



**Early Childhood Care  
and Development  
Policy Partnership**

# Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

Three-Year Strategic Plan

October 2023

### Artist attribution

### Guiding Stars description

This vibrant artwork, titled “Guiding Stars,” symbolizes the unity and shared decision-making embodied by the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCDPP or the Partnership).

The central motif of interconnected patterns and shapes represents the coming together of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, families, and government representatives, all working harmoniously to ensure the well-being and cultural richness of the youngest children. The bright, swirling elements signify the Guiding Stars, an ancestral reminder of the wisdom and strength that guide the community in making decisions for a brighter future. Surrounding footprints depict the journey of collaboration and continuous support from the community, creating a nurturing environment where every child can thrive and remain connected to their heritage. This piece is a celebration of the ECCDPP’s commitment to fostering early childhood development and closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

### Artist bio

Tovani Cox is a proud Bunuba, Gija and Karajarri woman from the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Born in Broome, Tovani is passionate about art and design and often her inspiration is from her long standing commitment to self-determination and rights of first nations people and communities. She was predominantly raised in Noongar country in Perth, and since early 2017 has been living in Melbourne on Wurundjeri country, and travels home to the Kimberley as often as she can to connect with kin and country. Tovani has qualifications in Digital Graphic Design from RMIT University, and wants to pursue further skills and training using art as therapy and healing.

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### Design attribution

The ECCDPP logo and creative elements designed by Coolamon Creative.



### Acknowledgement

The ECCDPP acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country across the continent and islands and their continuing connections to land, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Elders past and present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect their continued connection to Country, care for community and practice of culture for generations uncounted.

We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, parents, families and kinship carers who are the custodians of caring practices that have kept children safe and thriving for more than 65,000 years.

# Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

## Vision and remit

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and thrive in their early years because they are nurtured by strong families, and continually connected to their culture and community.

This vision is underpinned by the Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Targets 2, 3, 4, 12 & 13 which are within the remit of the Partnership.\*

## Purpose

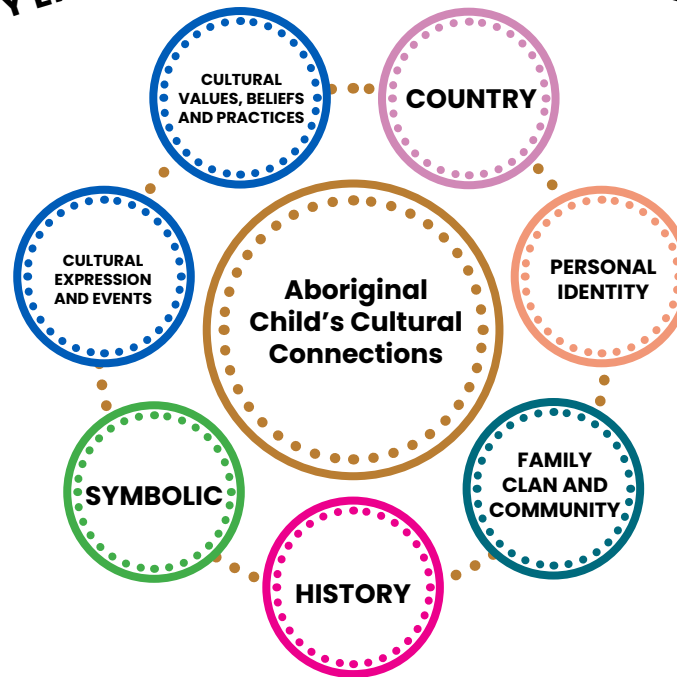
The Partnership drives improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement), by establishing a joined-up approach between all governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.

## Theory of Change

When governments work in equal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people and leaders, better decisions are made about legislation, policy and programs, which create the developmental environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to thrive.

\*As outlined in the Agreement to Implement the ECCDPP.

**COMMONWEALTH, STATE AND TERRITORY POLICY ENVIRONMENTS**  
**GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES**  
**COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES DELIVERED BY ACCOS**



**Credit:** Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency 'Deadly Story' resource. <https://www.vacca.org/page/resources/cultural-resources>

**This diagram represents the layers of support which wrap around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.**

It shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations are best positioned to deliver early childhood care and development services because they support and strengthen the cultural connections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, which keep them strong and healthy as they grow. This acknowledgement also underpins Priority Reform 2 – Building the Community-Controlled Sector.

## Overarching Partnership Objectives\*

Give a focus to the Priority Reforms in the National Agreement, and how they can be harnessed to make the changes needed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy, supported to thrive with strong families and proud in culture.

Establish a joined-up approach between all governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives to address early childhood care and development outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Support efforts to implement the National Agreement including meeting targets for the Priority Reform areas and socio-economic outcomes.

Identify opportunities to work more effectively across the Coalition of Peaks and community organisations, reduce gaps and duplication and improve outcomes under Closing the Gap.

Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, communities and organisations to negotiate and implement agreements with governments to implement all Priority Reforms and policy specific and place-based strategies to support Closing the Gap.

Drive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led outcomes on Closing the Gap, and support community-led development initiatives.

Identify opportunities to join up action across governments, reduce fragmentation and improve outcomes under Closing the Gap.

Identify specific reforms to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to achieve their potential in the early years, to be set up for long-term success.

\*As outlined in the Agreement to Implement the ECCDPP.

## YEAR ONE / 2023 – LAYING FOUNDATIONS

<b>GOAL</b>	The voices of all Partnership members are weighted equally, and decisions made by the Partnership reflect shared expertise.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Plan for oversight and driving policy reforms has been developed and endorsed by the Partnership.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Annual priorities considered and agreed by the Partnership, quarterly focus and update on progress towards the Priority Reforms including through jurisdictional implementation plans, probity framework, partnership end-of-year health check.

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership engages with external reviews to introduce the priorities of the Partnership and present reform options, which reflect the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Consistent engagement with the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and the three-year Closing the Gap Review.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Commissioner representation at Partnership meetings, Priority 1 and Priority 2 project findings are shared with the Productivity Commission in-confidence to inform draft and final reports.

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership identifies and agrees to targeted research priorities, which build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Commission and deliver research projects which members have identified as Year 1 priorities for the Partnership
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Delivery of a research project on funding model options for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations that deliver Early Childhood Education and Care and integrated early years services, working groups are established to progress Priority 3 and 4.

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership works across government silos to reflect how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience holistic, integrated service delivery in their communities.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Collaborate with Safe and Supported to accelerate progress towards Partnership priorities which align with actions under the <i>Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–2026</i> .
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Shared responsibility for design workshops to model options for a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

## YEAR TWO / 2024 – CONNECTION & COLLABORATION

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership is visible and accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and the community-controlled sector, and their views are informing decisions taken by the Partnership.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Build on strong community feedback loops established by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members who are representatives of their communities, and those established through previous consultation with communities.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Develop a strategic communications strategy.

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership collaborates with other shared decision-making mechanisms, to progress shared priorities in relation to early childhood care and development.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Collaborate with other shared decision-making mechanisms, including Policy and Place-based Partnerships under the National Agreement.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Engage National Indigenous Australians Agency as central agency to coordinate communication with other Policy and Place-based Partnerships and invite other Policy Partnerships to participate in Partnership quarterly meetings.

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership's Year 1 priorities are translated into tangible policy and funding reforms, which reflect genuine shared decision-making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all governments.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Dual process of recommendations to Joint Council and Partnership members following Closing the Gap governance architecture in their own jurisdiction.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	The Partnership submits formal recommendations to Joint Council (via engagement with Joint Working Group and Partnership Working Group) and convenes out-of-session meetings to support jurisdictional members engage with respective cabinet processes.

## YEAR THREE / 2025 – DELIVERING RESULTS & MEASURING PROGRESS

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership Year 2 priorities are translated into tangible policy and funding reforms, which reflect genuine shared decision-making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all governments.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Dual process of recommendations to Joint Council and Partnership members following Closing the Gap governance architecture in their own jurisdiction.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	The Partnership submits formal recommendations to Joint Council (via engagement with Joint Working Group and Partnership Working Group), out-of-session meetings to support jurisdictional members engage with respective cabinet processes.

<b>GOAL</b>	The Partnership is evaluated on its strengths as a shared decision-making mechanism and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and the community-controlled sector.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Document the learnings and insights of the Partnership across three-years and inform government review of Policy Partnerships as mechanism under National Agreement.
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Commission independent evaluation of the Partnership.





