

MEDIA RELEASE

Implementation of the Productivity Commission’s review recommendations must commence urgently as new data doesn’t show improvement.

The data update for the *Closing the Gap Dashboard*, released today, again demonstrates the need for urgent, committed, and sustained change by Governments in the way they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples if all Australians are going to have equitable life outcomes.

The Productivity Commission’s data provides a new year of data for several socio-economic targets and supporting indicators within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement).

Coalition of Peaks acting Lead Convenor Catherine Liddle said the latest dashboard data had some bright spots in an otherwise depressing report card.

“The update indicates there is improvement in babies born healthy and strong, an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having health checks, and to targets relating to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ legal rights or interests in land and sea,” Ms Liddle said.

“We need to celebrate this progress, along with some of the improvements we are seeing in some jurisdictions. While we need to do a deeper dive into the data, I suspect that where there is improvement, we will find more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designed and led programs and policies.

“Distressingly, targets relating to criminal justice, youth justice, child protection and suicide are all either not changed or are worsening.

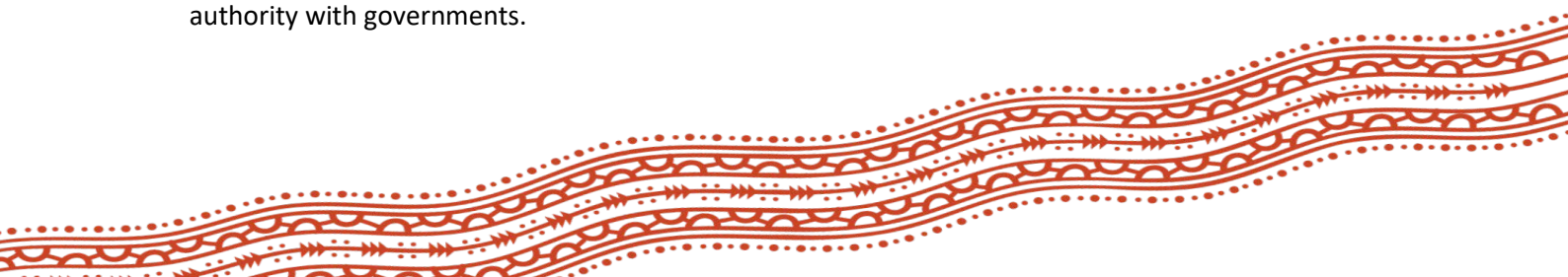
“Our children are being removed from families at gross and increasing rates, they are ending up in the justice system and dying far too often by suicide.

“Our children are paying the price for decades of Government failure. Closing the Gap has to start with our children.

“The Prime Minister made it very clear in his Closing the Gap speech last month, by stating *“The Productivity Commission has made it clear that the old ways are not working. Decades of insisting that Government knows best, has made things worse. We must find a better way – and we must do it together”*.

“The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is the better way.

“Through the National Agreement, government parties have committed to build and strengthen structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share in the decision-making authority with governments.





“The PC review released in February shows Governments cannot continue in business-as-usual mode.

“They must recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) have knowledges, expertise and connection to community that governments do not have. ACCOs are better placed than governments to design and deliver high quality, holistic and culturally safe services.

“The Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks) has expressed its support for the full implementation of all the Productivity Commission’s recommendations in the final report.

“I extend an invitation for all of us to rise to the challenges laid out in the Productivity Commission Review recommendations, and really lean into the full potential of the National Agreement to drive real change.”

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