in Gunnedah, Breeza and Quirindi.

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This Report covers the 2024-25 financial year with educational data covering the 2025 calendar year.

The data is mainly drawn from the latest Productivity Commission Annual Data Compilation Report (ADCR), which tracks Australia's performance towards the targets and indicators in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The ADCR incorporates the latest data from the Closing the Gap Dashboard (the dashboard). <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/>

Ministers Foreword

I am pleased to present the ACT Government's 2024-25 Annual Report on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

This report is a key component of the ACT's reporting obligations under the National Agreement and the ACT Implementation Plan. It reflects the ACT Government's commitment as a signatory to the National Agreement and outlines our progress in implementing the Priority Reform Areas. The report also presents data sourced from the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Information Repository, highlighting performance against socio-economic outcomes and targets.

Through the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 (the ACT Agreement) and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (National Agreement), the ACT Government remains committed to transforming how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans. A central focus of this transformation is the strengthening and growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector in the ACT.

Self-determination is a foundational principle of the National Agreement. Genuine partnership and shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is essential to ensuring government accountability and delivering meaningful outcomes. Key initiatives include:

- > Continued implementation of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) Establishment and Expansion Fund.
- > Ongoing support for the Elected Body, recognising its critical role in promoting self-determination.
- > Establishing an interim management committee for Boomanulla Oval, progressing its return to community control working with the Elected Body, to co-design a strategy to transition Boomanulla Oval to a community-controlled organisation. Boomanulla Oval is much more than just a sporting facility. It is a place of cultural and community significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- > Delivering the remaining recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way review. This includes:
 - » Work with Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation to support it to become a registered Care and Protection Organisation.



- » The Aboriginal Service Development Branch has also worked closely with interested ACCOs on their application process to deliver various services to be considered as part of the new Children, Young People and Families Panel.
- » The First Nations Family Support Team in Health and Community Services Directorate has provided culturally safe and informed support to over 200 families. This team is also continuing to develop a new practice framework led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.
- » The ACT Government also maintains a policy commitment to transfer funding proportionate to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the out-of-home care system. Under the Next Steps initiative, we aim to transfer the case management and care coordination arrangements of up to 100 per cent of eligible children and families to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

While many of the investments and reforms underway may not show as significant changes in the data for many years, there are already some positive signs that we are moving in the right direction.

The ACT has shown strong performance in several Closing the Gap targets, often exceeding national benchmarks and outperforming other jurisdictions. The ACT has seen improvements in early childhood education (Target 3), Year 12 attainment (Target 5), tertiary qualification (Target 6), youth engagement (Target 7), employment (Target 8) and out of home care (Target 12).

Despite strong performance in some areas, the ACT faces challenges in justice-related targets and child development, including worsening against:

- > Target 4 (child development) - significantly lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track across all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census which is well below the national target.
- > Target 10 (imprisonment) - continued over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in incarceration; and
- > Target 11 (youth detention) - disproportionate number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (aged 10-17) in detention.

The ACT Government's Strategic Board Subcommittee—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (Sub-Committee) (now known as the Strategic Board Closing the Gap Sub-Committee) will provide strategic oversight and leadership across the ACT Public Service related to the implementation of the ACT Government's commitments detailed in the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement. The Sub-Committee will focus on progress against these commitments, and in identifying and escalating to the Strategic Board risks, impediments and barriers to delivery.

Consistent with the ACT Government's commitment to partnership and shared decision making, the Sub-Committee has also issued a standing invitation to the Chair and Deputy Chair of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body). This ensures

connection with the work of Elected Body and Closing the Gap, as the Chair of the Elected Body is also the ACT representative on the Coalition of Peaks. The Sub-Committee will meet bi-monthly and provide a regular report to Strategic Board through the Chair.

This report presents an opportunity to reflect on our progress and recalibrate our efforts to strengthen outcomes into the future. In close collaboration with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement Partners, we remain committed to embedding transparency and accountability in our reporting practices. We will continue to enhance how we measure and communicate progress against the National Agreement, with a clear focus on advancing self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ACT Government deeply values the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the broader community, particularly through the generous sharing of knowledge and culture. Together, we are dedicated to implementing the necessary systemic reforms to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT.

As the seat of the Federal Government and home to the Australian Public Service, the ACT Government also acknowledges the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans to the nation.

Suzanne Orr MLA

MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS



Partnerships and Community Engagement

The ACT Government is working to building a strong foundation of collaboration, partnership, and self-determination in delivering on its commitments under the National Agreement. This commitment is reflected in our efforts to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong and influential voice in government, including through the Elected Body and other representative organisations. Strong partnerships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community benefit the ACT Government in the efforts to Close the Gap, specific partnerships include:

- > The Elected Body which provides a critical function through public hearings and accountability actions.
 - » The Elected Body Hearing reports are available on the Elected Body website: [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body](#). The ACT Government is currently reviewing ways to strengthen the Elected Body's independence, including providing sufficient ongoing budget and reconsidering its responsibility to report directly to its ACT Government Minister.
- > The United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC), which is a representative body of Traditional Owners in the ACT.
 - » The UNEC governance review report was issued to UNEC members on the 20th of September 2025. UNEC meetings are currently on hold until the outcomes of the report are finalised.
- > The Our Booris Our Way review was a 2017 government-commissioned, Aboriginal-led review of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the ACT's statutory child protection system. In response to recommendation 15 of the review, an Our Booris,

Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (OBOW IOC) was established in 2020 to oversee the implementation of the 28 recommendations and 8 sub recommendations of the review.

- » The ACT Government is committed to fully implementing the intent of all the recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way and the ongoing collaboration with the Committee ensures we continue to operationalise the recommendations and move them into a continuous improvement program to support longer term focus in the context of broader reforms.
- » This work also aligns with the ACT Government's commitments to the ACT Agreement, the National Agreement, and Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-31.
- » The ACT Government has signed a partnership agreement with OBOW IOC informed by Priority Reform One of Closing the Gap.
- » These steps ensure that the ACT Government continues to deliver on the intent of the review to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the out of home care system, improve their experience of the system and increase their pathways to restoration, wherever it is safe to do so.

These partnerships represent just some of the ways the ACT Government is working to engage more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples guided by the principle of self-determination to support their aspirations and address the issues that impact their lives.

Productivity Commission Three-Year Review of the National Agreement

In February 2024, the Productivity Commission published its inaugural three-year review of the National Agreement. This is a key requirement under clauses 121-124 of the National Agreement to ensure that all parties are publicly accountable for actions.

In its inaugural review, the Productivity Commission made four key recommendations which comprised 16 essential actions, 15 of which were agreed by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap in July 2024.

The ACT Government agreed with these key recommendations and the Joint Council agreed essential actions and is working to implement them. To address the agreed position on the Productivity Commission's essential actions, the following actions are being undertaken:

Essential Action	ACT progress
1.1 Amend the Agreement to clarify the purpose and broaden the scope of Priority Reform 1	The Commonwealth Government has not progressed this yet.
1.2 Governments treating ACCOs as essential partners in program and service design and delivery, not simply as funding recipients	This is being implemented in the ACT through the Aboriginal Service Development Branch (ASD) in the Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD). ACT Government directorates are responding to strengthen the partnership elements in the way that they work. ASD is undertaking extensive work with ACT directorate's in partnering with ACCO's to develop capacity and capability in the provision of services in varied fields including housing, justice, children youth and families, health and education.
1.3 Regular meetings between Ministers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies	The ACT Government already has this in place. The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs meets regularly with the Elected Body as the ACT representatives on the Coalition of Indigenous Peaks.
1.4 Governments adequately resourcing the implementation of the Agreement	This is being partially implemented but requires regular review through the budget processes. In 2024, Ngarra Group was engaged to undertake a community consultation and develop a Listening Report, capturing the views of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on what they would value in a contemporary Elected Body model. The ACT Government has previously committed additional funding and resources to the Elected Body, to strengthen the model in accordance with Clause 67 of the National Agreement. Work to progress a position on the findings will be undertaken in partnership with the Elected Body and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Listening Report will be publicly released once final feedback from the Elected Body is received. The ACT Government will continue to collaborate with the Elected Body to enhance their capability and progress towards a refreshed model. Funding has also been committed to support the development of the ACCO sector.
1.5 Governments writing implementation plans more strategically, in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	This is being implemented. The ACT Government is strengthening implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement through close collaboration with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. Together, they are co developing more strategic and focused action plans that reflect community priorities, support culturally informed decision-making, and improve accountability for progress..
2.1 Amend the Agreement to include Indigenous Data Sovereignty under Priority Reform 4	The Commonwealth Government has not progressed this yet. The ACT Government supports this but notes that action cannot be progressed on this by individual jurisdictions and is dependent on the workplan of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.



Essential Action	ACT progress
2.2 Establish a Bureau of Indigenous Data	Joint Council did not agree to this essential action but instead agreed to set up a National Data Policy Partnership with the ACT Government represented by the Executive Branch Manager, Wellbeing Branch, Chief Ministers, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD). Preparatory work has commenced on this with CMTEDD being supported by the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA).
3.1 Government departments develop and execute a transformation strategy for the portfolio	This is being implemented. The ACT Government is committed to developing a Transformation Strategy. This Strategy will be guided by a clear theory of change, co-design and a whole-of-government approach. The Cultural Transformation Branch (CTB) (now Cultural Transformation Group) and the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) are in early discussions to coordinate this work. The CTB will contribute primarily to Priority Reform 3, maintaining a strong focus on embedding cultural integrity through systemic change, uplifting cultural capability across the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) workforce and improving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee experience.
3.2 Review and update funding and contracting rules so that they explicitly incorporate accountability for funders to abide by the Priority Reforms in commissioning processes	This is being implemented. Through commissioning, the ACT Government seek to design, invest in, and deliver culturally safe services that foster truth-telling, healing, connection, and positive outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Canberra. Guided by Traditional Custodians, Elders and ACCOs, commissioning cycles and practices are adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and programs. The ACT Government adjusts commissioning processes to be culturally safe and meet engagement needs.
3.3 Review and update Cabinet and Budget processes so that they explicitly promote, support and encourage the Priority Reforms	This is being implemented. Work has been done to embed questions around the Priority Reforms in the Wellbeing Impact Assessment that accompanies all matters to be considered by the ACT Government's Cabinet, however further work is required to enhance this approach, including engagement with the Elected Body.
3.4 Designate a senior leadership group to drive public sector change in each jurisdiction	This has been implemented. The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Strategic Board refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters in its terms of reference. This includes the establishment of a Strategic Board Sub-Committee Closing the Gap. This Sub-committee includes Directors-General from across the ACTPS and was previously supported by an Inter-directorate Committee Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (IDC), comprising of senior officers. The IDC was disbanded in December 2024 and a new support mechanism to be investigated and established.
3.5 Embed responsibility for improving cultural capability and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into public sector employment requirements	CTB (now CTG) have implemented the following actions to meet the intent of the recommendation to implement Essential Action 3.5 were delivered in the 2024–25 financial year: > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment KPIs included in Director-General performance agreements. > Acting DDG OIRWS wrote to Director Generals on 25 Feb 2025 to confirm the ACT Public Service diversity employment targets and KPIS. > Two questions drafted to be included in the 2025 ACTPS Employee Survey aligned to the outcome and output indicators for Priority Reform Three. > Creation of the Cultural Integrity Professional Learning Database, which provides information on the types of cultural learning and current activities available across the service.

Essential Action	ACT progress
4.1 Establish the independent mechanism in each jurisdiction without further delay	This has been implemented. The ACT was the only jurisdiction to have such a mechanism in place during the reporting period. Since 2009, The ACT Government has an established Independent Mechanism in the Elected Body that operates under the Aboriginal and <i>Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008</i> . The ACT Government announced an additional \$1.19 million over 2024 and 2025 to further enhance the independence and capacity of the Elected Body. An Aboriginal consultant has been commissioned to work with the community to identify options to strengthen the current model. The consultation is complete and findings of this will be considered as part of legislative review and a long-term resourcing model.
4.2 Embed the commitments of the National Agreement in other inter-governmental agreements	This is being implemented. OATSIA continues to work across the ACTPS to ensure the inclusion and alignment of all inter-governmental agreements with the National Agreement.
4.3 Include a statement on Closing the Gap in every government organisation's annual report	This is being implemented in accordance with the Joint Council agreed position. Work has progressed requiring each directorate to include a statement but further work to meet stated requirements is needed. This requires that the purpose of the Closing the Gap Statement would be to provide transparency about the substantive activities that each government organisation is undertaking to implement the Agreement's Priority Reforms and the demonstrated outcomes of those activities. The exact criteria that the Closing the Gap statements must meet should be designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and peak bodies and included in the relevant legislation or rules.
4.4 Publish all documents developed under the Agreement	This is being implemented. The ACT Government will publish all documents developed under the Agreement. In accordance with the agreed position, this will include: > partnership stocktakes > partnership agreements > expenditure reviews > evaluations > transformation strategies.

Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The Final Report of the first-ever Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Review of the National Agreement (The Indigenous Led Review) was released on Saturday 21 June 2025 and was provided to all parties to the National Agreement three days earlier.

The Indigenous Led Review is the first time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have led a national assessment of how the Agreement is working on the ground. It puts First Nations perspectives, experiences, and solutions front and centre.

The Indigenous Led Review made nine recommendations to help governments uphold their commitments under the National Agreement and shift from business-as-usual to real partnership, accountability, and systems reform.

Development of the Joint Council response has been a collaborative process, led by the Coalition of Peaks, with engagement from all Parties.

The Joint Council response is intended to be a holistic, strategic statement on the future implementation of the National Agreement – focused on driving system-level reform rather than responding recommendation-by-recommendation.



Embedding the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement

PRIORITY REFORM 1

Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

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.

The ACT Government understands that in order to effect real change, governments must work collaboratively and in genuine, formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because they are the essential agents of change.

The ACT Government continues to promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, knowledge, and culture in decision making including through existing partnership arrangements with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [Elected Body \(Elected Body\)](#), the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee, and the ACT Reconciliation Council.

The partnerships detailed below support shared decision making and provide valuable advice from Community to government. While some of the below partnerships do not meet all the formal partnership elements outlined in the National Agreement, they address the priorities that are important to our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and, therefore, the ACT Government.

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body)

The Elected Body was established under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008 (Elected Body Act). The OATSIA supports the Elected Body in its role as a member of the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks) who are signatories to the National Agreement and are the ACT representatives on the Joint Council and Partnership Working Group.

The Elected Body is a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans nationally. As a member of the Coalition of Peaks, they are the ACT jurisdictional member on the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.

In partnership with Elections ACT, an election was conducted in 2024 to establish a new term of Elected Body members. Voting was open from 6 to 13 July 2024, with the announcement of seven new Elected Body members on 26 July 2024 for the term of 2024–2027. Under Section 10A of the Elected Body Act, the Elected Body holds public hearings into ACT Government service provision. This functions as the only Independent Mechanism operating nationally under the National Agreement. The OATSIA works with the Elected Body and across the ACT Government to coordinate these hearings and develop formal government responses to recommendations made by the Elected Body. In 2024–25, work has progressed to implement the recommendations from the Elected Body public hearings held in August 2023 and April 2024. These functions are ongoing and align to other key reports and recommendations that aim to strengthen governments' delivery of commitments and outcomes under the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement. In accordance with Section 10A of the Elected Body Act the Elected Body held public hearings on 12, 13 and 14 August 2025. From these hearings the Elected Body is required to provide a formal report by mid December 2025, with recommendations to the ACT Government which the government is required to formally respond to.

In 2024–25, the Education Directorate continued to strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through structured engagement with the Elected Body. Monthly high-level meetings between the Director-General and the Elected Body education portfolio holder ensured strategic alignment, while bi-monthly deep dives facilitated meaningful dialogue connecting the Directorate initiatives to Priority Reform Areas and Closing the Gap targets under the National Agreement. These ongoing engagements support shared governance and genuine partnership in education policy and program delivery.

Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee

The Our Booris Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (OBOWIOC) is an independent, wholly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committee, that works with the ACT Government to advise and oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the Our Booris, Our Way Final Report, 2019.

The key intent of the recommendations is to:

- > reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young; people entering care;
- > improve their experiences in care; and
- > increase pathways to restoration with their families, where it is safe to do so.

In March 2025, a Partnership Agreement was signed between OBOWIOC and the Community Services Directorate (CSD).

The Partnership Agreement details how the implementation of the Our Booris Our Way recommendations will be driven by ongoing collaboration, the principles of shared decision making and Aboriginal self-determination to improve cultural, physical and socioemotional health and wellbeing outcomes of families within the child protection system.

In the last year there have been several other achievements that build on the foundation of what has already been implemented and looks to embed our commitment under OBOW into the broader reform roadmap:

- > The establishment of the ACT Aboriginal Children's Forum (AACF) and the Child and Family Reform Ministerial Advisory Council ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central to policy and program development. The AACF, co-chaired by Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation and CSD, provides governance and oversight of services for Aboriginal children and families. The Advisory Council, with 30 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership, advises on the implementation of the Next Steps for Our Kids strategy and supports shared decision-making in line with Building Block 2.
- > Executive Branch Manager, (EBM) Aboriginal Service Development (ASD) also attends the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCDPP) along with the ACT Government member. The ECCDPP brings together governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to develop recommendations to improve early childhood outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

United Ngunnawal Elders Council

The United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) is a Traditional Owner representative body, providing advice to the ACT Government in relation to heritage and connection to land matters for the Ngunnawal people. UNEC also provides advice to the [Elected Body](#) in accordance with section 9 of the Elected Body Act.

UNEC was established to represent the interests of Traditional Custodians of the ACT. It is made up of representatives nominated by several Ngunnawal family groups. The ACT Government has provided funding to assist UNEC through employment of a dedicated secretariat, as well as remunerating members through sitting fees.

Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee

In line with the National Agreement Second ACT Jurisdictional Implementation Plan (Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making), EPSDD recognised the importance of shared decision making through its ongoing partnership with the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC). The DNCCC were active participants in the co-design, development and management of programs and projects related to the management of EPSDD-managed lands.

EPSDD and DNCCC sought to meet at least 4 times a year. EPSDD and DNCCC met once during the reporting period. Meetings paused in September 2024 pending an independent review of DNCCC functions and operation. The review will be undertaken in 2025–26 to determine areas to improve the effectiveness of the committee and to ensure both parties benefit through the DNCCC. This review aims to further improve Closing the Gap outcomes in the Territory, particularly the formal partnerships component of Priority Reform 1.

Boomanulla Oval Interim Management Committee

The ACT Government is co-designing a governance model with the Elected Body to transition Boomanulla Oval to community control. Boomanulla Oval is being positioned for full Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led management, with interim governance and capability-building underway.

The Committee is intended to provide cultural leadership and advice to the land manager and support the transition of Boomanulla Oval to community management.

Since 1 July 2025 Boomanulla Oval is managed by the City and Environment Directorate (CED). CED will work with the Elected Body to progress establishment of the Committee.

Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation

The ACT Government has supported Yeddung Mura's Soft Landing employment program (a 52-week employment pathway program) by providing financial support and land access. Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is exploring future opportunities including travel support, provision of Proof of Identity cards, and employment opportunities following successful completion of the program.

Re-emergence of First Nations burning in contemporary grassy woodland

The Australian National University (ANU), in partnership with the ACT Government, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Ngunnawal community is leading an Australian Research Council Linkage project, 'Re-emergence of First Nations burning in contemporary grassy woodland'. The project, rolling out from 2025 to 2029, will implement a First Nations-led burning program and monitor the relative ecological responses of the woodland ecosystem values, including elements that influence fire risk.

The project follows a cross-cultural model to help inform and support the re-emergence of First Nations cultural burning across Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri Country and across multiple land tenures. It aims to build capacity of communities and encourage self-determination in the cultural burning space and to establish an interface between First Nations and western knowledge and management of a critically endangered ecosystem. The project will dedicate significant resources to provide social, cultural and economic benefits for First Nations People to maximise cross-cultural benefits for community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Caucus and Justice Advisory Group

Both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Caucus and Justice Advisory Group (JAG) continue to provide strategic advice to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT Justice System. Caucus met four times the 2024-2025, including a meeting that was open to the Community, and JAG met twice.

JACS Directorate's policies, projects and programs that do or may impact Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT are reviewed by one or all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Caucus, First Nations Justice Branch and JACS Ngunnawal Cultural Advisor.

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap has agreed all jurisdictions developing and implementing new justice policy and law reforms will consider and apply the objectives and outcomes of the Priority Reforms and Justice Targets and Outcomes 10 and 11. In line with this decision, JACS is contributing to the ongoing work of the Justice Policy Partnership to finalise an assessment and reporting framework on impacts and mitigation strategies for all jurisdictions to consider.

Canberra Health Services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group

The Canberra Health Services (CHS) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group (CRG) works with CHS so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can have better access to health services, experience culturally safe care, and the needs and wishes of the community are responded to.

CRG includes representatives from the local and South Coast Aboriginal communities who are health care service users and/or carers. Members share their experiences and provide cultural advice and direction for CHS to improve experiences of and access to health care. During the period 2024-25, the CRG:

- > Entered a contract with Indigenous Allied Health Australia to develop a Partnership Agreement between the CRG and CHS, in line with National Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1 - Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making. This Agreement recognises CHS and the CRG's commitment to recognising and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of working and approaches to holistic health and wellbeing.
- > Hosted the first Wellness Day event which promoted health care awareness and access to health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- > Provided input into major infrastructure projects including the Northside Hospital and Canberra Hospital Expansion, including the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Welcome Lounge.
- > Implemented Asking the Question Training supporting CHS team members on 'how to ask the question' around Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status.

Maternity in Focus Birthing on Country model of care co-design

The Maternity in Focus: First Action Plan 2022–2025 commits to work with consumers and community-controlled organisations to co-design a Birthing on Country model of care (BoC) to provide the best start in life to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander babies and their families.

To support First Nations self-determination, a Cultural Governance Group of First Nations women community leaders (the Group) was formed early in the project to work with and guide the former ACT Health Directorate's (ACTHD) project lead in formal partnership. The Group guided Community listening to hear what the Most Deadly, Most Excellent First Nations maternity care model could be. A Community Listening Report was checked back with Community.

The Cultural Governance Group has guided the formation of, and co-Chairs the Birthing with Country Working Group (BwC WG), which is a formal partnership of First Nations Community Organisations, maternity services operational leadership, First Nations midwives, Liaison Officers, consumers, and the Maternity in Focus leads.

Together, the Working Group is co-designing culturally safe models of care for the public maternity system and exploring options with local Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations to implement a Birthing on Country (BoC) model of care that reflects First Nations ownership, leadership, and governance.

The Working Group is a formal partnership that commits to majority First Nations representation in decision-making; to enable cultural safety there is a requirement that more than 50 per cent of people in the room be First Nations people. If required, non-First Nations people will step out to restore the First Nations majority for decision-making.

The Birthing with Country Cultural Governance Group (BwCCGG) evolved from the Cultural Governance Group to signify greater self-determination and decision-making than advisory. The BwCCGG gives the Cultural authorisation and the BwC WG Working Group is actively co-designing the Model of Care, not providing advice. The BwCCGG (Four Elders), are also a part of the BwC WG. Cultural Integrity Training delivered by an Aboriginal organisation (National Indigenous Training and Employment Solutions), a Traditional Custodian organisation (Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural Services) provide on-country appreciation tours and language courses.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Advisory Group

People who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTIQ+ are at increased risk of poor social and emotional wellbeing. These risks arise from the systemic prevalence of racism, and ongoing impacts of colonisation coupled with LGBTIQ+ discrimination.

Recognising these needs and in alignment with the National Agreement, in particular Priority Reform area 1, the Government has made the following commitments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people in the ACT:

- > The First Action Plan (2024 – 2026) of the Capital of Equality Strategy (2024 – 2029): *Engage in a co-design process with LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT to identify needs and develop culturally appropriate responses;* and
- > LGBTIQ+ Health Scoping Study 2019 – 2020: *Create LGBTIQ+ health resources for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, in collaboration with community and relevant LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community health groups.*

The LGBTIQ+ Health Policy Team (Health Policy and Strategy) and the Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs are working collaboratively to ensure a consistent and effective approach is taken to addressing these actions.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) was established in October 2024; initially as a short-term project to assist the ACT Government to select and define the scope of work with a consultant, and progress work under the Capital of Equality Strategy and the LGBTIQ Health Scoping Study.

In delivering its advice, the Advisory Group made a formal recommendation advising against engaging a consultant, instead recommending the extension of its term to harness the expertise of its members to deliver the same outcomes.

This recommendation was accepted, and operation of the Advisory Group has been extended until June 2026. Further extensions are subject to government agreement.

The role of the Advisory Group is to advise the ACT Government on culturally safe and appropriate approaches to delivering existing commitments under the First Action Plan 2024 – 2026 and the ACT LGBTIQ+ Health Scoping Study and provide recommendations on additional actions. As a secondary role, the Advisory Group can meet with other ACT Government Directorates or agencies to discuss relevant work and formulate advice on how the ACT Government can ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ voices are central within projects impacting their communities.

The Advisory Group's meeting schedule is 10 meetings between October 2024 and June 2025; and six meetings between July 2025 and June 2026. Recommendations and advice regarding outputs will take the form of a

written report and/or a presentation directed to the Health and Community Services Directorate. It is expected recommendations will be delivered by the end of the Advisory Group's term.

This is the first time within the ACT Government that an Advisory Group has been established to provide intersectional and lived experience advice on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ peoples. The Advisory Group believes investing in long-term, community-led initiatives is taking the right step towards reconciliation and building trust with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ communities.

Other Advisory bodies and partnership initiatives across the ACT Government

The ACT Government also consults with a range of internally administered advisory groups with specific policy expertise or interest. These include:

- > The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing continue to support the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Partnership Group, which advises on culturally appropriate suicide prevention strategies. The Group helps shape targeted approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT, including culturally appropriate prevention, intervention, aftercare, and postvention services. It provides advice to the Coordinator-General, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and reports to the ACT Suicide Prevention Coordinating Committee. The group has met monthly since 2019.
- > There is one identified position for an LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person on the ACT LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council that must be filled. Currently, there are 2 members who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:
 - » the Chair (Aboriginal person).
 - » the Deputy Chair (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person).
- > The ACT Reconciliation Council, who act as community leaders for Reconciliation and promote the ACT's nation leading Reconciliation Day Public Holiday.
- > In July 2024, the inaugural Reference Group for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space was formed. The Reference Group for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Space combines members from a diversity of language groups and cultural backgrounds, gender identities, career stages and from across Australia. Together they will guide the design of the dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Arts Space in the Kingston Arts Precinct and self-determine the shape of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation for Canberra and the region.
- > Canberra Australia's Arts Capital – Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022-26 (the Arts Policy) and the related Action Plan includes the focus area 'Elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture and practices to enhance outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and reflect Canberra's unique culture and identity'.
 - » The Action Plan is reported on annually and published on artsACT's website. artsACT continued to provide support for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network to promote the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through the arts and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leadership.
 - » In 2024–25, the Network met seven times. During these meetings, members received updates and provided input on key initiatives such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts Program and the Canberra Pōneke Indigenous Artist Exchange. The position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Officer is an ongoing position within artsACT.
- > Watermarks Project: Sullivans Creek Activation delivered in collaboration with Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation and Catchment Studio, embedding Ngunawal language and cultural stories into public infrastructure.
- > Playground Upgrades: Co-designed with Bagariin Ngunawal Cultural Consulting to reflect Ngunawal cultural themes in Lyons, Kaleen, Aranda, and Gordon. The opening of the playground also included a traditional smoking ceremony and storytelling by Bagariin.
- > In 2024-25, the Education Directorate commissioned Curijo to lead a co-design process involving yarning circles and interviews with Elders, students, parents, ACCOs, educators, and government representatives. The goal is to develop a community-endorsed model for national representation in education policy and to provide a critical voice for community about education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT. The final report outlines three structural options for a Voice to Education (VTE), each designed to ensure independence, transparency, and community input. These options will be presented to the Elected Body for further discussion and direction.
- > Within Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) managed infrastructure projects, relevant business units are actively working to strengthen their capability and capacity to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity throughout all stages of design and construction. These efforts are complemented by ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses, ensuring that cultural perspectives are reflected meaningfully in project outcomes. Further detail on past and current infrastructure initiatives, and how they demonstrate collaboration and shared goals with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



stakeholders, can be found in the section below on *Supporting Closing the Gap Goals – Design and Construction Work* for some highlighted examples.

- > In alignment with shared decision-making principles, iCBR maintains a strong and ongoing commitment to cultivating strategic partnerships both internally and externally. These relationships are designed to ensure meaningful collaboration and the consistent inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices across the organisation and within the projects managed by iCBR. Outlined below are examples of formalised partnerships and engagement mechanisms with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:
 - » iCBR Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Group: This group comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff alongside non-Indigenous staff, including executive and middle management. It convenes monthly to discuss all initiatives relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ensuring alignment with both state and national frameworks and agreements.
 - » Formal Engagements with the Elected Body: iCBR conducts monthly meetings between the Director-General and senior staff with the Elected Body. Additionally, there is a growing number of formal engagements involving other iCBR staff, particularly in areas related to infrastructure design and construction that aim to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity is embedded in projects.
 - » Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee: This committee includes staff who are committed to advancing the actions and deliverables of the Reflect RAP. Its purpose is to support the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and promote unity and inclusion across the broader community.
 - » iCBR is currently engaged in a co-design process with the Elected Body to develop the Phase Three Implementation Plan for the ACT Agreement. This plan will serve as a jointly endorsed, high-level strategic document that guides iCBR in implementing actions aligned with the priorities and aspirations outlined in the ACT Agreement. The plan will support the organisation in delivering meaningful and measurable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the ACT.
 - » iCBR has established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Group and actively engages with identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the organisation. These arrangements are designed to strengthen cultural leadership and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded within organisational decision-making processes.

- » External Partnerships: iCBR maintains active engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory bodies, most notably through its partnership with the Elected Body. This collaboration is currently reflected in the co-design of the iCBR Phase Three Implementation Plan, which aims to align organisational actions with the priorities of the ACT Agreement.

Looking ahead, iCBR guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and communities will continue to build upon existing external partnerships, particularly with Ngunnawal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This ongoing work will ensure that community voices remain central to iCBR's core business and project delivery, fostering culturally responsive and inclusive outcomes.

Wellbeing Impact Assessments

The ACT Government seeks to ensure that decision-making processes draw upon consultations and shared decision making with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, ACCOs and/or community groups.

The use of Wellbeing Impact Assessments (WIAs) supports the ACT Government to consider the wellbeing impacts of any proposal on the community, including on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. WIAs are a requirement for Cabinet Submissions and Budget business cases.

Budget business cases, Cabinet Submissions and WIAs seek to capture relevant impacts. Templates for each of these decision-making documents are regularly reviewed to ensure they are as effective as possible in their intent. This includes a requirement that consideration be given to the impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and identification of how proposals and decisions support commitments under the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement.

These tools have been supported in recent Budget processes by webinars for all staff conducted jointly by the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA), Aboriginal Services Development (ASD), Treasury and the Wellbeing team - to further explain the need to consider the relevant issues (including use of ACCOs) in developing Budget business cases and WIAs.





PRIORITY REFORM 2

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.

The ACT Government acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control is an act of self-determination that includes providing culturally safe and responsive services meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ACCOs deliver services that build the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people.

As well as investing in significant infrastructure improvements and service expansions for existing ACCOs, the ACT Government is focussed on supporting the community to establish new organisations and expand already established ACCOs.

The Strengthening Partnerships – Investing for Social Impact (Commissioning Framework) supports delivery of services and new initiatives (including communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about these opportunities) has been developed and implemented. CSD and JACS continue to apply commissioning in a self-determined way to ACCOs and for culturally safe services across the human service system. Ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement processes are in place with Government committing to continue evaluating and improving the commissioning approach to deliver better outcomes.

Through Commissioning, the ACT Government seek to design, invest in, and deliver culturally safe services that foster truth-telling, healing, connection, and positive outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Canberra. Guided by Traditional Custodians, Elders and ACCOs, commissioning cycles and

practices are adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and programs. The ACT Government adjusts commissioning processes to be culturally safe and meet engagement needs.

In 2024-25, the former Community Services Directorate (CSD) published the [Commissioners Guide: Strengthening our understanding of impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through each commissioning cycle](#). The purpose of this Guide being to ensure an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander human services lens is applied to each commissioning cycle and transition of proportional investment to the community-controlled sector is considered. To support the application of the guide, Aboriginal Services Development (ASD) has documented and promoted a practical application of setting and implementing meaningful funding targets through a case study. The case study outlines relevant ACT Government commitments, elements of success, system enablers, and key lessons learned. Documenting this approach has provided a strong foundation to learn from and progress committing to and progressing proportional funding targets in line with Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector, National Agreement.

The ACT Government is working through genuine community-led solutions, looking for opportunities to improve culturally safe service delivery across the sector, system, and services. Cultivating culturally responsive services across Canberra improves equitable access and choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Self-determination is encouraged

by fostering the growth of ACCOs within the Canberra community. This means more services, programs, and supports delivered by community for community. The Commissioning Strategy focuses first on strengthening ACCOs providing services in the ACT.

Where new ACCOs are formed to respond to community need, the ACT Government may adjust the investment process or approach to support new organisations as they establish within Canberra, grow skills and capability, or expand their capacity for service delivery. The ACT Government is guided by ACCOs leaders to apply the commissioning principles in a culturally appropriate way and to realise the right to self-determination as committed to in the ACT Agreement.

The ASD, Children, Youth and Families, ACT Health and Community Services Directorate regularly shares relevant investment opportunities, both local and national, with ACT human service delivery focused ACCOs via the bi-monthly ASD Newsletter and emails as appropriate. ASD also responds to ACCO requests for assistance and offers practical advice and guidance supporting local ACCOs to engage with various investment opportunities and commissioning activities.

ASD has focused on advocating for increased investment to support the ACT Aboriginal community-controlled sector. Advocacy is informed by local voices and has focused on dedicated funding to support ACCO establishment, capacity and capability building activities, and enabling more inclusive funding practices with the goal of achieving proportional funding for ACCOs across the human service priority areas.

In the 2024-25 Budget, the ACT Government invested \$3.86 million over 4 years to establish and deliver the ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund (AEEF). The AEEF was designed with community as an alternative funding source for local ACCOs to support their growth and sustainability. Key partners and stakeholders shaped the AEEF Grant Program design, establishment and ongoing management underpinned by the principle of designed for community by community. The 2024-25 AEEF Grant Program opened on 3 March 2025 with a total funding amount of \$823,000. The total funding amount was fully expended across 10 applications.

Under the National Agreement Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector and the ACT Agreement, the ACT Government is committed to the implementation of proportional funding for the ACT Aboriginal community-controlled sector. This includes setting targets to deliver a meaningful proportion of human services through ACCOs.

Across 2024-25, the ACT Government has continued supporting or undertaken work to:

- > Provide strategic and practical support to Yerrabi Yurwang to further strengthen the organisation's capability and capacity, for example through the AEEF. Yerrabi Yurwang delivers Sustaining Families services – intensive family support, preservation and restoration services – to families with children

aged 0-17 years of age engaged with, or at risk of engagement with statutory services. As a provider of this service, Yerrabi Yurwang is providing wholistic, trauma-informed support to Aboriginal children, young people and families.

- » Yerrabi Yurwang continues to operate from the Yarramundi Cultural Centre and is one of the Children, Youth and Families (CYF) preferred providers delivering sustaining families (family preservation, restoration and intensive family support). As a preferred provider, Yerrabi Yurwang is providing wholistic, trauma-informed support to Aboriginal children, young people and families.

- > Work with Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation to deliver Throughcare, a client-centred program designed to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to succeed as they transition from prison to living back in the community. The program works with the ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) Reintegration Unit to provide individualised and intensive case management and trauma informed support. Throughcare provides support such as mobile phones, medicine, identification documents and assistance with services such as housing, Centrelink and other providers and programs.
- > Provided funding of \$1.659 million for program delivery, operations, land management and maintenance of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) Operations. In 2024-25, the NBHF delivered four successful programs with up to 81 participants engaging in formal program activities across the programs. CSD worked with Community, NBHF staff and external experts to develop an appropriate procurement to support the uplift of the NBHF day-program. This procurement was completed in January 2025, with sector experts, Ngaimpe Consulting Pty Ltd, securing the 12-month contract. Ngaimpe Consulting started working with NBHF staff, CSD and Community in February 2025 to support service readiness for transition to Community-control, and into the future residential services. It is anticipated the transition to Community-control and residential services will progress in multiple stages.
- > The ACT Government continues to work with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories on the implementation of the [NDIS First Nations Strategy 2025-30](#). This Strategy serves as a roadmap to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NDIS participants, improve access to culturally safe services, and embed the knowledge and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability within the NDIS. As part of this work, the ACT Government engages with the National Disability Insurance Agency to increase services and supports in culturally thin markets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability, such as supporting the growth of Aboriginal Business Enterprises and ACCOs delivering



NDIS services. This work is currently in the early phases, with future public consultation to be led by the Commonwealth, in collaboration with states and territories.

- > Through the development of genuine partnership between ACT Government and ACCOs this year, we have been able to support local organisations in leasing arrangements to secure office space, support for the development of organisational governance structures, support expansion of services, and provide funding for service delivery in Children, Youth and Families, Housing, Domestic, Sexual and Family Violence, Health and Justice.
- > The Education Directorate entered a Deed of Grant with Winanggaay Ngunnawal Aboriginal Language Corporation (Winanggaay) to fulfill the Budget Commitment to provide \$150,00 per annum over 4 years to progress Ngunnawal language reawakening. To date \$50,000 has been provided to support the establishment of Winanggaay.
- > The new Gulan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation facility in Wanniasa provides a purpose-built, culturally led space to support expanded services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families. The building reflects Aboriginal identity and connection to Country through design, artwork and storytelling. It also demonstrates leadership in sustainability and social procurement, with strong results in environmental performance and Indigenous business engagement. Delivered under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP), the project exceeded targets, with 21.65% of total contract spend of \$19 million with Supply Nation or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registered organisations. Construction began in September 2023 and was completed on 14 March 2025 by Projex Building Group. The ACT Government has also partnered with Gulan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to create original artwork which will feature on resources about After-Care Assistance. Young people from Gulan Gulwan's, Young Men's and Women's Groups have created the artwork which will tell stories of transitioning to independence and ability for care leavers to continue to access to support after they leave care at 18.

While much of the afore mentioned work is outward facing, there is significant internal work needed to support the building of the community-controlled sector and empower all ACT Government employees to consider impacts of their initiatives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Ahead of the ACT Government 2026-27 Budget cycle, Aboriginal Services Development (ASD) in partnership with the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA), Treasury and the Wellbeing Branch will be conducting a series of Closing the Gap webinars and drop-in sessions.

Wellbeing Impact Assessments (WIAs) are a formal requirement for the Budget business case process and cabinet submissions. As part of the WIA, business units must consider the impacts of their proposed initiatives on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ACT Government is committed to continuing their support into other areas of service delivery to ensure the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have a holistic and culturally safe services run by the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector.

The ACT Government introduced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) in May 2019. The ACT Government's aim for the ATSIPP is to support the objectives of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028. Under the ATSIPP, directorates commit to spending a certain amount of procurement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises. The target started at 1% of addressable spend in 2019-20, increasing to 1.5% in 2020-21 and 2.0% from 2021-22 onwards. Expenditure reached \$27.69 million in 2021-22, followed by \$26.16 million in 2022-23. Procurement spending is significantly influenced by spending on several capital works and construction projects, a number of which were nearing completion towards the end of this period. The general upward trend in procurement expenditure over this period may also have been driven by a greater awareness of, and application of the ACT Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP).

All directorates provide detailed reporting on achievement against targets under the ATSIPP in directorate annual reports. This is referred to as addressable spend. The addressable spend for the ACT for the 2024-25 financial year was \$68.73 million which is based on the primary target of 2% of the addressable spend to be spent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises.

In late 2024, Procurement ACT convened a committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy. The Committee has now finalised the review, including its final report. Importantly, this review centred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through collaboration with the Elected Body, and OATSIA. The Chair of the Elected Body was the Deputy Chair of the committee undertaking the comprehensive review, and an OATSIA representative also sat on the committee as a member. The review also facilitated the inclusion of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, such as Supply Nation and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier.

Procurement ACT is progressing work to give effect to the recommendations of the review, including through updating the policy and an action plan to implement the recommendations of the review. Procurement ACT has commenced communication and education activities under the action plan to increase awareness of the

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy across government and the community (including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises) to encourage higher and more meaningful utilisation of the Policy and will engage with relevant business areas across government to do so.

In 2024-25 Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) contributed 9.28% towards the addressable spend target of 2% of ACT Government total capital and supplier expense for 2024-25, spending \$6.38 million across 34 projects. Large EPSDD projects that have been successful to date include:

- > The Cleaning Services at Parks and Conservation Service Depots and Visitor Centres project was a request for tender (publicly), however the Directorate placed a higher percentage on focusing on the weighted criteria against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Policy to promote the engagement of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entity. Corroboree Empire Limited was selected as the preferred supplier with a value of \$793,321.00 (GST Inc) over three years.
- > The First Nations Conservation Training Program provides services for the employment and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Traditional Custodian community members. The participants are employed as conservation land management trainees. The program provides for 8 trainees over the 4-year period. The trainees are primarily be used for delivery of Australian Regional Delivery Partners Program (RDP) outcomes; it may assist with the delivery of other ACT Government funded ACT Natural Resources Management (NRM) projects when capacity allows. 18Fifty3 Group Pty Ltd was selected as the preferred supplier with a value of \$1,377,804 (GST Inc) over 4 years.
- > Home Energy Support Scheme provides ceiling insulation and electrical panel arrangement where the panel members provide ceiling insulation and gas to electric appliance installation at identified houses. Arrow Facility Management is one of four panel members under the arrangement. To date the ACT Government has spent \$6 million (GST Inc) via service orders with the supplier. The total value of the panel is \$61.6 million (GST Inc) over five years. They are a certified Supply Nation company.
- > Ceiling Insulation Installation Quality Assurance Inspections requires that the supplier conducts onsite quality inspections of the properties that receive ceiling insulation installations. This project was conducted via a select procurement process, inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entities to participate in a request for quotation process. Canberra Energy Ratings was selected as the preferred supplier with a value of \$200,000 (GST Inc) over two years. They are a registered Supply Nation company.

During 2024-25, the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) engaged multiple Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses under Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) to deliver services and infrastructure. Nineteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises were attributed a value of addressable spend. The percentage of addressable spend spent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises was 0.33%. The top three areas of spend include:

1. building, facility and construction related services
2. management and professional business services
3. cleaning services.
 - » ACT NoWaste entered a 12-month contract with Onpoint 365 Pty Ltd, an Indigenous-owned business.
 - » Cultural Integrity Training was delivered in partnership with Aboriginal organisations and Traditional Custodians.

Justice and Community Services (JACS) Directorate has also historically sought ACT budget funding for programs developed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and there is no equivalent mainstream program available (e.g. Front Up and Yarning Circles), or when limited funding has been available, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to justice needs have been prioritised (e.g. Ngurrumbai Bail Support was established and no mainstream bail support services funded). This means there are limited situations where JACS can demonstrate how proportional funding has been applied. JACS also relies on several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises to ensure community-based programs and services are delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2024-25, JACS provided funding to the following ACCOs for justice programs and services specifically focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- > Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT
 - » National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-2025 (Commonwealth funding)
 - » First Nations paralegal program
 - » Trial Advocate
 - » Duty Lawyer Service
 - » Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service
 - » Disability Liaison Officer
 - » Front Up Program
 - » Ngurrumbai Bail Support Program
- > Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
 - » Justice Reinvestment/Yarrabi Bamirr Program

...



- > Yeddung Mura (Good Pathways) Aboriginal Corporation
 - » Transitional Accommodation Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men
 - » iCAN Intensive Case Management pilot program
 - » Elder and Community Leader Visitation Program
 - » Community Corrections External Reporting Site hire
 - » Yarrabi Bamirr
 - » Throughcare Support Program
 - » Support for Galambany Circle Sentencing Court
 - » Empowerment Yarning Circles

JACS also provided funding to the following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers:

- > Clybucca Dreaming
 - » Yarrabi Bamirr
 - » Yhurwan Bullan Women's Program
- > Dean Jard Consulting - Yurwan Ghuda (On Country) Program
- > Benny Hodges Consultancy - Elder and Community Leader Visitation Program
- > Wiradjuri Consulting - Young Bruthas Healing Men's Group

A mix of short term and recurrent funding is allocated across these programs.

In June 2024, ACTHD provided a Deed of Grant to Clybucca Dreaming for a Try-Test-Learn initiative for Intensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perinatal Case Management Support, to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and their babies. Funding for a further year of this project was allocated in June 2025.

Clybucca Dreaming's first performance report for the Intensive First Nations Perinatal Case Management Support demonstrates that the service has delivered some clear benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women through its comprehensive, culturally sensitive care, which addresses not only immediate health concerns, but also the broader social, cultural and emotional needs of participants.

HCSD is also focusing on services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander through the Mental Health Commissioning process.

The draft Strategic Investment Plan (the SIP) for this Commissioning work outlines different fundings streams and grant processes to purchase mental health services to be provided by non-Government organisations. The SIP was available for public consultation from 14 April 2025 to 20 June 2025.

The SIP outlines a proposed dedicated grant stream of \$1.16 million annually for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services which could be conducted through a select grant process following co-design and consultation with ACCOs and community.

The final SIP is expected to be released in October 2025, which will have more details about this grant stream and how general services in the Commissioning process will be enabled to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As part of its ongoing investment in resources and strategic priorities iCBR is committed to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses seeking procurement opportunities within the ACT Government. This includes fostering meaningful engagement and collaboration to support economic participation and self-determination.

Additionally, iCBR recognises the importance of maintaining strong partnerships with ACCOs that utilise and occupy spaces managed by iCBR. For example, Yerrabi Yurwang, a local ACCO, currently occupies the Yarramundi Cultural Centre—an arrangement that reflects iCBR's commitment to supporting culturally significant spaces and ensuring they remain accessible and responsive to community needs.

In 2023, ACTHD engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants, Yulang Indigenous Evaluation, to review ACT Government mental health services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to identify approaches to enhance culturally appropriate care. The [Yulang Report](#) highlighted gaps in mental health service provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. To address this issue, the 2024–25 Budget allocated investment to support:

- > \$400,000 to engage a specialist consultancy and provide support to ACCOs to assist with the co-design of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth mental health service;
- > \$200,000 to build the culturally responsive capacity of the mainstream mental health sector; and
- > \$297,000 for one designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior Officer Grade C position over two years to implement these measures, with funding for the full-service model to be brought back in a future budget process.

A designated officer has been appointed, and work has begun to procure a specialist consultancy. HCSD will work with the ACCO sector, to develop this work and ensure that there is a true partnership approach, and that self-agency and ownership are paramount.

Thirrili Limited, an ACCO with a national footprint and an office in the ACT, is funded by the ACT Government (\$1.5M until 30 June 2027) to deliver a culturally safe, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and aftercare service. Co-designed with local communities, the service offers holistic, lifespan support. Thirrili Limited continues to advocate for individuals and strengthen partnerships with ACT organisations.

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Partnership Group (the Partnership Group) continues to meet regularly providing strategic advice on culturally appropriate suicide prevention approaches.

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing (OMHW) supported the Partnership Group, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and Thirrili Limited to host two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Community Forums.

The OMHW also supports training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members through the Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Train the Trainer course. Participants included representatives from local communities, NGOs, businesses, and ACT Government agencies continued to support capacity-building initiatives, including training community members to become Suicide Prevention Trainers.

Thirrili Limited delivers the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and aftercare service. This community-designed and led model, endorsed by the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Partnership Group, embodies Priority Reform 1, aligns with Priority Reform 2 and Target 14, improving social and emotional wellbeing and reducing suicide. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, Promotion and Early intervention service, operated by Thirrili Limited, continue to seek input from partners and communities regarding service design and implementation.

The Education Directorate is meeting with established ACCOs to improve educational outcomes and ensure culturally safe practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and funding requirements. Funding has not been allocated to ACCO service delivery but will be considered as part of future budget appropriation.



PRIORITY REFORM 3

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.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Communications and Engagement branch has initiated conversations with Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) to explore opportunities for improving whole-of-government guidance on culturally competent engagement. This reflects a shared recognition of the need to strengthen government-wide practices when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and stakeholders. Initial activities continue to focus on identifying gaps in current engagement approaches and the importance of embedding cultural safety, respect, and responsiveness across all ACT Government communications and consultation activities. This work will inform the development of specific tools to support the new ACTPS Engagement framework. This framework is going through approvals.

Addressing systemic racism, racism and unconscious bias

The National Agreement defines cultural safety as overcoming the power imbalances of places, people and policies that occur between the non-Indigenous position and the minority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander position. It is met when the through actions from the majority position which recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally safe.

The ACT Government acknowledges that the intergenerational impacts of colonisation, dispossession and the harmful policies and practices of past Governments, driven by institutional racism, are the root cause of the statistical gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

Addressing systemic discrimination, racism and unconscious bias is a key deliverable under the Transformation Elements of Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement, and the Cultural Integrity Core Focus Area of the ACT Agreement.

Key elements to addressing systemic discrimination include: Identifying and eliminating racism, including institutional racism, discrimination and unconscious bias; embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety; and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This supports cultural safety, both internally within government organisations and externally through the services and contact that they have with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ACT Public Service is committed to delivering on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, with a strong focus on Priority Reform Three - Transforming Government Organisations.

The Cultural Transformation Branch (CTB) within Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) lead this work engaging closely with OATSIA.

A range of initiatives were implemented or progressed during the reporting period to support delivery of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, with a strong focus on Priority Reform Three, Transforming Government Organisations, and addressing systemic racism. These included:

- > Ongoing socialisation of the Cultural Integrity Professional Learning Database and refresh of the Cultural Advisor Network.
- > Responsive cultural guidance provided, including support during periods of high cultural load.
- > Continued rollout of Cultural Load and mental health resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, as well as finalisation of cultural care safety plans, with potential for whole-of-government rollout.
- > Support for newly established Cultural Advisor roles across directorates and connecting advisors to a centralised network, recognising their vital contribution to building cultural capability and enhancing cultural safety across the ACTPS.
- > Guidance prepared for Identified Positions, and progress on developing an ACTPS Cultural Integrity Framework and cultural capability uplift initiatives.
- > Coordination of professional development opportunities for ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, including participation of 10 employees in the IPAA Emerging Leaders program and 10 employees to the upcoming ANZSOG Conference.
- > Ongoing engagement with external collaborators to inform the development of systemic racism guidelines, including insights from recent Healing Circles. To date, 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have participated in these sessions. These sessions have surfaced valuable reflections on cultural safety, healing and accountability.
- > Finalisation of cultural care safety plans, with potential for whole-of-government rollout.
- > Development of a consistent, service-wide approach to Reconciliation Action Plans and related strategies that advance reconciliation.

This is a cornerstone for how the ACT Government must identify and address systemic racism, discrimination and unconscious bias.

A measure of this under the National Agreement is the number of directorates with a RAP in place, by RAP type – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate:

- > Community Services Directorate (CSD) – *Reconciliation Commitment* developed in 2018 and embedded within the Strategic Plan 2018-28.
- > Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) – Stretch RAP 2023-26 which is designed to further embed reconciliation in the directorates business strategies to ensure it becomes a key part of all staff's functions.
- > EPSDD – *Innovate RAP 2023 – 2025* designed to improve race relations and reduce systemic discrimination through a multi-faceted strategy..

- > CMTEDD – *Reconciliation and Cultural Integrity Plan 2024-27*. Significant effort was undertaken to ensure that this aligns to the transformation elements under Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement. This included working closely with the Cultural Transformation Branch and OATSIA.
- > Justice and Community Services (JaCS) – *Innovate RAP*
- > ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) – agreed to develop and implement a Cultural Integrity Plan.
- > ACT Teacher Quality Institute (under the Education Directorate) – *Reflect RAP*
- > Canberra Health Services (CHS) – CHS Statement of Commitment which was developed in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consumer Reference Group in place of a RAP at the request of community stakeholders.

National Reconciliation Week ran from 27 May to 3 June 2025, with the theme being 'Bridging Now to Next':

- > The ACT continues to be the only jurisdiction in Australia to observe Reconciliation Day as a Public Holiday. The Reconciliation Day Public Holiday was celebrated on 2 June 2025 with an event held at Commonwealth Park.
- > Hosted by OATSIA and funded by the ACT Government, with sponsorship from the NRMA and working with the ACT Reconciliation Council, the 2025 event saw increased participation from the previous year of approximately 7,000 attendees from the ACT Community, visitors, stallholders and artists including the headline act of Kobe Dee.
- > The event provided access to a range of experiences focusing on all age groups but with specific activities for children and young people, providing Canberrans with the opportunity to come together to celebrate and better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and be part of discussions around reconciliation.

Directorate Initiatives Supporting Organisational Change and Commitment to Cultural Integrity

Most directorates have engaged a Cultural Advisor or pay an additional allowance for staff in recognition of the additional cultural load in supporting their directorates apply and embed culturally appropriate practices.

In 2024-25, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) Executive undertook the Indigenous Psychologists' Services General Cultural Competency Profile to better understand areas of unconscious bias. The organisational report was used to develop actions undertaken during 2024-25 to embed cultural integrity.

- > TCCS's Senior Indigenous Cultural and Capability Advisor consulted across more than 30 instances to embed cultural integrity into projects and policies, offering strategic advice and cultural guidance.
- > Yarning Groups were held across four locations to engage TCCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on workplace issues, cultural safety, and wellbeing, fostering inclusion and psychological safety.
- > Cultural Integrity Training was delivered to 43 senior officers in TCCS, improving cultural awareness and embedding respectful practices that support a culturally safe and inclusive workplace. Cultural integrity training addresses unconscious bias and system racism and challenges participants to think practically about how to be aware of racism, encouraging reviews of policies and services with a cultural lens.
 - » Twenty-two TCCS employees completed Ngunnawal language training in 2024-25 to support culturally respectful acknowledgements and communication.
 - » Under their Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, TCCS held on country tours of significant areas and Ngunnawal language training programs to help strengthen staff awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultures and needs. These were attended by staff from all levels, including SES.

EPSDD's Building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisational Capability Framework was published, fostering an inclusive, culturally respectful and safe workplace where every employee understands, values and champions the knowledge, histories and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The framework includes an Employee Value Proposition Toolkit that contains tailored wording to help attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The new Inclusion in Recruitment Guide provides practical guidance for panel members to consider when undertaking recruitment in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These materials help address systemic racism by providing guidance and education, heightening workforce capability through enabling staff awareness of unconscious bias and how to challenge these assumptions.

EPSDD and TCCS were part of the amalgamation to create the new City and Environment Directorate (CED) effective from 1 July 2025. Former entities policies and frameworks will be considered in developing CED's Cultural Integrity Framework, ensuring consistency and alignment with broader policy review and strategic planning.

ACTHD developed a Commitment to Cultural Integrity Statement, as part of its work to strengthening cultural integrity in the organisation. The Statement is currently in a final stage of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The Statement makes a high-level commitment to improving cultural integrity and includes specific actions designed to transform the directorate in alignment with Priority Reform Three of the Closing the Gap Agreement. ACTHD also engaged a dedicated staff member to engage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to create a culturally safe environment.

Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) continues to uphold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity as a core organisational priority. This commitment is demonstrated through:

1. ensuring WIAs are completed for all business cases led by iCBR.
2. the strategic investment in and engagement of additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, ensuring that cultural integrity is consistently embedded across all aspects of iCBR's operations and project delivery.
3. the iCBR Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Integrity Framework is currently being developed and will provide clear guidance for all iCBR staff to effectively incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity into infrastructure projects and core business activities. It will also support the integration of wellbeing impact assessments into future initiatives, reinforcing iCBR's commitment to culturally responsive and inclusive practices.

iCBR is committed to fostering a culturally safe and inclusive organisation by actively addressing systemic racism, overt and covert racism, and unconscious bias. Current mechanisms include:

- > engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in strategic advisory roles
- > operation of the iCBR Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Group
- > implementation of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- > alignment with the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework (as well as iCBR staff who self-nominate as RED officers).

iCBR is also developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Integrity Framework, which will provide clear guidance for embedding cultural safety and anti-racism principles into core business and infrastructure projects.

Future mechanisms will include targeted training for staff on unconscious bias, culturally responsive practices, and systemic change, as well as strengthened data tracking systems to monitor and evaluate progress in addressing inequities. These efforts aim to ensure that iCBR remains a culturally respectful and responsive organisation, committed to the wellbeing and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Cultural Integrity Reference Group (Reference Group) completed the development of ACT Health's Cultural Integrity Commitment Statement (the Statement) in December 2024. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who were not involved in the Reference Group were given the opportunity to review and comment on the document prior to its finalisation. The Statement outlines the organisation's understanding of cultural integrity, recognises the ongoing impact of colonisation, and acknowledges the responsibility that the Directorate has to strengthening cultural integrity. The Statement makes commitments to, for example, meaningful cultural integrity training for all staff and the embedding of cultural integrity improvement into existing business processes (for example business plans and PDPs). The Statement will be supported by a program of work that will be considered in collaboration with plans in place across HCSD.

Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and leaders

Development of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Action Plan engaged First Nations health workforce and leaders across ACCO, public and non-government health sectors to identify workforce barriers and priorities. Key themes were eliminating racism and supporting culturally responsive career pathways. The First Nations Health Workforce Collaborative met in August 2025 to discuss outcomes and priority actions. Addressing racism consistently identified as a critical theme and priority. Actions include researching effective anti-racism practices in other jurisdictions, specifically Queensland. OCAHO met with Metro North, Queensland Health and the learnings will be shared with the Collaborative and Canberra Health Service as an example of health system reform through Community collaboration.



PRIORITY REFORM 4

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.

The ACT Government is working to strengthen ways to share data and information through supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to identify and monitor priorities under the ACT Agreement. Work is currently underway to ensure that the Elected Body and community can access the information and data they require to hold ACT Government directorates accountable for delivering the outcomes details in the agreements.

Over Phase One of the Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance (IDS/IDG) project (which occurred between July 2023 and July 2025):

- > Training workshops were provided by Maïam nayri Wingara (MnW) to a range of critical partners across ACT Government in a de-siloed approach to increasing staff understanding of the core principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance (IDS-G), and how this can translate to action and impact with Community by government implementing Governance of Indigenous Data (GID).
- > An audit of Indigenous data holdings across all ACT Government agencies was conducted, with the ACT Health audit provided to MnW for use in Community workshops.
- > MnW collaborated with a broad range of key Community partners (including individuals, groups and organisations) to develop shared understandings of IDS-G to support future work and shared decision making.

- > MnW hosted a Community workshop where participants collaboratively developed understandings of IDS-G, utilised the ACT Health Indigenous data holdings audit to begin setting Community self-determined health data priorities, and at which the groundwork was set for a future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data group (independent of government) was laid.

Initiation of Phase Two is currently underway to continue Community collaboration, capacity and capability building, and self-determination of Community health data priorities.

HCSD continues to collaborate with CMTEDD and Digital Canberra in a de-siloing approach to ensure shared governance between the IDS/IDG project and delivery of a jurisdictional response to the National Indigenous Australians Agency Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data.

Additionally, staff from the Epidemiology Section and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Team attended the Global Indigenous Data Sovereignty (GIDSov) Conference 2025 held on Ngannawal Country in April 2025.

The primary source of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, wellbeing and cultural data for the ACT is the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. However, the ABS advised that owing to issues related to securing an appropriate sample, they

would not be able to provide ACT specific estimates for the 2022/23 survey. The Directorate has identified the Mayi Kuwayu - The National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing (Mayi Kuwayu Study) based in Canberra as a potential source of data for wellbeing measures and answering additional research questions.

The Mayi Kuwayu Study was created by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In addition, the study has strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance and guidance in place and adheres to Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles. Engagement with Mayi Kuwayu will be undertaken as part of the implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty principles and will have financial implications moving forward.

In collaboration with JACS and the ABS, ACT Correctional Services (ACTCS) is progressing several data linkage opportunities that aims to improve our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interactions with the ACT justice system, with the broader goal of reducing over-representation and improving compliance and rehabilitation outcomes.

The broad aims of these data linkage initiatives are to:

- > Produce a more complex profile of an individual's interaction with the justice system, including the outcomes of these interactions and flows within the system, to build a whole-of-system perspective on system contact and pathways.
- > Improve our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interactions with the justice system, with a focus on measuring and reducing over-representation and identifying service improvements.
- > Develop comprehensive metrics regarding reoffending across the justice system will allow significantly improved understanding and potential options for early intervention for repeat offenders.

These initiatives seek to address service gaps by providing a more accountable and transparent approach to measuring the impact of justice services and outcomes.

iCBR is committed to the continuous review and refinement of organisational tracking systems to ensure they are capable of accurately capturing data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This process is essential to strengthening the organisation's capacity to monitor, report, and respond to outcomes that reflect cultural integrity and community priorities.

iCBR is refining its contract management system to improve the tracking and reporting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data including more fulsome subcontractor engagement and expenditure data. This process includes engagement with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies to embed cultural integrity within contract management practices. This collaborative effort aims to improve the functionality and responsiveness of data systems, ensuring they support the effective inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of iCBR's work.

Wellbeing information is collected annually for all students and staff at ACT public schools through the School Satisfaction and Climate Survey. In the Parent/Carer module one wellbeing question is asked: a Life Satisfaction question. All surveys ask respondents to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

It is noted that this collection is not representative of the population, since only staff, students, parents and carers associated with public schools are invited to complete the survey.





Supporting Closing the Gap Goals

The ACT Government will continue to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and community-controlled organisations to implement the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement in the spirit of partnership and self-determination. Additional efforts and investment the ACT Government is undertaking in reaching National Agreement targets and actions are outlined below.

Closing the Gap – Inland Waters Target

The Elected Body is the ACT's democratically elected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice to Government and the ACT's representative body on the Coalition of Peaks. Consequently, the Elected Body is the ACT Government's representative on consideration of the National Agreement Inland Waters Target. The Office of Water and the Elected Body Chair have been working collaboratively during 2024-25 to prepare for the potential introduction of a new Inland Waters Target. The Elected Body noted they do not have a role or responsibility in land and water management in Caring for Country and Traditional Custodians will need to play a key role in the development of any jurisdictional indicators.

In July 2024, the Joint Council on Closing the Gap agreed to revoke the Inland Waters Target Framework endorsed by Joint Council in August 2022, which included a 3 per cent Inland Waters Target and a baseline measure of

2.37 per cent, and instead agreed to a jurisdictional Inland Waters Target approach. The agreed approach requires each jurisdiction to determine their own foundation metric and their approach to achieving a target in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

In June 2025, at the 14th meeting of the Joint Council, the ACT Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs agreed *in principle* to the jurisdictional approach being included in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Pending final endorsement by governments, the Office of Water will continue to work collaboratively with the Elected Body on a forward pathway including developing partnerships with Traditional Custodians.

Ngunnawal Language Revitalisation

The ACT Government has implemented multiple avenues for the visibility of Ngunnawal language. These include:

- > Bilingual signage and theming in new ACT Government digital platforms, including promotion of Ngunnawal language on social media and directorate websites.
- > The Education Directorate entered into a Deed of Agreement (DoA) with Winannggaay Language Group in June 2024. The deliverables in the DoA included furthering the development of a Ngunnawal language vocabulary dictionary and pronunciation guide, the provision of Ngunnawal names for classrooms and house groups at Agnes Shea School, the development of early years reading primers, workshops for Ngunnawal Elders to learn a Welcome to Country in language and the facilitation of Ngunnawal People as the first teachers of their language workshop.
- > Public spaces named with Ngunnawal language during Phase One and Two of the ACT Agreement included: Watermarks Project Sullivans Creek, Ngamawari (Acton Waterfront), Maliyan Park Watson, Wamburang, Namarag, Budjan Galindji, Nadjung Mada Nature Reserve, Wandarawari Track. The most recent use of Ngunnawal language was the naming of the Mindjagari Track and Wamburang (new special purpose reserve at Coombs).
- > Environment areas are using Ngunnawal names for wild plants and animals including: Gula (Koala), Buru (Kangaroo), Waragul (Dingo), Wagar (Two-spined Blackfish), Ngaluda (bettong), baray (wallaby) and are supporting use of Ngunnawal nomenclature in scientific literature, strategies and plans.
- > Bilingual signage and Ngunnawal cultural theming have been embedded in upgrades to playgrounds (Lyons, Kaleen, Aranda, Gordon) and public parks.
- > As part of the Watermarks Project, murals and etched Ngunnawal language songs were installed along Sullivans Creek, with interpretive signage guiding visitors in Ngunnawal terms.
- > Street Art and Murals across Canberra incorporate Ngunnawal language and cultural symbolism. New toilet installations at Florey, Evatt and Duffy include both language and murals on the outer toilet wrap.
- > Libraries ACT: Annual program celebrated Ngunnawal language with signage and resources to identify Aboriginal authorship and content.
- > Community Learning: Engagement with Aboriginal communities to promote literacy and lifelong learning using library services.
- > Yarralumla Nursery rebranded with Ngunnawal seasonal themes and RAP logo to enhance cultural visibility.

First Nations Engagement and Facilitation Program

The ACT Office of Water recognises the need to strengthen our approach to engagement with Traditional Custodians, and other Aboriginal people with a connection to waterways across this region. This means moving beyond consultation and towards deeper collaboration. With that in mind, the Office of Water procured an Aboriginal consultant to support relationship building and collaboration across a range of water resource management matters in September 2024 for a period of 12 months. The first phase of the Office of Water First Nations Engagement and Facilitation Program explored a range of important themes related to water management, such as cultural flows, water management governance, restorative cultural practices and knowledge sharing with community. With community's permission, key findings were documented in a Listening Report which was verified with attendees.

Home Energy Support Programs

EPSDD engaged ACCO, Yedding Mura, to co-design and pilot free culturally appropriate home energy support activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households during 2024-25 to help reduce energy bills. Twenty households participated in the pilot, receiving home energy visits and participating in Yarning Circles. Yedding Mura also developed several sets of education materials to support the delivery of their activities. Ongoing funding has been secured to expand the program to other ACCOs.

First Nations Youth programs

EPSDD (through the ACT Natural Resource Management Program) ran three programs in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses during 2024-25 supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The purpose of these programs is to address disparity experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in education, justice and health, with the data showing 'Connection to Country, built through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors, enhances both individual and collective resilience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth'. The three programs delivered during 2024-25 were:

- > Kickstart My Career Through Culture – 63 participants
- > Yurwan Ghuda 'On Country' Program – 26 participants
- > Bimberi First Nations Program – 15 participants



Ngunnawal Conservation Training Program

The First Nations Conservation Training Program is designed to engage Ngunnawal community members in on-Country environmental projects. Over four years, eight participants (in four two-year blocks) will be engaged in practical on-ground conservation projects delivering positive environmental outcomes for the ACT. They will build their capacity to undertake these tasks through a Certificate III in Conservation Management and certifications such as chainsaw and chemical application. Additionally, they will benefit from cultural training and mentorship, spending four days a week in the field and one day in training.

The program, commenced by EPSDD in conjunction with 18Fifty3, started in January 2025 and is due to run until December 2028. The initial four participants commenced work on restoration projects across the ACT.

Cultural Advisors Program (Healing Country, Healing Community Project)

Four Cultural Advisors from the Ngunnawal community (2 men and 2 women) have been engaged to work with CED ecologists and land managers to develop an ecocultural project bringing Indigenous knowledge and western science together to restore Country. This work provides opportunities for traditional owners to restore or strengthen their connections to Country.

This project is successfully trialling a model for Ngunnawal engagement and co-developed key documents including a Code of Care, Cultural Advisor Agreement and a 'restoration wheel' for measuring the success of ecological and cultural values in restoration efforts.

Further initiatives by TCCS supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement include:

- > Community feedback to TCCS from events like Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC celebrations informed decisions to continue valued services such as the Koori Pre-School Charter Service and the Community Bus Program.
 - » The Community Bus Program provided 3,857 passenger movements in 2024–25, enabling access to medical appointments, cultural events, and social activities—reducing barriers to essential services and enhancing community wellbeing.
 - » The Koori Pre-School Charter Service continued in 2025 following positive evaluation, supporting cultural excursions and connection to land for Aboriginal children, contributing to educational and emotional wellbeing.
- > The Learner Driver Mentor Program supported 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in gaining provisional licences, improving access to employment, education, and independence.

- > Working with through the ACT and District NAIDOC Committee continue to support an award at the Annual NAIDOC Ball event and attend the event. During the last two Balls, the committee asked if the ACT Government could provide native plants for decorations and bouquets for award recipients. The native plants were provided by Yarralumla Nursery for the event, and feedback is that the provision of native plants was well received by recipients.
- > A Community Engagement Officer is and identified role embedded within City Services fostering collaboration with Traditional Custodians and supporting cultural events and urban land management.

Early childhood education

The 3-Year-Old Check pilot was delivered in ACT Early Childhood Education Centres and Koori Preschools during Terms 2 and 3, 2025. It aimed to identify developmental needs early and connect children and families with appropriate supports where risks or delays were found.

The pilot responded to Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data showing rising developmental vulnerability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the ACT. It supports efforts to increase the proportion of children who are developmentally on track across all five AEDC domains, aligning with Closing the Gap Target 4.

Phase Two of the ACT Government's Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT (Set up for Success) to be delivered between 2023 and 2025 will focus on implementing a range of workforce initiatives through delivery of an ACT specific ECEC workforce strategy.

The ACT Government expanded the Koori Preschool program in 2024, offering an additional class across three Koori Preschool sites. This provided access to Koori Preschool for an additional 66 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children increasing available places from 110 to 176.

In March 2025, the Aunty Agnes Shea Early Childhood Scholarships Program was launched. Delivered by the ACT Government in partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation. The program provides financial support for Aboriginal people to undertake a Diploma or Degree qualification in early childhood education. In March 2025, the ACT Government launched the free culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational practices professional learning, designed to support educators from a range of experience levels and from a variety of practice contexts. Developed by Community Early Learning Australia, the professional learning was informed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Panel to ensure it reflects local culture, meets the community's needs, and supports cultural safety and integrity. The professional learning is ACT Teacher Quality Institute accredited. As of 16 September 2025, 226 educators have enrolled in training and 86% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their confidence to deliver culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational learning experiences.

School education and student supports

Waruga Yardhura student support service within Flexible Education, continues to support students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds who have not attended or are not enrolled in school. The review of Flexible Education is planned with the procurement process underway for this evaluation looking at how the holistic approach of the Waruga Yardhura service is supporting the child or young person to engage in school. The review is focused on gaps in service provision and best ways of meeting the needs of students requiring Flexible Education supports.

This review is an Action in the Education Action Plan under the Focus Area of Lifelong Learning and the Closing the Gap Targets of:

- > Students achieve their full learning potential - By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 %, and 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 %.

There are currently 12 Indigenous Education Officers (IEOs). IEO roles are salary graded as School Assistant 4. The role of IEOs help the Directorate respond to the Closing the Gap Target Area 8 – Strong economic participation and the development of people and their communities and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Agreement 2019-28 Focus Areas on Cultural Integrity and Economic Participation.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Scholarship Program supports a high-expectations approach to education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the senior years of secondary education. A total of \$75,000 is allocated annually to this program. For the 2025 school year, six secondary scholarships were awarded; with five scholarships continuing from 2024. A review of the Secondary Scholarships programs is underway. The Deed of Agreement was revised in early 2025 to improve clarity and increase flexibility.

A total of \$80,000 is available each year for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Scholarships program. Scholarships of up to \$10,000 per annum over four years are available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking a teaching qualification at an ACT university. Low engagement with the tertiary scholarship program in recent years has prompted a review of the impact, intent and effectiveness of the scholarships. This review is an Action in the Education Action Plan under the Focus Area of Lifelong Learning and the Closing the Gap Targets of: 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%.

Engoori is a strength-based approach to addressing complex challenges and transforming organisational and school culture. During 2024–25, two schools participated

in whole school Engoori training. Engoori training was incorporated into the new educator induction sessions and was delivered to several teams in the Directorate. Over 150 staff participated in Engoori training during 2024–25. The Directorate continues to provide Engoori training to schools and Education Support Office.

The Directorate currently supports several targeted Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ACT public schools. These programs can provide pathways into tertiary education post Year 12. Current traineeship initiatives the Directorate funds or supports in this area are:

- > Head Start Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA) Program. The Head Start Program was funded for an additional three years (2024–25 to 2026–27) to support another cohort of 50 students to commence their Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) during the 2025 school year. The program provides tailored ASbAs for students from year 10 and 11 while completing their senior secondary certificate. The pilot program delivered 50 ASbA placements including 5 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (i.e. 10%). There are currently two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students undertaking a Head Start ASbA.
- > Chief Minister Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's (CMTEDD's) Employment Pathway Program (EPP). In 2025, the Directorate committed to contribute funding the wrap around services for the CMTEDD's EPP for the next three years (2025-26 to 2027-28).
- > Indigenous Allied Health Academy (IAHA) ASbA program. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy Program is operated by Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA). It is an ASbA program that provides Year 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the opportunity to pursue a Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance while working towards a Year 12 Certificate. In 2025, 17 new students commenced the program, 10 of these students are from ACT public schools. The program also has 11 students continuing from 2024 of which six are ACT public school students.
- > ACT Emergency Services Agency Work Experience Program. In collaboration with ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA), a pilot Work Experience Program was delivered in 2024 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from ACT public schools. Planning is underway to deliver two programs in 2026, these placements will occur with ACT Ambulance, ACT Fire and Rescue, and the ACT ESA Central Communication Centre.
- > The Education Directorate provides a licence for a dedicated career education website for every ACT public high school and college, through Career Tools. The Directorate continues to collaborate with Career Tools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to highlight local ASbA, work experience and other employment and training opportunities and supports available to students.





Educating our Workforce

The Education Directorate offered and ran several training sessions throughout the year, completion numbers for these sessions were:

- > Respect, Equity and Diversity training – 31 completed;
- > Respect Equity and Diversity Contact Officer training – 49 completed;
- > Supervisor Development training – 19 completed;
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness e-Learning – 28 completed;
- > On Country Walks – 65 completed; and
- > Ngunnawal Language – 114 completed.

Completion numbers for professional learning offered to New Educators included:

- > Cultural Integrity – 25 completed; and
- > Grant Sarra Workshop – 37 completed.

Traineeships and tertiary education

The User Choice program provides a \$500 loading for each government funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentice or trainee to assist registered training organisations (RTOs) in providing inclusive and positive learning experiences.

The loadings are a contribution towards the cost of RTOs delivering learning support tailored to the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. They are intended to facilitate learner satisfaction and successful outcomes. Skills Canberra continually monitors the User Choice program for adequacy. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in-training in trades occupations has been increasing steadily since 2016.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are a priority cohort under the Free TAFE initiative where qualifications and short courses are available for Canberrans to access pathway courses to areas of ACT and national priority. The Skills Canberra Field Officer Program continues to promote vocational education and training pathways under the Skilled Capital and User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) initiatives.

CMTEDD continued delivery of the Employment Pathways Program, an 18-month program combining paid work experience and formal training under the Australian School Based Apprenticeship scheme. During 2024/25 CMTEDD had eight participants on the program, with seven completing it in December 2024 and one due to finish in December 2025. Students who complete the program are offered ongoing employment within the directorate.

Care and safety of children

The Children and Young People Amendment Act (no 2) 2024 introduced a merits review scheme. This scheme allows decisions which impact the long-term and significant wellbeing of a child to be reviewed. These decisions include care and placement, health, education, religion and culture. The review scheme supports internal review by the decision maker, and an external review by an independent body. The review scheme is due commence operating on 1 July 2025, supported by a range of supporting information to assist organisations and carers to use the scheme. The operation of the scheme is intended to improve the transparency and quality of decisions for children in child protection, and lead to better quality outcomes.

Following the conclusion of the Functional Family Therapy-Youth Justice (FFT-YJ) pilot program in 2022, funding was provided to re-establish the program, with ongoing funding in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 ACT Budget. The program supports young people who are at risk or have contact with the youth justice system and their families, supporting them to overcome challenges within the family unit and develop effective strategies for change.

The Intensive Adolescent Service (IAS) provides voluntary, practical, and intensive support to young people with complex needs who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. With a strong focus on diversion, IAS works to prevent youth offending by addressing the root causes of harmful behaviour and promoting positive pathways. The team are uniquely placed to support young people navigate complex statutory systems, such as child protection and youth justice, to ensure they are engaged and connected to the right supports at the right time.

Both programs have been introduced to support young people displaying harmful behaviours to be diverted from the youth justice system and where possible, involve statutory involvement (including detention).

Raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

In a landmark move, the ACT Government has passed legislation to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) from 10 to 14 years. This reform aims to divert children and young people away from the criminal justice system and towards supportive, therapeutic services that are trauma-informed, individualised, holistic and culturally safe and appropriate.

The final increase to 14 years commenced in 2025. This change aligns with international standards and human rights obligations, and it is expected to have a particularly positive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, who are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.

To support this legislative change, the ACT Government is also developing a range of alternative therapeutic supports and service responses. By shifting from a punitive criminal justice response to a therapeutic response to children and young people involved in or at risk of engaging in harmful behaviours, the reforms are transforming the way government works and addressing the systemic inequalities that contribute to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the criminal justice system.

Domestic and Family Violence

The ACT Government continues to strengthen responses to domestic and family violence (DFV) in ways that are culturally safe and trauma informed. A Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Family Response and Engagement Pilot is being trialled as part of CYF's reform to child protection services. The intent of the pilot is to provide earlier and longer-term support for families experiencing DFV, aiming to keep families safe and together. The pilot team has worked alongside CYF's First Nations Family Response and Engagement Team to share learnings, connect with community partners and develop a cultural lens on their DFV-informed practice. The pilot is scheduled to end in December 2025, with an evaluation from the Institute of Child Protection Studies to follow.

Preventive health initiatives were enhanced through programs such as Yawarj Mara – Strong Pathways, delivered by Yerrabi Yurwang, and the Step TOGETHER intergenerational wellbeing program, led by Stellar Company and Project Dust. These programs incorporate cultural models of wellbeing and received direct funding, with Stellar Step TOGETHER awarded \$54,288. Both initiatives support Priority Reform 1 and Target 1 by improving health outcomes through culturally relevant approaches.

Commissioning reforms were another critical component, with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and Gudan Gulwan receiving \$3.9 million and \$1.2 million respectively to deliver a range of primary health, AOD, and youth mental health services. These contracts have been extended through to 2025, reinforcing Priority Reforms 1 and 2 and supporting Targets 1, 2, and 14.

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing continued to ensure the availability of culturally appropriate suicide prevention training delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people completed the Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention, Train the Trainer course and then delivered workshops to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, NGOs, local businesses and ACT Government service.

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and Thirrili Limited, hosted a community forum at Exhibition Park for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT and surrounding regions. Attended by over 80 participants, including the Minister for Mental Health, the forum provided a platform to discuss mental health and suicide prevention, aligned with the four Priority Reform areas of the Closing the Gap plan. Key topics included systemic racism, poverty, self-determination in data, holistic service commissioning, and strengthening relationships between mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

ACT Health Directorate previously commissioned Yulang Indigenous Evaluation to conduct a review of ACT Government funded mental health services that are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Yulang Report assessed the availability, accessibility, and cultural appropriateness of mental health services across the ACT. The Yulang Report also highlighted the importance of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Drawing on the findings of the Yulang Report, the ACT Government invested \$897,000 in the 2024–25 Budget for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Mental Health initiative. This includes:

- > \$400,000 to engage specialist services to assist with the co-design of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth mental health service;
- > \$200,000 to strengthen the cultural responsiveness of the mainstream mental health sector; and
- > \$297,000 to fund an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander position to lead the implementation of these measures.

Disability Health

The 10-year *Disability Health Strategy 2024-2033* (DHS) and the *DHS: First Action Plan 2024-2026* (First Action Plan) were launched in December 2023. The DHS has three overarching goals, the second of which is to ensure that people with disability have access to appropriate healthcare services – this includes a commitment to ensuring that the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability are met through community-led and culturally-appropriate practices.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with disability are one of eight priority populations under the First Action Plan. Initiatives under the First Action Plan consider the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability community, from the research to the design and implementation stages of projects, giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People the opportunity to engage in consultation and co-design activities.





Under the First Action Plan, free Easy English translation training is available for healthcare and disability services in the ACT. Training is run approximately six times a year, with invitations sent to stakeholders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

Health Care Consumers' Association is finalising a scoping report on the health literacy needs of people with disability, their family members, carers, and advocates, healthcare workers, disability service providers, and advocacy groups. This report will assist in the development of requirements for the development and implementation of disability health literacy initiatives. This will include health literacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a priority population under the First Action Plan.

Additionally, procurement is underway for a supplier to scope the clinical, informational, and education sexual health needs of women with disability. The scoping will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and women with disability both being priority populations under the First Action.

With the release of the NDIS review and Disability Royal Commission (DRC) findings the ACT Government will work to ensure reforms stemming from these reviews are culturally appropriate and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. In July 2024, all Governments responded to the DRC Final Report and agreed in principle to establish a First Nations Disability Forum (Recommendation 9.10) and release a revised Disability Sector Strengthening Plan (Recommendation 9.11) in partnership with the First Nations Disability Forum. These commitments align with Priority Reform One and Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement.

All governments committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, their families, carers and representatives, the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, peak bodies, and other key stakeholders to develop options for the establishment of a First Nations Disability Forum or other appropriate shared decision-making mechanism for the cross-cutting outcome of disability under Closing the Gap. An engagement paper was released for consultation from 12 December 2024 to 25 February 2025, and the insights from this consultation will go to inform the final options for the First Nations Disability Forum.

Additionally, in 2024, the ACT Government joined other jurisdictions in committing to work with the First Peoples Disability Network to strengthen the implementation of the current [Disability Sector Strengthening Plan](#). This work is closely linked with the First Nations Disability Forum which is ongoing.

Design and construction work

During 2024-25, the ACT Government supported the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives across multiple infrastructure projects:

- > Economic Development has engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to develop a cultural design brief for the development of the new Convention and Entertainment Centre project. The Cultural Design Brief is a framework for incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and stewardship into design and planning processes, aiming to create culturally sensitive, sustainable, and place-based outcomes.
- > Playground Upgrades at Lyons, Kaleen, Banambila Street (Aranda), and Point Hut Pond (Gordon) incorporated Ngannawal cultural themes and artwork by Aboriginal artists. Bagariin were engaged to undertake the design and cultural heritage assessments across four proposed playground sites in Canberra in the suburbs of Aranda, Ngannawal, Chisholm and Gordon. Bagariin developed individual Ngannawal cultural themes across the four suburbs which incorporated local indigenous heritage and history. In developing these themes, Bagariin engaged with three distinct groups: Group A: The King Brown Tribal Group which includes Registered Aboriginal Organisations for the ACT and Surrounds; Group B: Mulleun Dreaming and Yawan Bidgee, local Ngannawal Businesses and Group C: Ngannawal Elders and community representatives. Seven separate engagement opportunities were undertaken. During these opportunities, the groups negotiated themes for concept design development which included the Ngannawal Songline, nature play and bush food themes. Bagariin ultimately was able to draw on the rich diversity of the indigenous community to reach agreement on themes to support cultural connection and celebrate this through thoughtful design. The final designs successfully included language, artwork and stories that support the local Indigenous community and visually enhance the surrounding landscapes.
- > Sport and Recreation Facilities upgrades at Stirling, Ngannawal, and Hawker sportsgrounds featured Indigenous artwork by Yarrudhamarra Creations, enhancing cultural representation and community connection. Upgrades at Stirling, Ngannawal, and Hawker sportsgrounds featured Indigenous artwork by Kristie Peters (Yarrudhamarra Creations), enhancing cultural representation and community connection. These projects have incorporated the contributions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through:
 - » cultural design elements – Indigenous artwork, storytelling and traditional design principles have been integrated into building facades;
 - » recognition and education – a QR code applied to the artwork links back to the Indigenous artist's website, providing further education and insights into the artwork's meaning and cultural significance; and
 - » employment and procurement – opportunities were provided for Indigenous businesses, designers and workers to contribute to the project.

- > Watermarks Project included Sullivans Creek Activation delivered in partnership with Buru Ngannawal Aboriginal Corporation, this project embedded Ngannawal language and cultural stories into stormwater infrastructure through murals and signage.
- > Street Art and Graffiti Program commissioned murals across public spaces featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes, supported by the launch of the Street Artists Directory to promote Indigenous artists and cultural expression.
- > The Athllon Drive duplication project has incorporated culturally responsive engagement by involving an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultant. This includes activities such as a Walk on Country and Yarning Circles with the design team. These engagements aim to ensure that the Ngannawal community's values and perspectives are understood and meaningfully integrated into the project's landscape design, signage, symbols, and structures. This approach acknowledges the cultural significance of the area, which has historically served as a route of travel, a source of food, and a watercourse for the Ngannawal people.
- > Construction is under way on an alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility in Watson, which will cater specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. The facility will be run by Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services. Construction is estimated to be completed early to mid-2026. As part of the Canberra Hospital Expansion Project, a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Welcome Lounge was designed and constructed in Building 2 at Canberra Hospital. The Welcome Lounge was designed in close consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and features a courtyard, lounge, yarning circle, and other culturally safe spaces and amenities. The Welcome Lounge was officially opened on 5 September 2025.
- > Partnered with three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to install murals and artwork at various shopping centres across Canberra – Eddie Longford at Narrabundah, Yamile Tafur Rios at Lanyon Marketplace and Kristie Peters at Evatt and Duffy. These artworks have included history and cultural themes that are relevant to the local landscape.

Closing the Gap and ACT Agreement Roadshow

ACT Health Directorate delivered a whole-of-directorate Closing the Gap and ACT Agreement Roadshow (63 per cent overall directorate attendance) providing activity audit supporting Phase 3 planning and transformation of businesses approaches and planning.

Economic Participation

Ongoing funding for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support business program was secured in the 2021-22 ACT Budget with funding of \$225,000 per annum (indexed).

Economic Development has been delivering the ACT Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business support program Badji since May 2022. Badji is currently delivered under contract with Coolamon Advisors, a Canberra-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander majority-owned and managed company.

The Badji Services Agreement with Coolamon Advisors is valued at \$235,186 (ex GST) in 2024-25.

Since May 2022, Badji has supported 96 unique businesses with a range of services, advice and referrals. Business types included consultancies, food, arts and recreation, construction, retail, and healthcare and social assistance. Over 40 per cent of clients have engaged with the Badji program on repeat occasions, indicating they have gained value from the program and are continuing to make use of the service. Badji has experienced consistent year-on-year client growth as awareness of the program has increased within the community:

- > In Year 1 (2022-23) Badji worked with 18 unique clients.
- > In Year 2 (2023-24) Badji worked with 23 unique clients.
- > In Year 3 (2024-25) Badji worked with 55 unique clients.

The Badji Program is well integrated into the ACT's business and innovation ecosystem, including engagement with the Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN), Canberra Business Advice and Support Service, Indigenous Business Australia, the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, and the Australian National University (ANU).

The Badji program provides culturally appropriate concierge services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and business intenders in the ACT. Badji is a free service delivered by Coolamon Advisors, an ACT-owned and managed local business offering a wealth of lived and learned experience to share with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. The Badji program helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and business intenders by providing concierge services, office-space resources, mentoring and coaching.

In 2024-25 the Badji program expanded the activities it delivered to increase the reach of the program. This included:

- > Pitch on a Page grant program in Quarter 2 2024-25, which enabled local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to participate in program delivery and engage in learning and mentoring activities to enhance competitiveness.





- > Hosting Indigenous Business Month Workshops in October 2024 that provided targeted advice to businesses on:
 - » Tax Implications of Business Structures, presented by the ANU Tax Clinic.
 - » Introduction to Grants, presented by Katrina Fanning.
 - » ACT Government Procurement Basics, presented by Procurement ACT.
- > Supporting local businesses to participate in CBRIN Female Founders.
- > Supporting clients to participate at the Supply Nation Indigenous Trade Fair, enabling them to promote their businesses to buyers who may not have accessed them before.

Co-designing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Intellectual Property Rights Workshop with the Arts Law Centre of Australia and Burrunju Aboriginal Art Gallery, to support artists in safeguarding their Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP).

iCBR Managed Infrastructure Projects (Design and Construction Works)

Outlined below are previous and current infrastructure projects managed by iCBR that demonstrate the level of maturity for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity. These projects reflect iCBR's commitment to integrating cultural values and perspectives into the design and construction of public infrastructure.

2024–2025 Highlights:

- > Canberra Hospital Expansion: Cultural design elements included in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lounge and Welcome Hall; over \$25M in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, business, education, and training.
- > Light Rail Stage 2A & 2B: Upskilling of two (2) Ngannawal public artists in tender writing submissions; exceeding cultural awareness training and workforce targets (2A) and Designing with Country Framework included as part of final Environment Impact Statement (EIS) (2B).
- > CIT Woden & CIT Yurauna: Aboriginal consultancies guided culturally inclusive learning space designs.
- > Canberra Theatre: Community consultations informed

cultural integration in redevelopment.

- > Gungan Gulwan Youth Facility: Achieved 18% Indigenous participation; cultural elements embedded in design.
- > Molonglo Valley Library: Ngannawal values and heritage integrated into design.
- > Sullivans Creek to Creek: Indigenous artists engaged for bridge artwork.
- > Education Projects: Schools include cultural awareness training and Indigenous participation targets.
- > Sport & Recreation Facilities: Cultural art installations added, including at Ngannawal District Playing Fields.
- > Road & Civil Projects: Local consultations ensure cultural heritage is respected.
- > Neighbourhood Projects: Increasing inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork and landscaping.
- > General Infrastructure: Landscaping and artwork inspired by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists featured across projects.

2025–2026 Focus Ongoing Projects:

- > Light Rail Stage 2A & 2B: Delivering public art from a Ngannawal public artist (2A) and cultural design recommendations included in EIS (2B).



Conclusion

The ACT Government reaffirms its commitment to self-determination through co-design, genuine partnership, and sustained investment in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Successive ACT Budgets reflect the growing influence of these partnerships, formed under both the ACT and National Agreements—on government priorities and resource allocation.

The Government recognises that this is a generational reform. It may take many years before the full impact of these investments and policy changes is evident in the Closing the Gap data. As we continue working towards the outcomes envisioned in the National and ACT Agreements, the ACT Government remains committed to partnering with the Elected Body, ACCOs, and the broader community to promote equity and support self-determination for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT.



Sources

1. The information presented in this report has been sourced from various ACT Government Directorates, providing comprehensive insights into the activities, initiatives, and achievements of different ACT Government Directorates.
2. The data in this report draws on the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Information Repository [Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#).
3. **Figure CtG2.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
4. **Figure CtG3.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
5. **Figure CtG4.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
6. **Figure CtG5.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
7. **Figure CtG6.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
8. **Figure CtG7.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
9. **Figure CtG8.1**
[Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
10. **Figure CtG9.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
11. **Figure CtG10.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
12. **Figure CtG11.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
13. **Figure CtG 12**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
14. **Figure CtG 13.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)
15. **Figure CtG 15.1**
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)



APPENDIX A

Closing the Gap Outcomes and Targets

The data in this report draws on the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Information Repository [Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#).

Why should indicators/measures derived from small numbers be used with caution?

Some data presented on the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Information Repository may be based on data sets relating to the Australian Capital Territory with only a small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/records. This data may be highly variable because changes for only a small number of people/records can affect the results substantially. As a result, data over time can be difficult to interpret.

In particular, rates and proportions based on data sets with few people can be sensitive to small changes in the numerator (such as the number of preschool enrolments) and/or the denominator. Enrolment proportions may exceed 100% for some jurisdictions due to the numerator and denominator being from different sources. For results derived using small numbers, year-on-year

movements in the results should be interpreted with caution [How to interpret the data | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)

The ACT also has higher levels of employment, education and access to tertiary education than other jurisdictions, in part due to the socio-economic status of a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when compared to other jurisdictions. This is often due to the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in government positions (Commonwealth and ACT), relocating to the ACT for employment or tertiary education, and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. While this is a unique characteristic of the jurisdiction, the ACT Government continues to focus on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experience higher levels of disadvantage and vulnerability.



TARGET 1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives.

DATA

ACT specific data not available.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

ACT specific data not available.

TARGET

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

NON-INDIGENOUS

ACT specific data not available

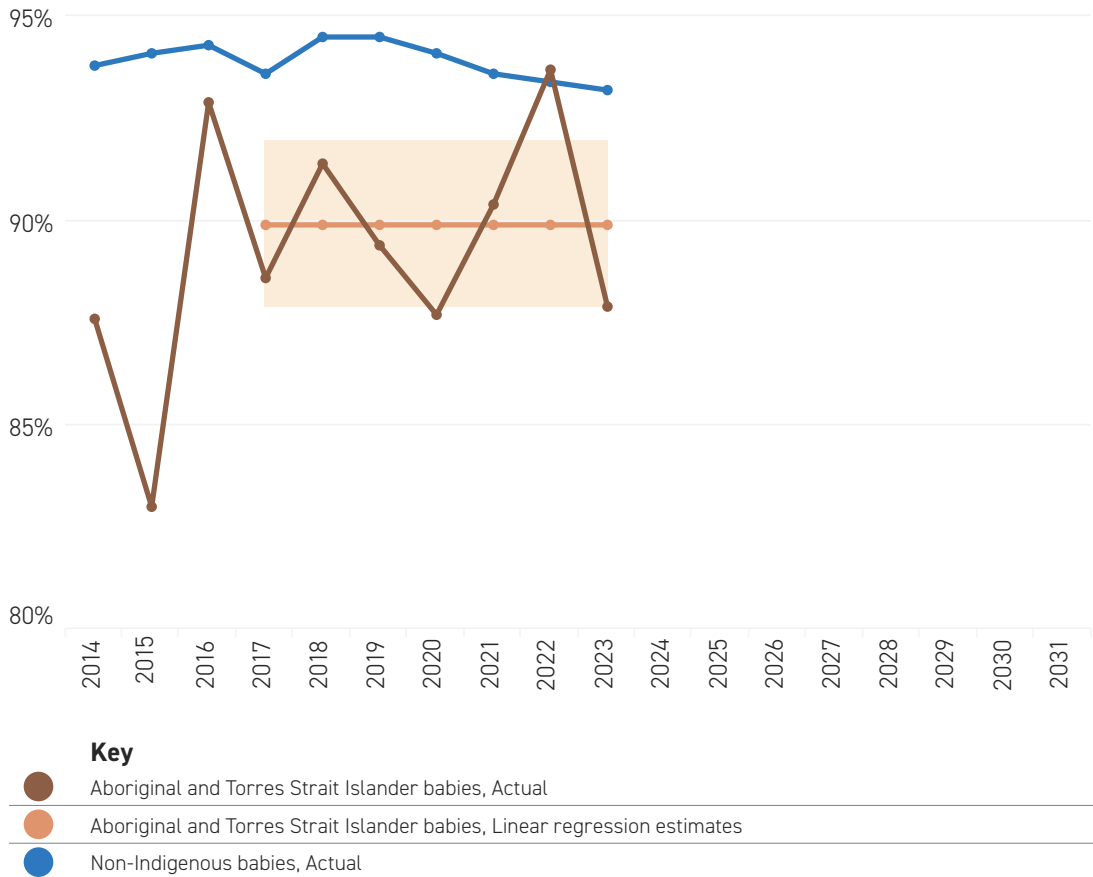
TARGET 2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong.

ACT DATA

Figure CtG2.1 Live-born singleton babies of healthy birthweight (2,500-4,499g) (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2023, in the Australian Capital Territory, 89.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born were of a healthy birthweight. This is an increase from 88.6% in 2017 (the baseline year), but a decrease from 2022 where it was 93.7%.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2023, in the Australian Capital Territory, 93.2% of non-Indigenous children born were of a healthy birthweight.



TARGET 3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

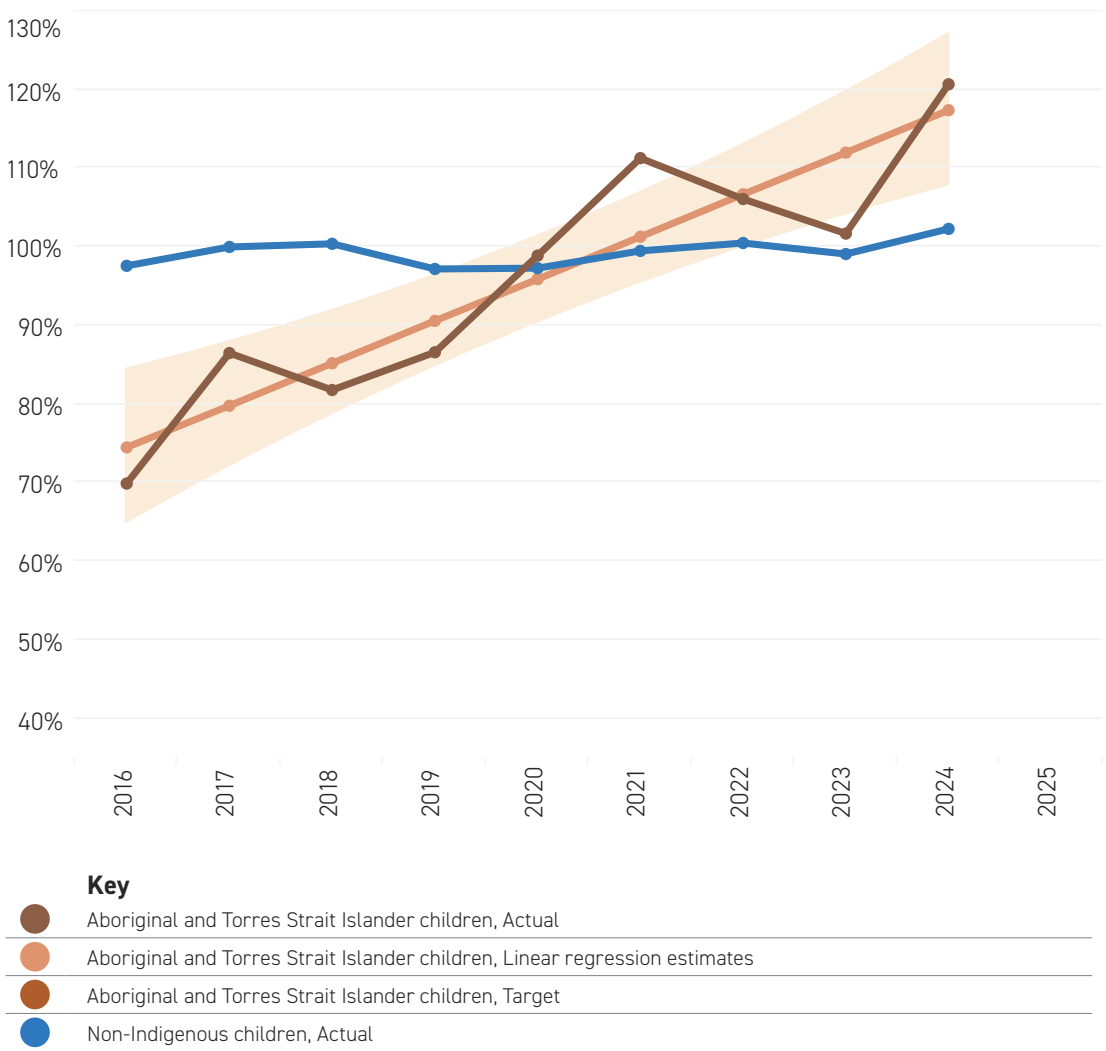
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.

TARGET

By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95%.

DATA

Figure CtG3.1 Children in the state-specific YBFS age cohort who are enrolled in a preschool program (a), (b)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2024, in the Australian Capital Territory, 117.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the state specific YBFS age cohort were enrolled in a preschool program.

Note: Enrolment proportions at the sub-national level (such as state and territory) may exceed 100 percent for some areas due to the numerator and denominator being from different sources.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2024, in the Australian Capital Territory 102.3% of non-Indigenous children in the state specific YBFS age cohort were enrolled in a preschool program.

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

TARGET 4

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

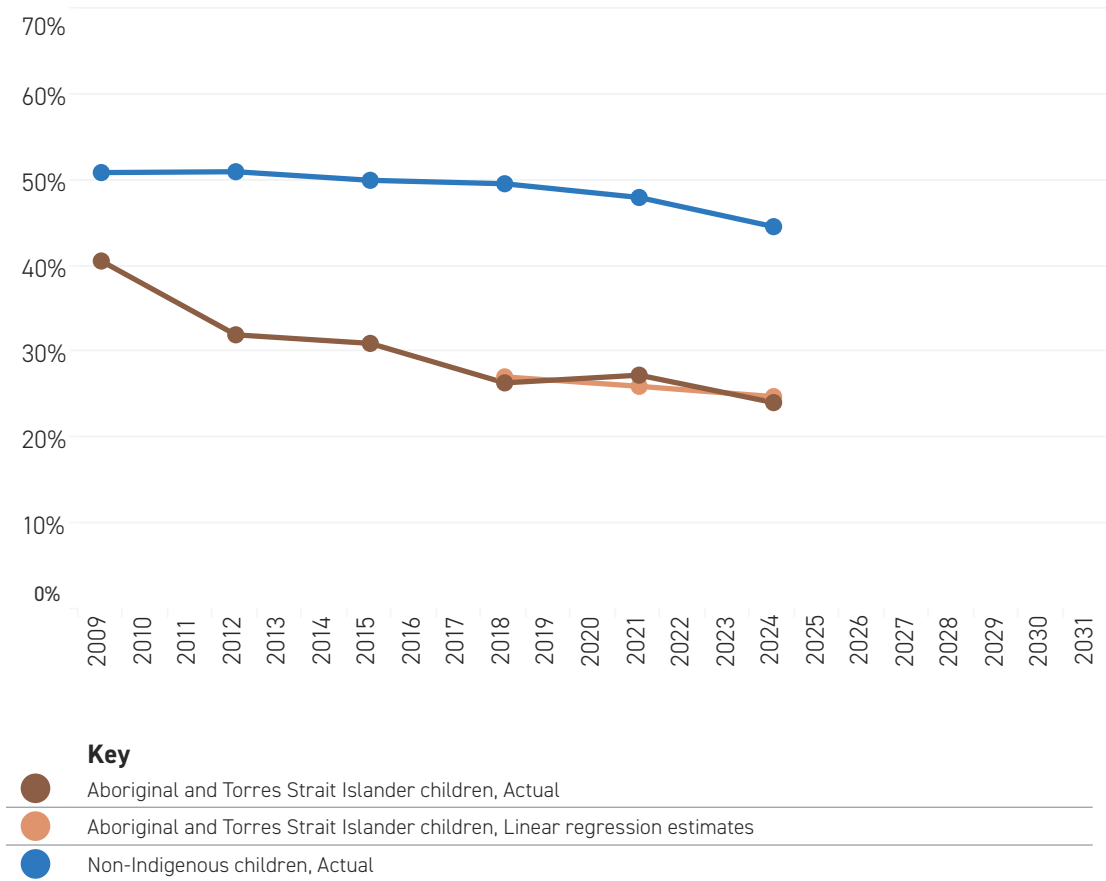
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.

TARGET

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95%.

DATA

Figure CtG4.1 Children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2024, in the Australian Capital Territory the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census was 24.1%. This was a decrease from 27.3% in 2021.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2024, in the Australian Capital Territory 44.6% of non-Indigenous children were assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census.



TARGET 5

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

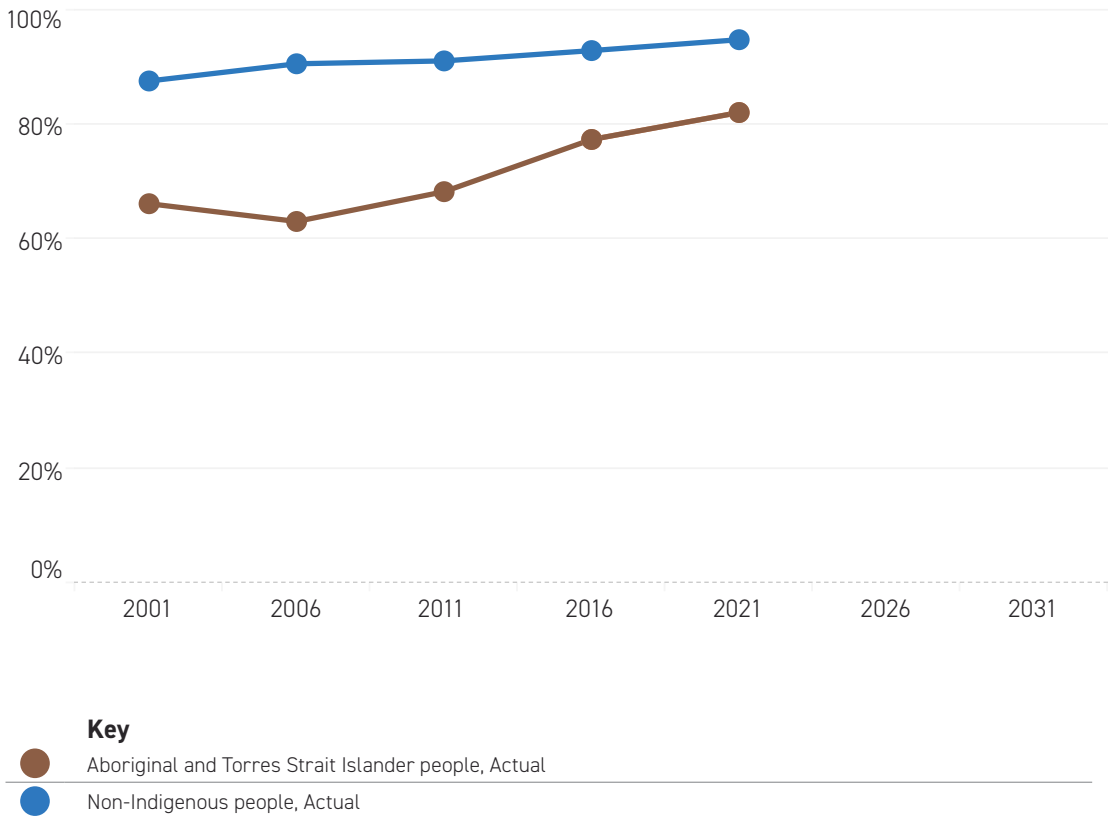
Socio-economic outcome area 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.

TARGET

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.

DATA

Figure CtG5.1 Attainment of Year 12 or equivalent, or a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, Actual, Linear regression estimates, Target and 1 more (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2021 which is the latest available data, in the Australian Capital Territory 82.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years had attained Year 12 or equivalent. This is an increase from 77.4% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since the 2016 (baseline year) an increase of 4.7% over that five-year period.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory 94.8% of non-Indigenous people aged 20-24 years had attained Year 12 or equivalent qualification.

TARGET 6

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

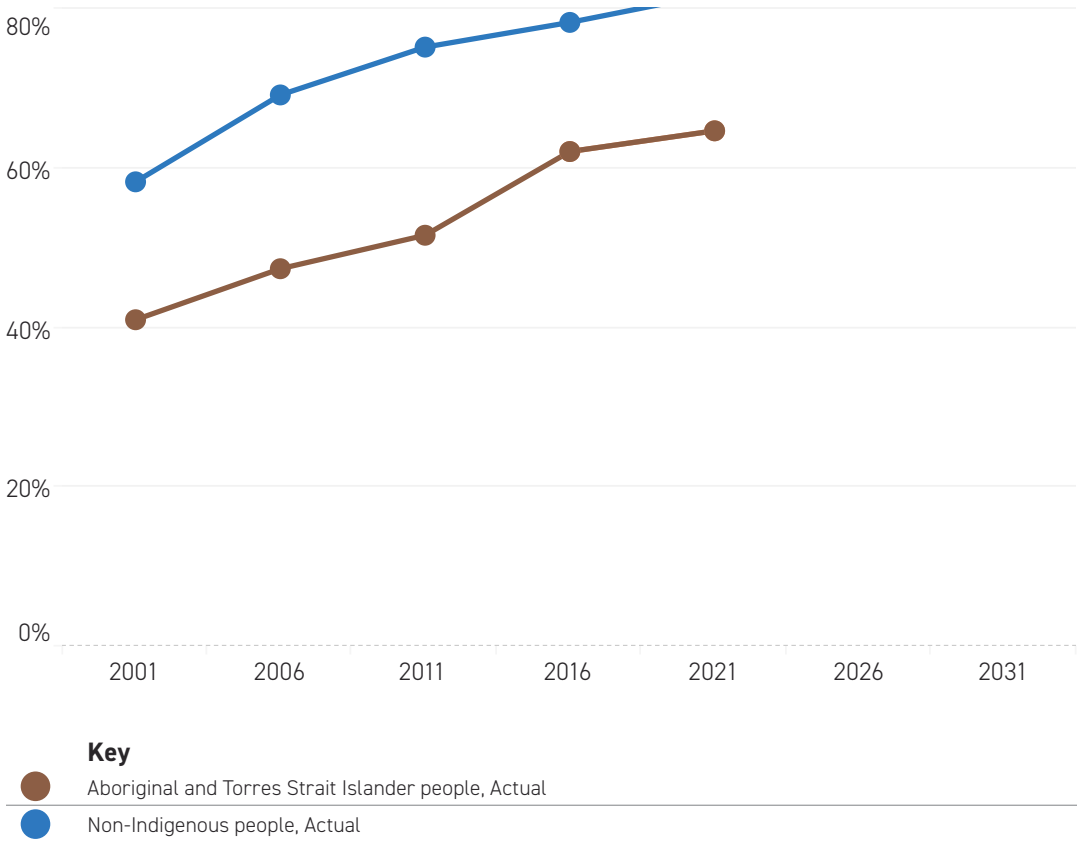
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways.

TARGET

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%.

DATA

Figure CtG6.1 Completion of non-school qualifications of AQF Certificate level III or above, 25-34 years old (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2021 which is the latest available data, in the Australian Capital Territory 64.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years had completed non-school qualifications of Certificate III or above. This is an increase from 62.1% in 2016 (baseline year), an increase of 2.6% over that five-year period.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory 81.9% of non-Indigenous people aged 25-34 years had completed non-school qualifications of Certificate III or above.



TARGET 7

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

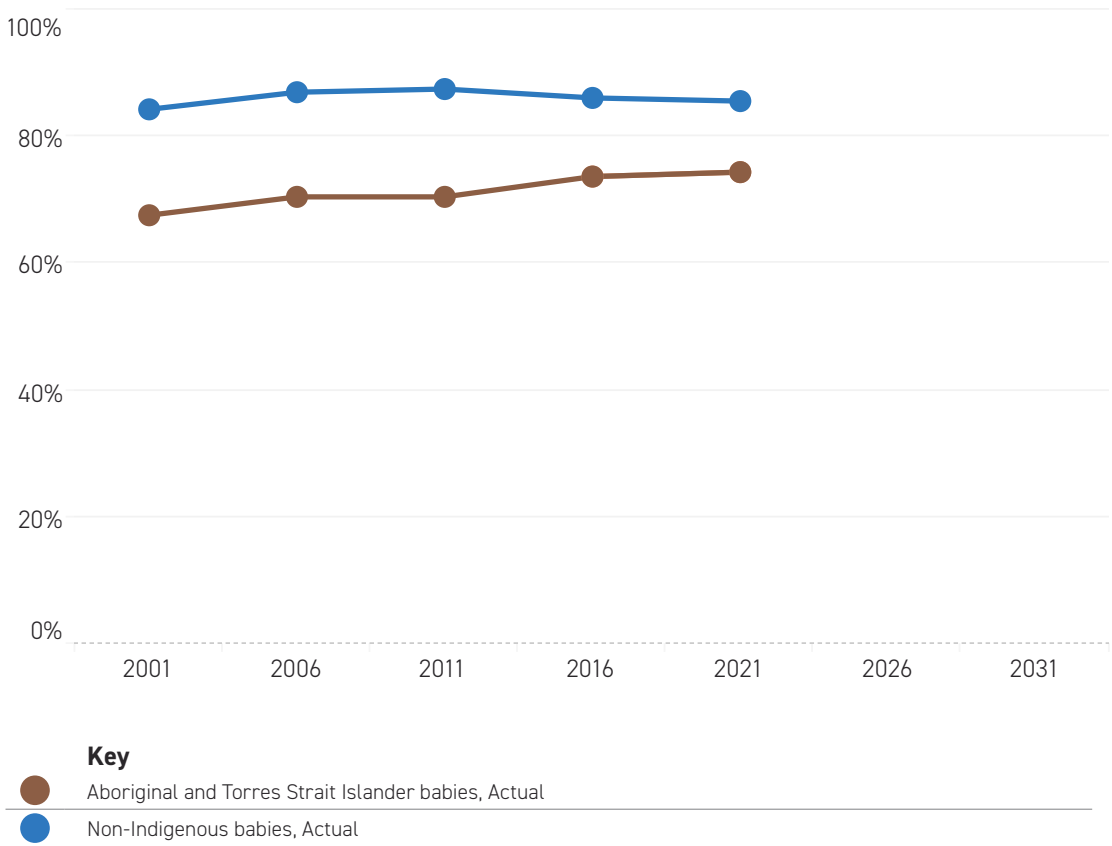
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.

TARGET

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%.

DATA

Figure CtG7.1 People aged 15-24 years who are fully engaged in employment, education or training (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory 74.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) were in employment, education or training. This is an increase from 73.7% in 2016 (the baseline year), an increase of 0.7% over the five-year period.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory 85.6% of non-Indigenous youth (15-24 years) were in employment, education or training.

TARGET 8

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

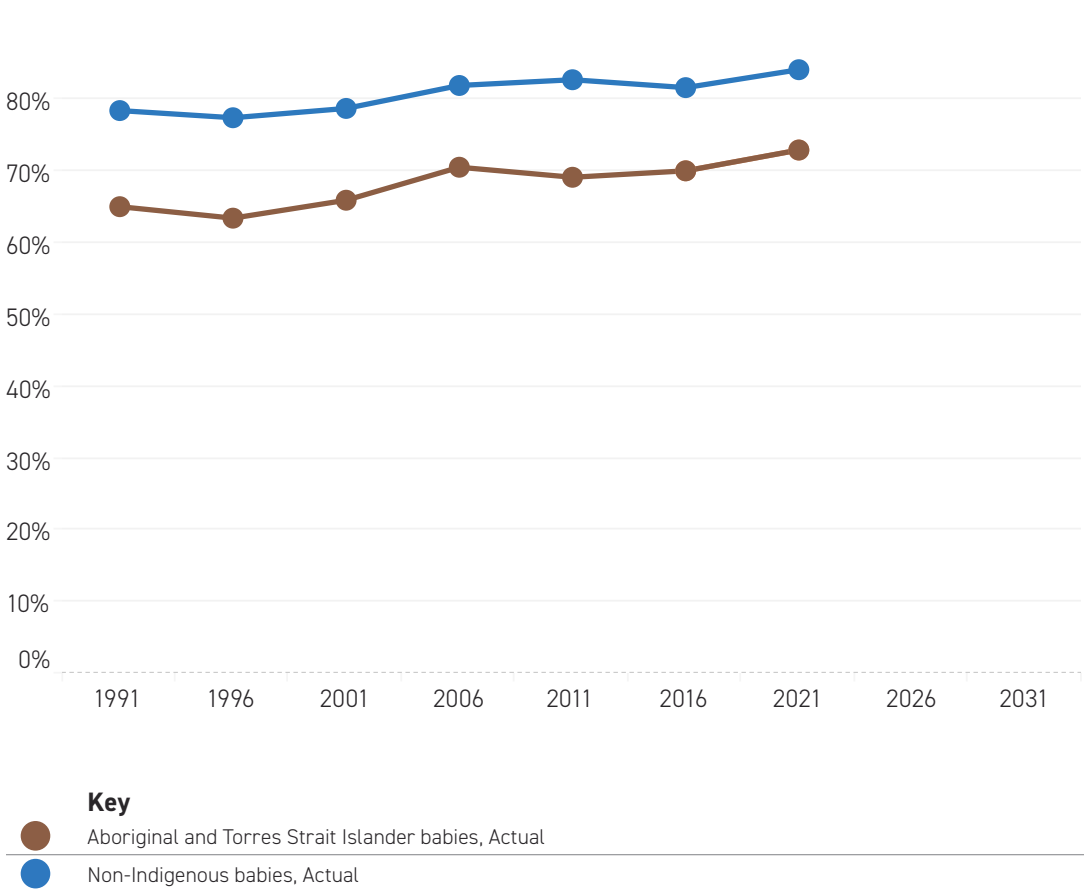
Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

TARGET

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed to 62%.

DATA

Figure CtG8.1 People aged 25-64 years who are employed (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory 73% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 were employed. This is an increase from 70.1% in 2016 (the baseline year), an increase of 2.9% over the five year period.

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory 84.2% of non-Indigenous people were employed.

TARGET 9A AND 9B

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

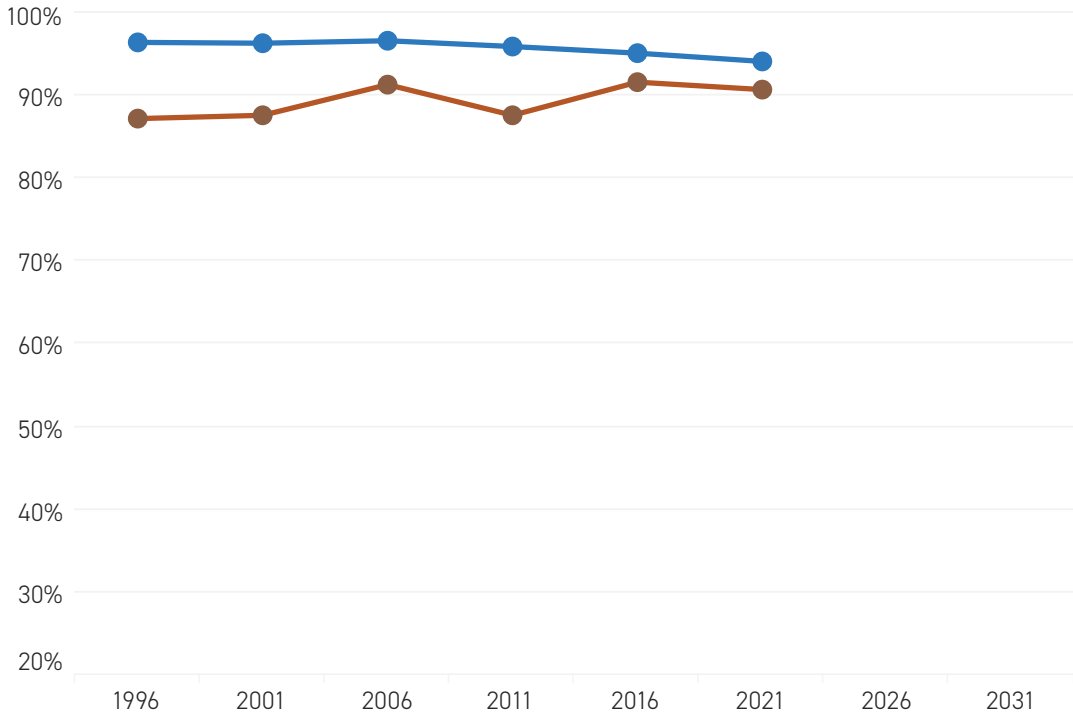
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.

TARGET 9A

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88%.

DATA

Figure CtG9A.1 People living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) dwellings (a)



Target 9B is not able to be reported against as there is no data source currently available which includes all required data elements.

Key

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Actual
- Non-Indigenous people, Actual

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In 2021 in the Australian Capital Territory, 90.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing (figure CtG9.1).

This is a decrease from 91.6% in 2016 (the baseline year).

TARGET 9B

By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households: within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard; in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a "town camp" or "town-based reserve").

NON-INDIGENOUS

In 2021, in the Australian Capital Territory, 94.1% of non-Indigenous people were living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing.

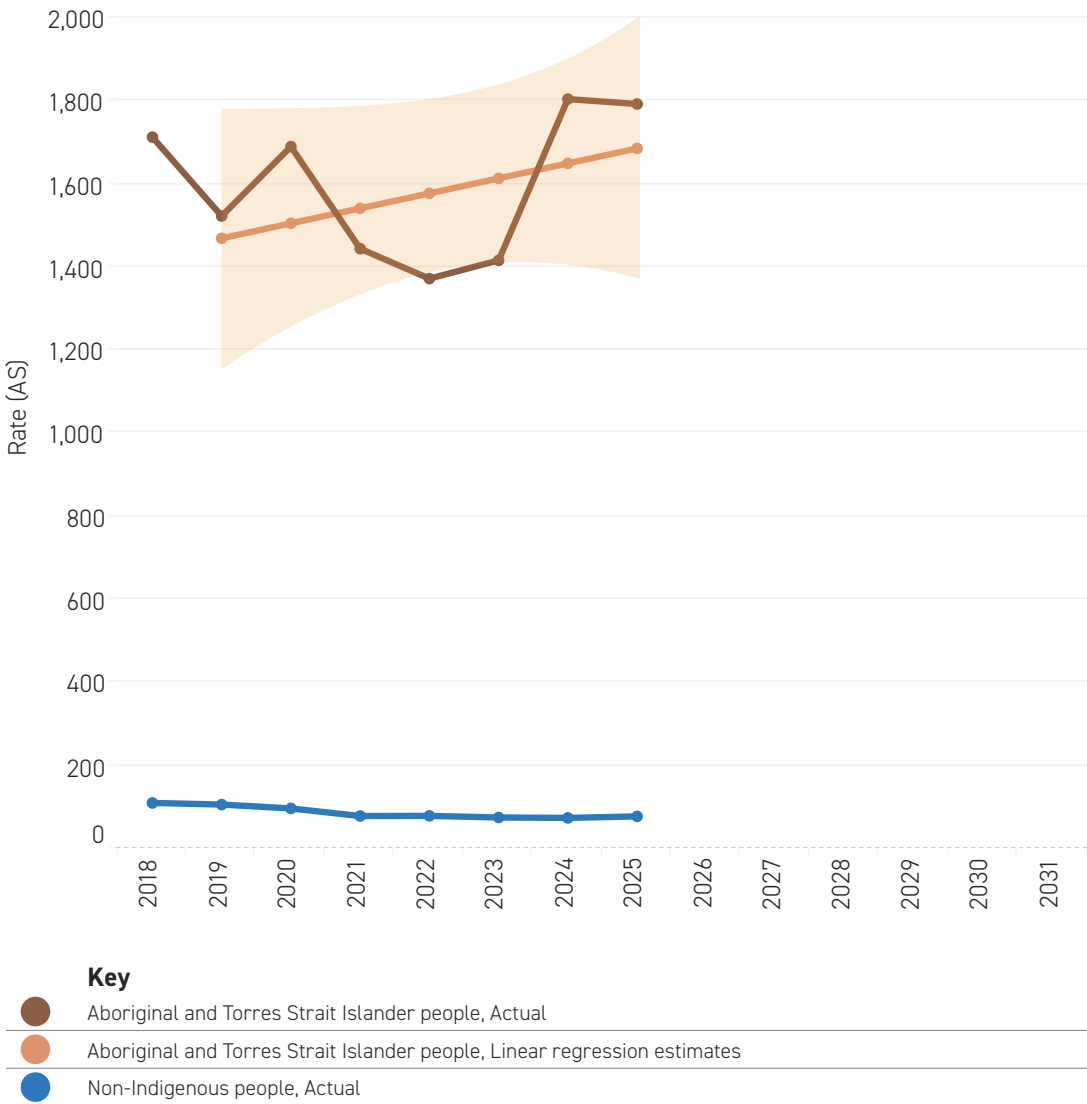
TARGET 10

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

DATA

Figure CtG10.1 Age-standardised imprisonment rate per 100,000 adults at 30 June (a)



Key

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Actual
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Linear regression estimates
- Non-Indigenous people, Actual

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

As at 30 June 2025, in the Australian Capital Territory the age-standardised rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners was 1,792.1 per 100,000 adult population.

The 2025 rate is a slight decrease from the previous year (1,804 per 100,000 adult population in 2024) and an increase from 1,522.5 per 100,000 adult population in 2019 (the baseline year).

TARGET

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15%.

NON-INDIGENOUS

As at 30 June 2025, in the Australian Capital Territory the age-standardised rate of non-Indigenous prisoners was 77.6 per 100,000 adult population.

TARGET 11

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

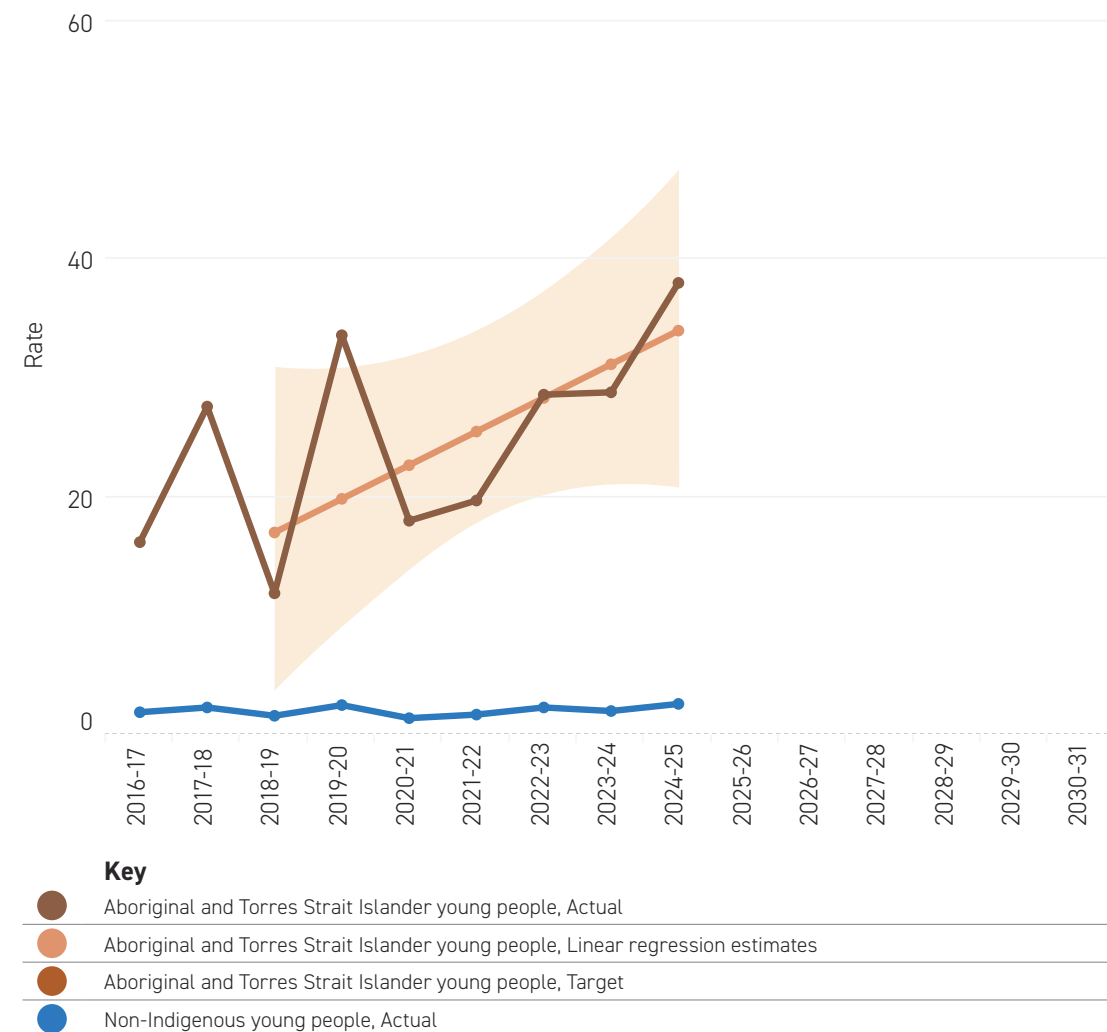
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

TARGET

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

DATA

Figure CtG11.1 Young people in detention on an average day, Rate per 10,000 young people (a), (b)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In the Australian Capital Territory in 2024-25, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10–17 years in detention on an average day was 38 per 10,000 young people in the population.

The 2024-25 rate is an increase from the previous year (28.6 per 10,000 in 2023-24) and an increase from 11.9 per 10,000 in 2018-19 (the baseline year).

NON-INDIGENOUS

In the Australian Capital Territory in 2024-25, the rate of non-Indigenous young people aged 10–17 years in detention on an average day was 2.6 per 10,000 young people in the population.

TARGET 12

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

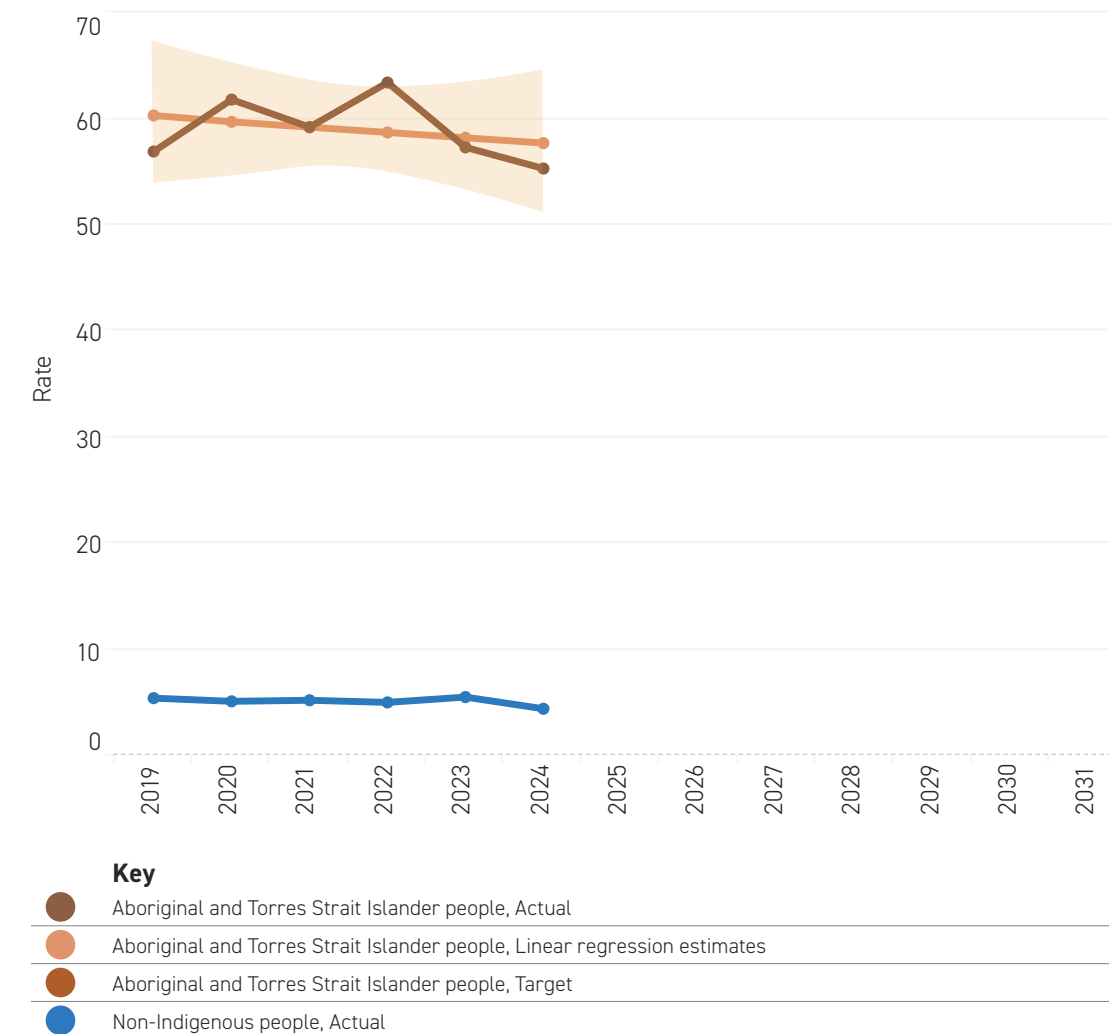
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.

TARGET

By 2031, reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0–17 years old) in out-of-home care by 45%.

DATA

Figure CtG12.1 Children aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care at 30 June, Rate per 1,000 children



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In the Australian Capital Territory in 2024, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care was 55.3 per 1,000.

The 2024 rate is below the rate in 2023 (57.3 per 1,000 children) it is also a decrease from 60.3 per 1,000 children in 2019 (the baseline year).

NON-INDIGENOUS

In the Australian Capital Territory in 2024, the rate of non-Indigenous children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care was 4.4 per 1,000.



TARGET 13

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

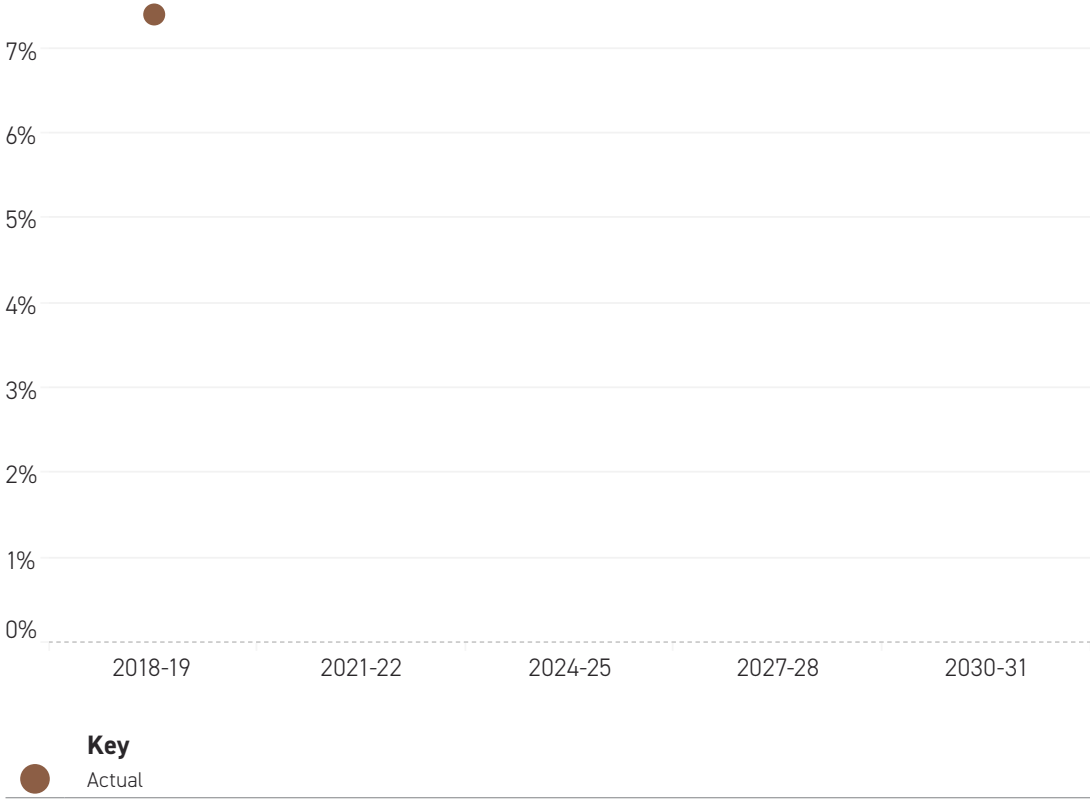
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.

TARGET

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.

DATA

Figure CtG13.1 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 15+ years old who Experienced domestic physical or face-to-face threatened physical harm (a)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

In the Australian Capital Territory in 2018-19, 7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15 years and over experienced domestic physical or face-to-face threatened physical harm.

There is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-19.

NON-INDIGENOUS

Data unavailable

TARGET 14

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.

TARGET

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

DATA

Data only available for NSW, VIC, QLD, WA, NT and SA. Data is only available for selected jurisdictions where Indigenous identification on deaths data is deemed accurate.

TARGET 15A AND 15B

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.

TARGET 15B

By 2030, a 15% increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.

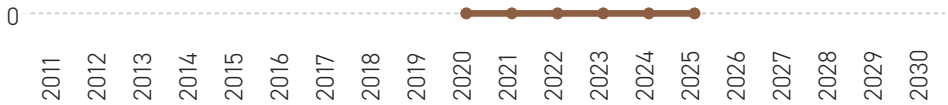
TARGET 15A

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

DATA

Figure CtG15.1 Area of Land mass and Sea country subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests at 30 June (a), (b)

Land mass in Sq Km



Sea country in Sq Km



Key

● Actual

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

There have not yet been any Native Title determinations for the Australian Capital Territory.

There has also been no processes established outside Native Title to recognise Aboriginal rights and interests in land.

The Australian Capital Territory is not subject to sea rights.

NON-INDIGENOUS

TARGET 16

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

TARGET

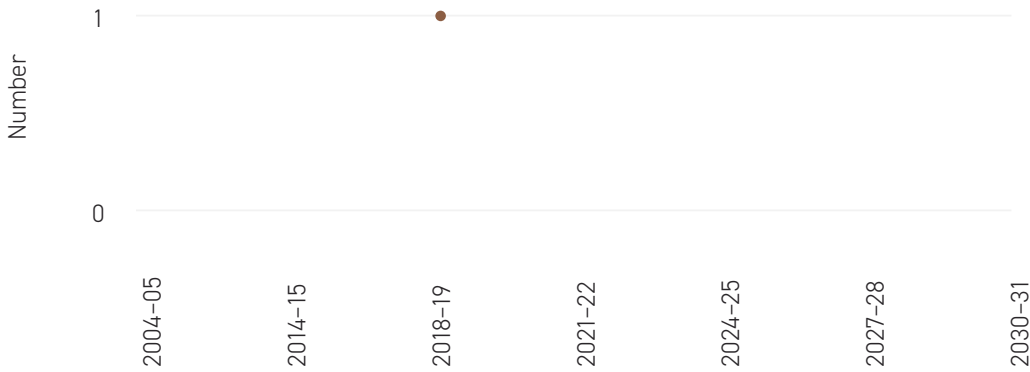
By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

DATA

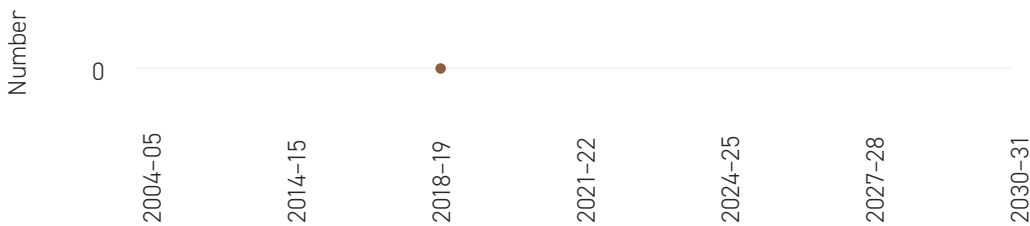
Figure CtG16.1 Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken and number of strong languages spoken (a)

There is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-19.

Languages Spoken



Strong Languages



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

There is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-19, where in the Australian Capital Territory there was 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language spoken, with zero strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken.

NON-INDIGENOUS

N/A

TARGET 17

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME AREA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.

TARGET

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

DATA

There is no new data for the ACT since the baseline year of 2014-15, where there was no data available in that year.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

There is no new data for the Australian Capital Territory since the baseline year of 2014-15, where there was no data available in that year.

NON-INDIGENOUS

N/A



APPENDIX B

Delivery on the Key Areas for Action Identified in the Sector Strengthening Plans

PRIORITY REFORM TWO: BUILDING THE COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED SECTOR.

Jurisdictional Actions

National Agreement Clause 47: Government Parties will include in their Jurisdictional annual reports information on action taken to strengthen the community-controlled sector based on the elements of a strong sector, as outlined in Clauses 118 and 119.

In their annual reports, jurisdictions, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, may prioritise implementation of different Sector Strengthening Plan actions at different times, depending on the requirements of the sector in a particular jurisdiction. Sector Strengthening Plans for Health, Early Childhood Development Care, Housing and Disability have been agreed in-principle by Joint Council. Ongoing annual reporting will also provide progress updates on jurisdiction's actions to implement the Disability Sector Strengthening Plan, as well as additional Sector Strengthening Plans as they are developed.

Progress on key ACT Government actions from the Early Childhood Care and Development, Health and Housing Sector Strengthening Plans is outlined below. Given the considerable changes to, and uncertainty of, the disability sector over the past years The ACT Government has

focused on prioritising implementation of Housing, Early Childhood Development Care and Health sector strengthening plans.

With the release of the NDIS review and Disability Royal Commission findings the ACT Government will work to ensure reforms stemming from these reviews are developed are culturally appropriate and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability including working with the commonwealth and other jurisdictions to establish a First Nations Disability Forum, releasing a revised disability strengthening plan, and development of foundational supports.

The ACT Government will also continue to focus on its existing commitments to develop services and infrastructure improvements for ACCOs in the areas intersecting with disability including the support of a new community-controlled housing organisation, a community-controlled service focusing on children, young people, and families and more accessible disability and domestic violence support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requiring support in these areas.



ACTION TABLE

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Sector Strengthening Plan

A. Workforce

Outcome: A dedicated and identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, with specialist skills and training relevant to the sector, with wage parity

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A1	Examine 2021 National ECEC Workforce Census data to develop an accurate picture of the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC workforce across Australia, and the workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC services.	Australian Government In collaboration with state and territory governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties	The 2024 National ECEC Workforce Census showed the nationally 2.7% of ECEC staff (excluding vacation care) identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The ACT result of 1.2% was below the national average but has increased by 0.7% since 2021.
A2	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander career development through secondary school career engagement, preparation of the workforce, on the job staff development, mentoring, career development and progression.	All governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties	In March 2025, the Aunty Agnes Shea Early Childhood Scholarships Program was launched. Delivered by the ACT Government in partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation. The program provides financial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake a Diploma or Degree qualification in early childhood education. In March 2025, the ACT Government launched the free Culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational practices professional learning, designed to support educators from a range of experience levels and from a variety of practice contexts. Developed by Community Early Learning Australia, the professional learning was informed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Panel to ensure it reflects local culture, meets the community’s needs, and supports cultural safety and integrity. The professional learning is ACT Teacher Quality Institute accredited. 226 educators have enrolled in training as of 16 September, and 86% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their confidence to deliver culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational learning experiences. These two deliverables are part of the ACT Government’s Valuing Educators, Values Children Workforce Strategy and Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT.
A3	Support for tertiary qualification pathway programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early educators in line with promising practice.	All governments and sector representatives.	Existing or to be determined by the parties	See A2.
A4	Development of long-term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development plan that identifies priorities and actions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development, in conjunction with the implementation of the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties	See A2. The ACT ECEC & OSHC Workforce Survey opened on 26 August 2025 and will close on 29 September 2025. A First Nations ECEC educators and leaders’ workshop will be held as part of the survey; it will be cofacilitated in culturally aware ways with consultants from the Nous Groups’ First Nations practice group. Survey respondents can choose to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, allowing for analysis of First Nations-specific data.
A5	Support, develop and resource community-based workforce development initiatives led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care services.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties	See A2.





No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A6	Scope current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and community-controlled child protection and family support workforce and projected workforce development needs in line with sector growth under Priority Reform 2 of the Closing the Gap Agreement.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties	The ACT Government does not currently have data on the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACCO child protection and family support workforce.
A7	Develop and implement strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and community-controlled sector workforce development.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties	As part of implementing the Long Yarn recommendations, the ACT Government will continue to work closely with ACCOs and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to build the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) workforce. The ACT DFSV Strategy will also consider how to build and strength the DFSV workforce, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.
A8	Develop the cultural competency and trauma responsiveness of the child and family sector workforce engaged through DSS grant funding.	Australian Government In collaboration with state and territory governments and sector representatives.	\$7.7 million over three years	In September 2024 the ACT Government released pre-program activities in anticipation of the release of a professional learning package for the ECEC sector in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational practices. The free online learning includes 4 self-paced modules and a suite of supporting resources: Module 1: The Starting Point - Connecting with your 'why' Module 2: Understanding the ancestral knowledge shared through history and culture Module 3: Building reciprocal relationship and making meaningful connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families Module 4: Culturally responsive practice. Further information can be found here: Culturally inclusive and responsive practices - ACT Government
A9	Assess the needs of and increase the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in the child and family sector (specific initiative led by DSS).	Australian Government In collaboration with state and territory governments and sector representatives.	\$3.2 million over two years	A commitment of Next Steps for Our Kids 2022-2030 (Next Steps), the ACT's strategy to strengthen families and keep children and young people safe, is the establishment and/or development of ACCOs to deliver early support and out of home care services and transitioning responsibility for case management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Following the completion of the procurement process for the Children, Young People and Families Panel in September 2024, services have progressively commenced, including Yerrabi Yerwang (ACCO) delivering early support (intensive family support, family preservation and restoration services) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families engaged with, or at risk of engaging with statutory child protection services.
A10	Priorities for action under Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 to be developed.	Community Services Ministers.	To be determined by the parties	The ACT Government continues to prioritise workforce capacity and capability through actions under Our Booris, Our Way and Next Steps for Our Kids 2022 – 2030. The ACT continues to be represented on the Working Group under Safe and Supported which includes progress on Action 4 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce) under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan, and Actions 3 (Workforce) and 8 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle – active efforts) under the First Action Plan.





B. Capital Infrastructure

Outcome: Capital infrastructure needs identified and consistent funding stream

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
B1	Identify capital infrastructure gaps for community controlled ECEC services and support capital infrastructure development through relevant programs to address gaps.	All governments, in consultation with sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government continues to include early learning centres as part of planning for all new primary school builds. There is a focus on increasing enrolments at existing Koori Preschool sites.
B2	Scope service gaps to inform roll out of future community-controlled integrated early years' services in locations of high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and high child vulnerability.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties	See B1.
B3	Identify and plan for opportunities to transfer land and building ownership to community-controlled early years services to support their long-term sustainability and security.	State and territory governments.	To be determined by the parties	See B1.
B4	Map and review existing infrastructure for multi-functional community hubs that can address the multiple psychosocial needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children delivered through community-controlled organisations. Consider opportunities to address infrastructure gaps and needs.	State and territory governments.	To be determined by the parties	This has not yet progressed in the ACT.

C. Service Delivery

Outcome: Clearly defined standards and requirements for service delivery

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	
C1	Undertake an assessment of the supporting materials and resources, and Authorised Officer training under the NQF and NQS to address gaps and ensure they provide quality, culturally appropriate and accessible supports to Authorised Officers and services for the regulation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.	All governments and sector representatives. ACECQA, in collaboration with all governments and sector representatives, for elements of the action within their areas of responsibility.	To be determined by the parties.	Consistent with the 2024 response, Authorised Officers working within the Quality Assurance Team of the ACT's Regulatory Authority, continue to upskill and ensure the provision of quality culturally appropriate regulatory practice. All new authorised officers undertake Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACEQOA) specific training and complete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence course that is provided by the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia. All Authorised Officers in the Regulatory Authority complete relevant training in Trauma Informed Practices, which is available to the wider education and care community. ACECQA also has a cultural competence course on the national learning management system for Authorised Officers. The curriculum documents Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and My Time Our Place (MTOP) include cultural responsiveness, with updated references to Aboriginal Ways of knowing and being. All education and care services were required to implement new curriculum documents from February 2024.





No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	
C2	Provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled organisations to operate within the scope of the NQF, where appropriate, and to meet and exceed standards against the NQS.	All governments and sector representatives, in collaboration with ACECQA.	Australian Government funding of \$1.5 million to the ACT under the Quality and Safety Training Package of safety reforms to strengthen the early childhood education and care sector. Further resources to be determined.	Yerrabi Yurwang is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Service who have expressed an interest in providing early childhood education and care. Authorised officers will support Yerrabi Yurwang through the process when they are in a position to apply. The ACT's Regulatory Authority continues to support the Jervis Bay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Continued support will be provided to the sole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island service in Jervis Bay to operate in scope of NQF.
C3	Support for Aboriginal community controlled Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector through expansion of existing programs and services (Note: Action overlaps significantly with E3 below).	All governments and sector representatives.	Connected Beginnings \$81.8 million Nationwide from the Australian Government to expand the Connected Beginnings program. CCCFR \$29.9 million Nationwide from the Australian Government to expand the Community Child Care Fund restricted expansion grant. State and territory support to be determined.	Funding of nine places for three-year-old children at Wreck Bay's Gudjahgahmiamia Multifunctional Aboriginal Community Service Early Learning Centre continues, providing them with access to two days per week of free early childhood education. Two Early Childhood Community Coordinators are supporting connections between educators at Gudjahgahmiamia and Jervis Bay School. Educators at Gudjahgahmiamia, Jervis Bay School, and Koori Preschools are eligible to access the free Culturally inclusive and responsive early childhood educational practices professional learning.
C4	Develop and implement strategies to build community-controlled sectors to respond to child and family needs at levels aligned to engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with child protection systems.	State and territory governments.	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government, through the Aboriginal Service Development Branch (ASD) in Community Services Directorate (CSD) supports and works in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, new and existing ACCOs and government partners to deliver on various aspects of the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector, including the commitments to meaningful proportional funding (Clause 55). Since its establishment in 2023, ASD has been working with ACCOs supporting their operational capability and capacity to meet community goals to deliver across the entire human services system. This includes holistic and culturally safe wraparound services, responding to individual ACCOs needs as determined by the individual ACCO and bringing partners together to collaboratively address challenges and explore opportunities. ASD is led by the ACCOs and their current and future service delivery scope and aspirations. ASD is leading various cross-directorate discussions aligned with the Commissioner's Guide and the experience gained from the out of home care approach to influence and advocate for proportional funding to be explored across the entire human services sector, specifically sharing the proportional funding model does not require additional financial resources. The ACT Government has committed \$3.86 million over four years to establish the ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund (AEEF) through the 2024-2025 Budget. The AEEF is designed to support the establishment, growth and sustainability of local ACCOs, consistent with the ACT Government commitments under the National Agreement Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector and the ACT Agreement. The AEEF provides an alternative funding source that is focused on supporting establishment, capacity and capability building activities for ACCOs, which may include resources to support ACCOs transition into the delivery of child protection and out of home care.
C5	Identify opportunities to progressively transfer authority in child protection to community-controlled organisations.	State and territory departments with responsibility for child protection and family support.	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government has committed to transitioning 100% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and carers to ACCOs. This commitment includes a further commitment to progressively re-allocating funding from the child protection and out of home care service system to support ACCOs in the delivery of these services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and carers. Following the completion of the procurement process for the Children, Young People and Families Panel in September 2024, services have progressively commenced, including Yerrabi Yerwang (ACCO) delivering early support (intensive family support, family preservation and restoration services) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families engaged with, or at risk of engaging with statutory child protection services.
C6	Improve multidisciplinary responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with multiple and complex needs.	Commonwealth Department of Social Services and state and territory governments and sector.	\$49 million funded entirely by the Commonwealth Government.	This is a Commonwealth led initiative funding community-led projects in regional, remote and metropolitan areas across Australia reflecting different community aspirations, operating environments and local priorities as long as it contributes to reducing the number of children in out-of-home care.



D. Governance

Outcome: Governance of individual organisations, including compliance with sector-specific regulatory systems

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
D1	Investigate mechanisms to consolidate and streamline reporting and compliance requirements for community- controlled integrated early years services.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	There are no community controlled integrated early years services offering ECEC in the ACT.
D2	National, state and territory community- controlled peak organisations provide direct supports for quality governance development, with government resources and support.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	Several ACT ACCOs have shared the need to explore the value a peak like body for the ACT community-controlled sector would offer. There are several human services sector peak bodies across the ACT, but there is not currently a peak like body supporting ACT ACCOs. Based on this feedback, \$100,000 was committed through the Healing and Reconciliation Fund in the 2024-25 ACT Budget for initial work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to investigate the benefits of establishing an ACCO peak body or other arrangement for the ACT. This work will be progressed in partnership with Community. Initial discussions have been held with the Elected Body and more substantial work will occur during the second half of 2025.
D3	Governance measures under Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031.	Community Services Ministers.	To be determined by the parties.	There have been ongoing discussions among Safe and Supported implementation partners about the need to streamline the Safe and Supported governance model to drive implementation progress. As such, the Department of Social Services and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children are proposing a streamlined governance model to increase efficiency and support greater accountability and oversight. A new model has been proposed to disband working groups to be replaced by huddles. This model is still in development and the ACT Government will continue to be represented on existing and future governance models.
D4	Investigate mechanisms to consolidate and streamline reporting and compliance requirements for community-controlled child protection and family support services.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	Currently there are no ACCOs delivering out of home care services in the ACT, however work is underway to support ACCO service delivery in this critical area. Structural, policy, practice and data reporting changes within CSD to better understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families remains a priority. Under the Children Young People and Families Panel a system wide Performance Management Framework will be introduced. This will support consolidation of some reporting requirements and promote reporting against meaningful outcomes for children, young people and families.
D5	Investigate the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led standards for the community-controlled sector in each state and territory.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	This has not yet progressed in the ACT.





E. Consistent Funding Model

Outcome: Across the early childhood care and development sector, funding for organisations is available/predictable and supports organisations to be responsive to the needs of those receiving the services

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
E1	Review early childhood education and care program and funding arrangements, including in Implementation Plans, to determine and implement changes needed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled ECEC services.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government continues to support Wreck Bay’s Gudjahgahmiamia Multifunctional Aboriginal Community Service Early Learning Centre to deliver the quality early childhood education for three-year-olds initiative, providing access to two days per week of free early childhood education. The Aunty Agnes Shea Early Childhood Scholarships Program is being delivered by the by the ACT Government in partnership with the ACCO, Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation. There is a focus on increasing enrolments at existing Koori Preschool sites. 2.1% of children accessing the free Three-year-old preschool program identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. There are no community controlled integrated early years services offering ECEC in the ACT.
E2	Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled service delivery.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	The ASD continues to work across government to implement Priority Reform 2: Building the Community Controlled Sector, including providing ongoing support to policy and program owners to implement Clause 55 of the Closing the Gap Agreement.
E3	Develop an agreed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled early childhood education and care sector definition and scope to inform efforts to build and strengthen the sector.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	See E1.
E4	Reduce service gaps and establish new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled integrated early years’ services in locations of high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and high child vulnerability.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	See E1.
E5	Develop jurisdictional plans for developing and resourcing community-controlled organisation functions aligned to the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.	State and territory child protection departments.	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government has committed \$3.86 million over 4 years to establish the ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund (AEEF) through the 2024-2025 Budget. The AEEF is designed to support the establishment, growth and sustainability of local ACCOs, consistent with the ACT Government commitments under the National Agreement Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector and the ACT Agreement. The AEEF provides an alternative funding source that is focused on supporting establishment, capacity and capability building activities for ACCOs, which may include resources to support ACCOs transition into the delivery of child safety services aligned with the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.
E6	Assess the needs of and increase involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in delivery in Commonwealth child and family sector programs (specific initiative led by DSS).	Australian Government Department of Social Services.	\$3.2 million over two-years funded entirely by the Commonwealth Government.	The Act Government, through the ASD Branch, supports and works in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, new and existing ACCOs and government partners to deliver on various aspects of the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector. Since establishment in early 2023, the ASD Branch has been working with ACCOs supporting their operational capability and capacity to meet community goals to deliver across the entire human services system. This includes holistic and culturally safe wraparound services, responding to individual ACCOs needs as determined by the individual ACCO and bringing partners together to collaboratively address challenges and explore opportunities. To support this partnership approach, ASD has fostered a positive relationship with Australian Government entities to enable increased sharing and exploration of Commonwealth initiatives. For example: > ASD monitors the Australian Government’s Grant Connect opportunities and shares relevant opportunities with local ACCOs, and offers assistance to apply; and > ASD facilitates meetings between Australian Government representatives and local ACT ACCOs to build positive relationship and explore opportunities.





No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
E7	In line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, increase the proportion of services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.	All Governments	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government funds five ACCOs and Aboriginal-led organisations for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence responses, with almost \$5 million invested between 2023-2027. The ACT Government has committed to allocating a meaningful proportion of the Safer Families Levy funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led programs, particularly ACCOs that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic, family and sexual violence. The ASD continues to work across government to implement Priority Reform 2: Building the Community Controlled Sector, including providing ongoing support to policy and program owners to implement Clause 55 of the Closing the Gap Agreement.

F. Peak Body

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations which deliver common services are supported by a peak body

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
F1	Develop a national and state/territory intermediary model to strengthen and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ECEC community- controlled services.	Sector-led action in collaboration with: National Indigenous Australians Agency Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills, and Employment State and Territory Governments.	Sector Strengthening Joint Funding Pool (pilot establishment and evaluation) to be supplemented by additional investment by other relevant portfolios and philanthropy. Australian Government, state and territory Departments of Education.	The ACT is also an active member of the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership with the express aim to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in this area.
F2	Develop a plan to support and enable community-led development of a peak body in each state and territory.	State and Territory Governments where peaks are not yet established or in development (Western Australia, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.	To be determined by the parties.	Several ACT ACCOs have shared the need to explore the value a peak like body for the ACT community-controlled sector would offer. There are several human services sector peak bodies across the ACT, but there is not currently a peak like body supporting ACT ACCOs. Based on this feedback, \$100,000 was committed through the Healing and Reconciliation Fund in the 2024-25 ACT Budget for initial work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community to investigate the benefits of establishing an ACCO peak body or other arrangement for the ACT. This work will be progressed in partnership with Community. Initial discussions have been held with the Elected Body and more substantial work will occur during the second half of 2025.
F3	Support adequate and sustainable funding for existing peak bodies.	All governments in consultation with sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	See F2.
F4	Develop a strong evidence base for best practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled service delivery through peak bodies.	All governments and sector representatives.	To be determined by the parties.	See F2.



ACTION TABLE

Health Sector Strengthening Plan

A. Consistent Funding Model

Outcome: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector is further strengthened through reliable funding streams to provide holistic, evidence-based and culturally safe services

No.	Action	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A1	Develop a needs-based funding model in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Australian Government State and Territory Governments	To be determined by the parties.	The ACT Government has committed additional funding to support Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services full time presence in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and continues to work in partnership with the CHS' Justice Health Service and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to develop and implement the: > model of care at the AMC > ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–28. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Commissioning Sector is in the Discover phase of the commissioning cycle. In 2023, the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) refreshed the approach to commissioning. Under the Refreshed Approach, commissioning subsectors were realigned into one of three commissioning streams: 1. Intensive Commissioning, 2. Flexible Alignment and 3. Supported Capability. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Commissioning sector was realigned into the Flexible Alignment Stream. This resulted in funded service providers within this sector, whose agreements were due to expire, securing extensions to their current agreements via a transition to a new deed of grant. Over the life of this deed of grant, ACTHD is working with our funded providers to support the building of commissioning capability, support innovation in service delivery and support the transition to outcomes monitoring and reporting. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnerships Team (Health Partnerships Team), Policy, Partnerships and Programs Division, lead the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Commissioning Sector within ACTHD. Over the past two years, the Health Partnerships Team has been busy: > Engaging with our funded organisations and community stakeholders to better understand the service landscape, community needs and service gaps, First Nations strengths and resilience and contextual challenges. > Supporting other commissioning sectors and subsectors to ensure First Nations perspectives are heard, considered and reflected in commissioning documents, priorities and outcomes, particularly as they relate to health and social and emotional wellbeing. > Collating data and information to inform a Discovery Discussion Paper and future commissioning Needs Assessment. The ACTHD community sector is block funded through procurement or grant arrangements. Contracts stipulate specific outputs and/or outcomes for First Nation's services.
A2	Re-prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health program funds being directed to mainstream non-government organisations, towards the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector. This includes current and new investments in mental health, drug and alcohol, aged care, and emerging health priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Australian Government State and Territory Governments	Nil additional financial cost.	Construction is under way on a new alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. Construction is expected to be complete in April 2026. It will be run by Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services. ACT Health Directorate is working on finalising a direct sale process, which will provide Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services with a long-term community lease over the site in Watson. Through the draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for the mental health commissioning process, the ACTHD is proposing a dedicated funding stream for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health services. Under this stream, a grant process with ACCOs will be undertaken to guide a co-design with community for specialist community non-government organisation (NGO) mental health and wellbeing services in the ACT. In addition, this stream will consider options to progressively direct proportional funding for mainstream community NGO mental health services to partner with ACCOs or be shifted towards ACCOs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The outcome of this stream is subject to the finalisation of the SIP.
A3	Optimise utilisation of Medicare in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.	Australian Government Department of Health NACCO Sector Support Organisations	\$8.7 million (estimated) Funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and delivered by NACCHO to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across Australia.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action. Note: ACT is a small jurisdiction with only Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and Yerrabi Yurwang providing primary health services as Community Controlled Health Organisations.





B. Workforce

Outcome: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector achieves its own workforce targets including for recruitment and retention in clinical and non-clinical positions in conjunction with implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
B1	Invest in a permanent, highly skilled, and nationally credentialed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health workforce.	NACCHO Sector Support Organisations Australian Government State and Territory Governments	\$1.25 million over three years for the continuation of the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Health Academy program in the ACT to increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce, improve cultural safety.	The Environmental Health Officer team within the Health and CSD has participated in multiple career events targeting secondary school students between May to August 2025 to promote the Environmental Health Officer profession. The Environmental Health Officer team has also engaged with Indigenous Allied Health Australia to explore options for offering practice placements with Environmental Health Officers for students of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy.
B2	Build community-controlled RTO capacity and improve the quality of RTO training within or linked to community-controlled health organisations.	Australian Government State and Territory Governments	To be determined.	This action is likely to be determined through the ACT Agreement and the development of ACT Government approaches to build a greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the broader ACT health workforce. This may include working with the ACCO sector if there is interest to build RTO capability. National ACCOs based in Canberra have indicated that this may be an area they will pursue and CSD will remain engaged in any conversations and next steps.
B3	Convene a Clinical Workforce Taskforce to analyse and systemically address the full range of pertinent industrial, professional, socio-economic and employment impediments affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.	Australian Government Department of Health NACCHO Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
B4	Resource permanent health care pathways co-designed in jurisdictions through partnerships between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector, its Sector Support Organisation, relevant national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce peak bodies, governments, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, and vocational training/tertiary institutions.	Australian Government State and Territory Governments NACCHO Sector Support Organisations Member services and partners as negotiated.	To be determined.	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) Health Workforce Collaborative (the Collaborative) has been established to provide leadership, professional and cultural guidance throughout the development and implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Action Plan. This will ensure that First Nations voices are elevated, respected and prioritised in actioning the ACT commitment to the <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031</i> (strategic implementation area 2.1) and the Closing the Gap priority reform areas. Key ACT and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders, educators and practitioners were invited to be part of the Collaborative. Membership will be reviewed as required and determined by the First Nations Health Workforce Collaborative. Invitations for this first meeting were offered to the ACT National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Affiliate, Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA), Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM), Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), National Association for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP), local tertiary education providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals, and the Canberra Health Services Elected Body member with responsibility for the Health Portfolio. The Collaborative met for the first time on 15 April 2025. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) Health Workforce Collaborative has continued to meet. The second meeting was held on 7 August 2025. A third meeting has been tentatively scheduled for November 2025.





C. Capital Infrastructure

Outcome: Provision of health care by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services occurs in modern, accredited physical facilities equipped to offer telehealth and other digitally enabled services irrespective of location or socioeconomic status of the community

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
C1	Fund major and medium-size capital and physical infrastructure including permanent clinic builds and large-scale renovations, mobile clinics, maintenance, repairs, and extensions to ensure facilities meet building codes and accreditation standards.	Australian Government State and Territory Governments	\$254.4 million over four years (as announced) Closing the Gap (CTG) health infrastructure measure, announced by the Australian Government in August 2021, is designed to enhance, build, and renovate Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) infrastructure across Australia.	The ACT Government has made significant investments in community capital and physical infrastructure, including: First Nations AOD Residential Rehabilitation Facility Construction is under way on an alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in Watson. This facility will promote rehabilitation and recovery in a culturally safe and inclusive environment. Construction is due to be complete in April 2026. It will be run by Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services. Ownership of the site for the facility currently resides with the ACT Government, however ACTHD is working on finalising a direct sale of the land to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, which will provide them with a long-term community lease over the site. Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) infrastructure The NBHF is in good condition. A procurement process is under way for the construction of a new machinery and vehicle shed for the NBHF. Construction is due for completion in mid-2026.
C2	Fund staff accommodation required to ensure regional and remote communities have the stable health workforce they require with equitable access to staff accommodation for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.	Australian Government Department of Health WA Government	\$254.4 million over four years includes funds for clinical staff accommodation only. Non-clinical staff – to be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
C3	Fund reliable IT capacity and connectivity for electronic clinical information systems, telehealth, community engagement, and client connection with their community-controlled health services in every region (urban, regional, and remote) and equitable access to other technological and digital innovations to improve culturally safe, cost-effective service deliver.	Australian Government Department of Health	\$254.5 million over four years (see A8).	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.





D. Service Delivery

Outcome: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector continues to lead, innovate, expand and excel in delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
D1	Rectify overburden of activity reporting to governments to allow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled health sector to focus on outcomes while maintaining accountability.	All jurisdictions	Nil additional financial costs (and release of resources currently diverted to unnecessary reporting).	The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is actively collaborating with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to reform and streamline reporting requirements, aiming to reduce administrative burden without compromising program accountability. Recognising the need for culturally safe and sustainable partnerships, ACTHD is transitioning from frequent, often onerous reporting cycles to a more practical framework of six-monthly and annual reporting. This shift acknowledges the capacity constraints often faced by ACCHOs, and the importance of allowing more time and resources to be directed toward service delivery, community engagement, and health outcomes, rather than excessive compliance. This new reporting arrangement is being co-designed with ACCHOs to ensure it reflects their operational realities while upholding transparency and accountability in programmatic performance. The reduction in reporting frequency is part of a broader strategy aligned with Priority Reform 1 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which emphasises formal partnerships and shared decision-making. This partnership model represents a significant step toward decolonising health system practices and embedding genuine self-determination in the way programs are funded, monitored, and improved. ACTHD has met a number of times, since May 2025, with two ACCOs to progress this work. Further discussions are required before formalising any agreed changes. The inclusion of Commonwealth partners is being pursued as per the needs and requests of the ACCOs.
D2	Develop a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research agenda led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to secure funding for evidence generation the sector has prioritised.	NACCHO Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
D3	Leverage buying power and economies of scale in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector nationally with minimum procurement targets to increase purchases /contracts from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and enterprises which train and employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	NACCO Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
D4	Fund health workforce leadership development programs and initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in or aspiring to work in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector to maximize service impact and health outcomes.	NACCHO	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.





E. Governance

Outcome: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector meets the highest standards of corporate, fiduciary and clinical governance

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
E1	Transition government-managed primary health clinics in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia to community-controlled comprehensive primary health care services and identify locations in all jurisdictions where new community-controlled primary health care services are required to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Australian Government Department of Health NACCHO Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.
E2	Fund Board corporate governance programs including needs assessment, capability development and support including independent expertise where required for CEO recruitment and essential criteria for CEOs across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector.	NACCHO Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.

F. Peak Body

Outcome: Increased representation and shared decision-making through structural reform to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies function as equal partners with governments to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
F1	Expand independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on government and non-government bodies and other decision-making entities whose decisions affect the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Australian Government Department of Health NACCHO Sector Support Organisations	To be determined.	Not applicable, this is a Commonwealth led national action/Sector led action.





ACTION TABLE

Housing Sector Strengthening Plan

A. Workforce

Outcome: A dedicated and identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, with specialist skills and training relevant to the Sector, with wage parity

No.	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
A1	Scope current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and support services and determine projected workforce development needs in line with sector growth under Priority Reform Two and Target 9 of the Agreement with scope to leverage existing processes through working with the Coalition of Peaks. This will support a long-term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development plan that identifies priorities and actions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development, in conjunction with the implementation of the NATSIHA Workforce Strategy (NWS).	Coalition of Peaks, NATSIHA, NIAA, all governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jurisdictional peaks and yet to be identified partners.	To be determined.	Yeddung Mura continues to provide short term occupancy support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men through the Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP). The TAP provides accommodation for four occupants exiting the Alexander Maconochie Centre who would otherwise not have suitable accommodations options. The contract with Yeddung Mura is due to expire in September 2025 with one extension remaining which will take the contract to March 2026. Procurement planning for a new contract is ongoing including a new approach to conducting a market review. In 2024, Housing ACT transferred 12 social housing properties to be managed by Yerrabi Yurwang for delivery of tenancy support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The transition was successfully delivered on 1 February 2025. Housing Assistance is actively working with Yerrabi Yurwang to develop the capacity of its workforce to independently deliver housing support to its client base. The transition of this program to an ACCO has increased the employment capacity of the Yerrabi Yurwang workforce. Lessons learned: During the contract negotiation stage it is vital to ensure all parties have the same understanding of contracted details, outcomes, and program deliverables. The ACT Government is still negotiating the Implementation Plan for the Closing the Gap initiative under the National Skills Agreement. CMTEDD is engaging with areas of Government to ensure appropriate consultation with community can be conducted. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be a priority cohort under the ACT's Free TAFE program. Free TAFE was expanded as of January 2025 to make more places available in building and construction courses. Classes will commence for Yurauna at CIT Bruce in Semester 1 2026.
A2	Develop the cultural capability of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and mainstream housing sector workforces.	NATSIHA, Australian Government in collaboration with state and territory governments and sector representatives.	To be determined.	The ACT Government, through Housing ACT is continuing to focus efforts on improving cultural competency in 2024-25 and is working to increase staff attendance at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness (SBS) training to above the 70% attendance achieved in June 2024. Housing ACT is undertaking an evaluation of Responses to the Request for Quote for Homelessness Sector Training – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness / Responsiveness Training. This training will support workers in the homelessness sector better respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's needs. Housing ACT has focussed efforts on improving cultural competency and maturity throughout 2023-24 and into 2024-25. As of 30 June 2024, 70 per cent of staff had undertaken the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness (SBS) training. In addition to this Senior Executives and senior leadership have undertaken cultural connections training and other staff have participated in a truth telling on country workshop. Housing ACT is developing a recruitment plan to increase the workforce with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who bring lived experience and cultural insight to Housing Assistance's workforce and promote a culturally safe customer experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Yerrabi Yurwang are the successful applicant in the procurement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness/ responsiveness training which will be delivered to the sector prior to July 2025.
A3	Increase the number of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people with disability employed with ATSI CCHOs.	NATSIHA, FPDN, Australian Government (new Disability Employment Support Model) in collaboration with state and territory governments.	To be determined.	Three ACCOs have retained registration as community housing providers in the ACT. The ACT Disability Strategy 2024- 2033 First Action Plan 2024-2026 commits the ACT Government to strengthening the voice and decision-making of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability by supporting ACCOs to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services supporting First Nations people with disability. The ACT Government will work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and disability communities to scope and deliver on this commitment.





B. Capital Infrastructure

Outcome: Capital infrastructure needs identified and consistent funding stream

No	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
B1	Develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing data collection project.	NATSIHA, jurisdictional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing peaks, all government.	To be determined.	The ACT Government has established a Closing the Gap Housing Partnership Group to agree and implement an Outcomes Framework and Statement of Assurance focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to supplement the National Outcomes Framework under the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (NASHH). The Partnership Group has established a short-term Data Work Group, which will be driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community priorities on what measures will be included under the Outcomes Framework to track performance against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social housing and homelessness commitments under NASHH.
B2	Build the capability and sustainability of ATSICCHOs through growth and ability to provide new housing. This could potentially include: A Housing Stock Transfer Program (property management and title). In the short-term states consider property management transfers of viable stock to ATSICCHOs with appropriate stock and management capacity for long-term leases. In the medium to long-term, and where there has been demonstrated success by specific ATSICCHOs, consider title transfers.	NATSIHA, state and territory governments, jurisdictional peaks and sector representatives.	To be determined.	In June 2025, the ACT Government announced SEARMS was successful in receiving financial assistance from the Affordable Housing Project Fund for a site in Gungahlin for affordable housing. There was strong interest in the EOI process from the community housing sector, including ACCOs, which integrated funding support with the release of two community housing sites. Responses from ACCO CHPs and/or ACCO-led consortia were prioritised by weighting responses favourably during the evaluation and providing up to 100 per cent of the land purchase price to successful ACCO CHPs and/or ACCO-led consortia. While some projects were announced in the 2025-26 Budget, the full range of individual projects will be announced once the contract negotiations are finalised. Consultation with ACCOs was a key element of this work to understand their plans and ambitions through surveys, meetings and support to navigate the process, including provision of a dedicated concierge.
B3	Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisations who are accessing, able to access and are aware of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) funding programs.	All governments, NATSIHA in partnership the Indigenous jurisdictional peaks and NHFIC.	To be determined.	ACT Government is continuing to work with housing ACCOs on applications for federal funding for crisis and transitional housing. Marymead CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn (MCCG) in collaboration with Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) and Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation (Yerrabi) applied for the NHIF Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program grant round (CTAP) in November 2024. The application was successful and three properties from the project will be directly controlled by an ACCO. ACT Government is supporting the ACCO sector to identify potential projects that may be eligible for the forthcoming National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional Housing (NHIF-CT) funding round. The ACT Government is encouraging ACCOs to apply NHIF-CT grants and loans to deliver housing solutions for vulnerable Australians, including women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and youth at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. ACCOs participated in a Housing Australia information session about NHIF-CT on 20 March 2025 and CSD and Treasury have since met with ACCOs to further explore these opportunities and identify projects to maximise the \$25 million funding.





C. Service delivery

Outcome: Clearly defined standards and requirements for service delivery

No	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
C1	Increase the capability and sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisations to be able to grow their housing and homelessness service delivery capability.	Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments, NATSIHA, jurisdictional peaks and sector representatives.	To be determined.	The ACT Government has identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness, especially women and children escaping domestic violence, and youth, as a priority cohort in the upcoming NHIF-CT round. Engagements have been conducted with the sector on this upcoming opportunity to support any applications for crisis and transitional accommodation places to be controlled by an ACCO. Yeddung Mura continues to provide short term occupancy support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men through the Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP). The TAP provides accommodation for four occupants exiting the Alexander Maconochie Centre who would otherwise not have suitable accommodation options. The program also includes case management for occupants. Since conception in May 2020, 30 clients have transitioned through the TAP. The contract with Yeddung Mura to deliver the TAP has been extended until May 2026. Procurement planning to support the delivery of this program beyond June 2026 is underway and is subject to future budget processes.
C2	Create best practice models using ATSICCHOs who have successfully and organically grown their organisation to provide effective services to meet the social and emotional well-being of their tenants and communities.	NATSIHA, jurisdictional peaks, the Sector and relevant jurisdictional government agencies.	To be determined.	Housing ACT worked collaboratively with Yerrabi Yurwang, Everyman Australia, and Marymead Catholic Care Canberra and Goulburn (MCCG) to successfully transfer 12 social housing properties to be managed by Yerrabi Yurwang (an ACCO) for the delivery of tenancy support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

D. Governance

Outcome: Governance of individual organisations, including compliance with sector-specific regulatory systems

No	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
D1	Improve the capacity and skills of existing board members.	NATSIHA, jurisdictional peaks and state and territory governments.	To be determined.	There is no specific training available in the ACT, however the staff of the ACT Regulator can offer bespoke assistance as requested. The ACT Government has committed \$3.86 million over four years to establish the AEEF through the 2024-2025 Budget. The AEEF is focused on supporting establishment, capacity and capability building activities for ACCOs, which may include capacity and skills development of ACCO Boards in full or individual Board Members.
D2	Build capability of ATSICCHOs through encouraging and supporting ATSICCHOs to apply for community housing registration.	NATSIHA, jurisdictional peaks and state and territory governments.	To be determined.	The ACT Regulator is currently working with one of the registered ACCO providers in undertaking a standard compliance review. The review will seek to demonstrate it is responsive in delivering housing assistance to tenants, effective in managing housing assets, committed in undertaking community engagements and is a well governed, well managed and financially sustainable organisation. The other two ACCOs are scheduled for review in the 2025-26 reporting period. The ACT Government has committed \$3.86 million over four years to establish the AEEF through the 2024-2025 Budget. The AEEF is designed to support the establishment, growth and sustainability of local ACCOs, consistent with the ACT Government commitments under the <i>National Agreement Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector</i> and the ACT Agreement. The AEEF provides an alternative funding source that is focused on supporting establishment, capacity and capability building activities for ACCOs, which may include assisting ACCOs to apply for National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) registration.
D3	Consider options to expand existing community housing registration processes to better cover and address the requirements of the Sector and ATSICCHOs.	State and territory governments.	To be determined.	A face-to-face workshop with ACCOs in Sydney in February 2025 was spearheaded by the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) Registrars with the aim of understanding the barriers to registration and compliance work to further support ACCOs. One of the outcomes of the workshop was that the NRSCH NSW Regulator shared tenancy related policies and procedures developed to assist ACCOs in putting together their own policies & procedures. The ACT Regulator will adapt these policies & procedures for ACT ACCO providers seeking registration.





E. Consistent Funding Model

Outcome: Across the Aboriginal & Torres Strait housing sector, funding for organisations is available/predictable and supports organisations to be responsive to the needs of those receiving the services

No	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
E1	Develop guidelines and support material to enable Housing and Homelessness organisations to become financially sustainable.	NATSIHA and all jurisdictional peaks.	To be determined.	The ACT Government has established a Closing the Gap (CtG) Housing Partnership Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing (Partnership Group) co-chaired by the ACT Government and the Elected Body. The Partnership Group will coordinate and progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing policies, initiatives and programs and support the delivery of relevant ACT Government commitments. The Partnership Group's objectives will align with the NASHH, CtG frameworks and the ACT Agreement, promoting a unified approach to housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

F. Peak Body

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations which deliver common services are supported by a peak body

No	ACTION	Responsibilities	Resources	Report on progress to date
F1	Explore and determine options for the ongoing sustainability of NATSIHA.	NATSIHA, Commonwealth Government, State/ Territory Governments and jurisdictional peaks.	To be determined.	ACT Government will work in partnership with NATSIHA, the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions to explore options for the ongoing sustainability of NATSIHA. ACT is working with Community to develop an Aboriginal Community Controlled housing sector and currently does not have a jurisdictional peak housing body.
F2	Build capacity of NATSIHA to support ATSICCHOs to achieve the relevant jurisdictional community housing registration.	State and territory governments, peak bodies and the Sector.	To be determined.	ACT ACCOs are actively partnering with other ACT registered providers to learn & see the actual work they do in managing tenancy and asset management. The ACT Regulator continues to offer bespoke mentoring arrangements with ATSICCHOs. This is based on the organisation's individual needs and supported by the Evidence Guidelines for NRSCH Regulatory Code.

Notes:

Under the Administrative Arrangements that came into effect on 8 November 2024, Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) was allocated accountability for the delivery of Tier 1 and Tier 2 infrastructure projects from other directorates. As defined under the Capital Framework, Tier 1 projects have a capital value greater than \$100 million, or have a capital value greater than \$25 million and are considered high risk. Tier 2 projects have a capital value between \$25 million and \$100 million or have a capital value less than \$25 million but have a high-risk rating.

From 1 July 2025, MoG changes will take effect to more closely align public service administration and resourcing with Government priorities. These MoG changes are guided by new Administrative Arrangements that take effect on 1 July 2025. Included in the changes is the formation of three new Directorates:

- > City and Environment Directorate (CED) – merges Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), Access Canberra and the Better Regulation Team from Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD).
- > The Heritage Library from TCCS is also moving to CMTEDD.
- > Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) – merges ACT Health Directorate and the Community Services Directorate (CSD) and the Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs from CMTEDD. The Health Research Ethics and Governance functions will move from ACTHD to Canberra Health Services.

- > Digital Canberra (DCBR) – bringing together Digital Data and Technology Solutions (DDTS) from CMTEDD and Digital Solutions Division from ACTHD. Digital Canberra will continue to develop over the course of 2025-26 as additional projects and responsibilities are transferred to Digital Canberra from other directorates.

As part of these changes:

- > all infrastructure delivery within the new Health and Community Services Directorate, with the exception of strategic infrastructure planning, will move to Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR), and; Public Housing growth and renewal and maintenance and the Facilities Insourcing Taskforce will transfer from CSD to Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR).



