**Thirteenth meeting of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap**

**Communique**

Joint Council members were welcomed on 15 November 2024 to Boorloo (Perth), by Whadjuk and Ballardong Traditional Owner and Elder Kerry-Ann Winmar. Joint Council paid respects to Noongar Elders, acknowledging their continuing custodianship of the land.

Joint Council welcomed new members, including Commonwealth Co-Chair Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, the Honourable Jacquie Petrusma MP (Tasmania), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (ACT), the Honourable Steve Edginton MLA (NT) and Mayor Matt Burnett (ALGA) and reaffirmed their commitment to working together to progress actions under the National Agreement.

Joint Council discussed critical matters regarding youth justice and agreed that Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) is an urgent priority that requires collective action across multiple government portfolios and jurisdictions to deliver on the ground results. Target 11, to reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10 – 17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent by 2031 is not on track to be met*.* Joint Council agreed to escalate this urgent priority and progress work that will achieve improved accountability, coordinated jurisdictional actions and outcomes. It was agreed that Joint Council Co-Chairs write to First Ministers to seek details of how their governments are currently taking steps to meet Target 11, including consideration of remand, alternative accommodation and health and disability care and education in youth justice facilities.

Parties acknowledged the benefit of bilateral agreements to harness mainstream funding and support sector specific service delivery and performance mechanisms. Joint Council agreed to progress work to apply Priority Reforms in the areas of Skills, Health, Education and Housing into National intergovernmental agreements (National Agreements) to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and deliver Closing the Gap outcomes. The Baseline Commitments for all National Agreements relevant to Closing the Gap were also noted by Parties.

All parties committed to the delivery of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Review (the Review) and Assembly to capture and report on the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities that have been engaged in the implementation of the National Agreement. Joint Council agreed to the revised Terms of Reference for the Review and Assembly.

Parties discussed the importance of a strategic approach to enable drivers of action to support delivery on the ground and in communities. Joint Council welcomed a collaborative approach to prioritise actions and agreed to a forward work plan to realise the National Agreement commitments.

Joint Council reflected on policy partnership and place-based partnership updates.

Further information on Closing the Gap can be found here: [Home | Closing the Gap](https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/)

**Attendees – Coalition of Peaks representatives**

| **Name** | **Representing** | **Organisation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ms Pat Turner AM | Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations | Joint Council Co-Chair; Lead Convenor, Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations  |
| Mr Michael Graham  | VIC | Co-Chair, Ngaweeyan Maar-oo |
| Ms Wynetta Dewis | QLD | Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service   |
| Ms Vicki O’Donnell OAM  | WA | Chair, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia |
| Dr Scott Wilson | SA | Lead Convenor, South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network |
| Mr Graeme Gardner  | TAS | Chairperson, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre |
| Mr Maurice Walker | ACT | Chairperson, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body |
| Dr John Paterson | NT | Lead Convenor, Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory |
| Ms Muriel Bamblett AO | Education and Families | Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency |
| Ms Donnella Mills  | Health and Wellbeing | Chair, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation |
| Mr Jamie Lowe | Economic Development | Chief Executive Officer, National Native Title Council |
| Ms Karly Warner | Justice | Chair, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services |

**Attendees – Government Parties**

| **Name** | **Jurisdiction** | **Title** |
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| Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy  | Commonwealth | Joint Council Co-Chair, Minister for Indigenous Australians |
| Hon David Harris MP | NSW | Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty |
| Ms Christine Couzens MP(Proxy for Minister Hutchins) | VIC | Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples |
| Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA | WA | Minister for Aboriginal Affairs |
| Hon Kyam Maher MLC | SA | Minister for Aboriginal Affairs |
| Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP(virtual) | TAS | Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  |
| Ms Suzanne Orr MLA(virtual)  | ACT | Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs |
| Hon Steve Edgington MLA | NT | Minister for Aboriginal Affairs |
| Mayor Matt Burnett | Australian Local Government Association | President, Australian Local Government Association |

**Apologies**

| **Name** | **Representing** | **Organisation** |
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| Hon Fiona Simpson MP  | Qld |  Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships |

**Guests and Presenters**

| **Name** | **Representing** | **Organisation** |
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| Professor Pat Dudgeon | Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership Update | First Nations Co-Chair |
| Zachariah Matysek | Housing Policy Partnership Update | First Nations Co-Chair  |
| Matt Flavel | Housing Policy Partnership Update | Commonwealth Co-Chair  |