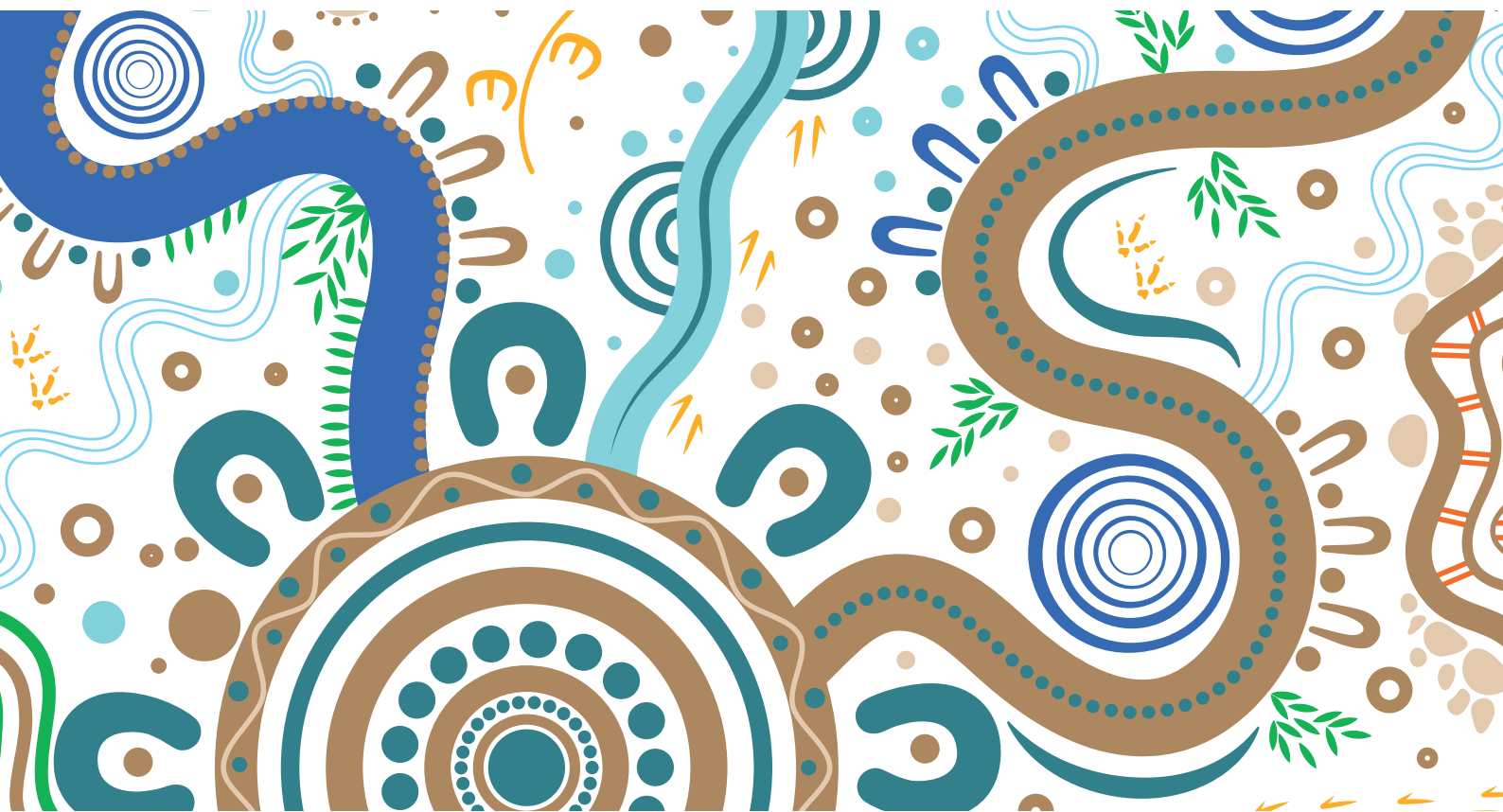


# NSW Closing the Gap Annual Report 2022–2023

November 2023



## **Cover artwork**

The cover artwork was designed for the *2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap*. It represents connection to the land of NSW, from the red dirt and mountain ranges to the water.

The bottom part of the artwork symbolises the ocean that NSW is connected to, and its link to Saltwater people.

The rivers and creeks are symbolised throughout the artwork, with symbols along the waterways representing Freshwater people, who regularly gathered along the banks.

NSW is known for its many distinctive mountain ranges and escarpments, which are illustrated in the artwork – from mountains ranges close to the ocean to the inland mountain ranges, which include bushland and rainforests.

The orange and brown areas symbolise the colours of the land elsewhere in NSW.

Animal tracks are included throughout the artwork, representing the wildlife that live and wander throughout NSW, including kangaroo, goanna and emu tracks. These animals are very significant to Aboriginal people.

The centrepiece is the gathering of Aboriginal people and government, working together in Closing the Gap.

## **About the artist**

The artist, Lani Balzan, is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. One of her biggest goals and inspirations in creating her artwork is to develop a better connection to her culture and to continue to work towards reconciliation – bringing people and communities together to learn about the amazing culture we have here in Australia.

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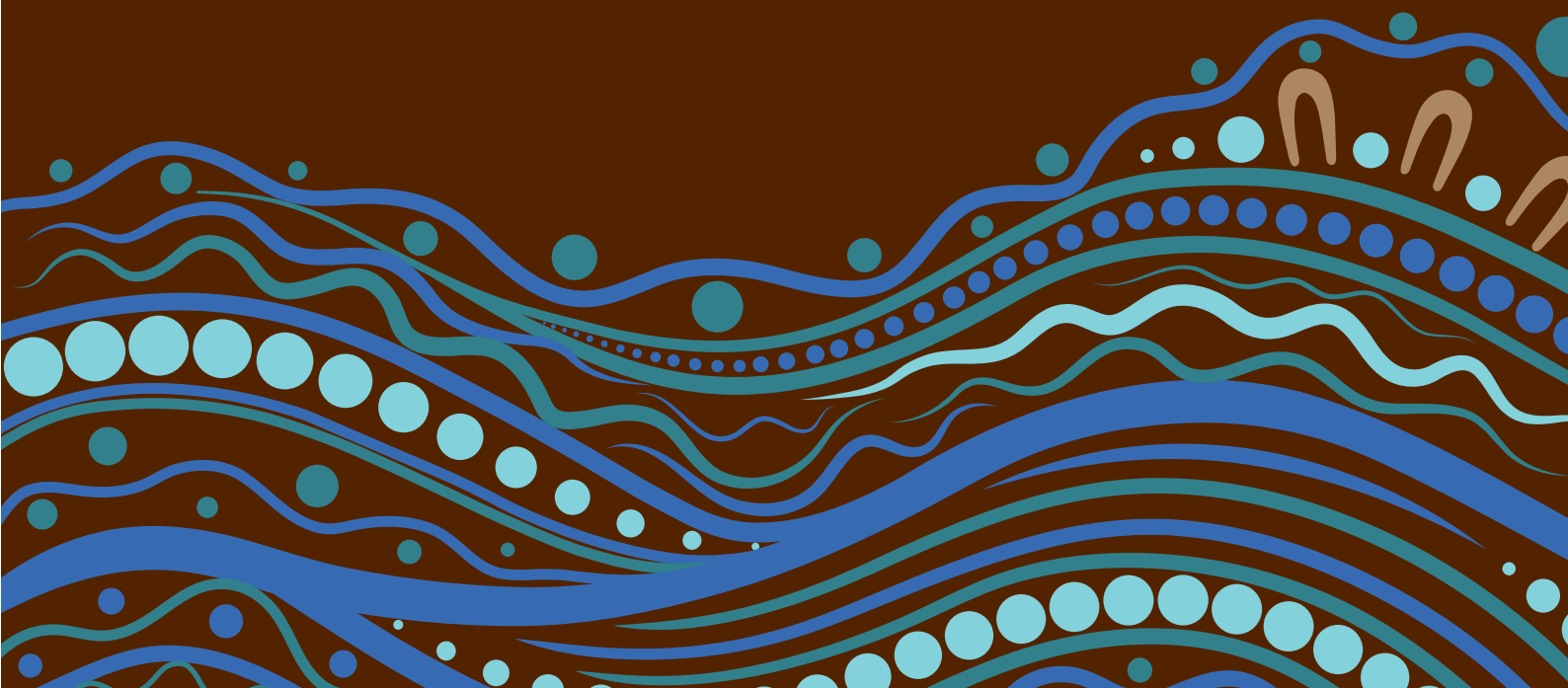
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# Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and the NSW Government acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and upon which this report was prepared.

We would like to acknowledge our Elders, past and present, and the contributions they have made to their communities.

We recognise and celebrate the profound cultural and spiritual relationship that Aboriginal people have with the land, seas and skies of this state.



# Premier's statement

**The Hon Chris Minns MP**

It gives me great pleasure to present the second joint NSW Closing the Gap Annual Report as NSW Premier.

NSW has the largest population of Aboriginal peoples of any Australian state or territory, in a country with the oldest continuous living culture on earth. We will continue to focus on the strength of Aboriginal communities to transform the way this government works.

NSW is committed to embedding the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap as the means to transform government to deliver better outcomes with Aboriginal communities.

It is important to recognise that this is a long-term reform program over 10 years to 2031. This is about transformational change as well as delivering immediate support to Aboriginal people and communities.

More than \$221 million over 4 years has been committed under the *NSW Implementation Plan on Closing the Gap 2022-2024* to make progress towards achieving the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

We will continue to listen to Aboriginal communities and voices to understand how policy can be improved so Aboriginal people and communities lead the way and determine, drive and own their desired outcomes.

Working in genuine partnership with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and our Aboriginal partners is how we will achieve our commitments under the National Agreement.

I offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to, and continues to work towards, Closing the Gap.



**The Hon Chris Minns MP**  
Premier of New South Wales

# Minister's statement

**The Hon David Harris MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty**

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, I am proud to share this second joint Annual Report with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations, under the Closing the Gap National Agreement.

Through genuine partnership, capacity building, better engagement, improved access to data, and, in the case of NSW, economic empowerment, Closing the Gap seeks to radically change the way government engages Aboriginal communities. This Annual Report demonstrates that since signing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, NSW has committed to lead the nation in innovative and meaningful work to close the gap.

I take seriously the partnership that drives the National Agreement and the voices of the community that built the NSW Implementation Plan to improve the lives of Aboriginal people in this state.

The Implementation Plan contains 142 initiatives, developed in partnership. This ambitious program of work will realise reform across the state. I recognise that by genuinely working in partnership, changes can be made, and the NSW Government has committed \$221 million to make that impact.

Closing the Gap is a 10-year agreement and the NSW Government will continue to build and improve upon the considerable work already done. There is still a long road ahead of us and the goal is ambitious, but also necessary and long overdue.

We must continue to engage with many voices from community to transform the way we work as a government and deliver better outcomes in partnership with Aboriginal people.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DARRIS', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**The Hon David Harris MP**

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty

# NSW CAPO Co-Chairs' statement

**Councillor Anne Dennis and John Leha**

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is a commitment to a better future for Aboriginal people.

There have undoubtedly been many important successes over the last 12 months that are bringing us closer to this goal. The 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan was launched in August 2022, including critical new initiatives developed in partnership between NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and the NSW Government; more than \$20 million was provided to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations as part of the Community and Place Grants program; and new data shows that the first Socio-Economic Outcome target has been met.

However, this second Annual Report reminds us that there is far more for us to do if we are to achieve the transformative vision of the National Agreement. As noted in this report, only 6 of the 19 Closing the Gap targets are on track in NSW, with just as many having stagnated or gone backwards since the National Agreement was signed. NSW CAPO also acknowledges that future Annual Reports will consider the findings of the Productivity Commission review of Closing the Gap, which will be delivered in December 2023.

There is enormous strength, expertise and resilience within our communities. Much more needs to be done to build upon these opportunities to drive meaningful progress on all areas of Closing the Gap. We must meaningfully implement and embed the Priority Reforms at all levels. It is only through shared decision-making, a strong community-controlled sector, transformed government organisations, control over data, and economic prosperity that Closing the Gap outcomes will be achieved.

The National Agreement highlights the fundamental importance of accountability. Transparently sharing information on how we are progressing is the first step towards meaningful accountability. We must now make sure we are using the information in this Annual Report to drive further progress on Closing the Gap, particularly on areas that are changing far too slowly.

This Annual Report uses data sources that have been provided to track progress against the targets set out in the National Agreement. We know that these statistics and data do not show a whole picture of real progress and impact made in communities. Real change and progress can only happen when communities witness meaningful changes that truly matter to them.

As NSW CAPO, we will continue to act as an independent advocate for the interests, needs and priorities of our communities in all work on Closing the Gap.



**Councillor Anne Dennis**



**John Leha**





# Executive summary

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# 1

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# Executive summary

In July 2020, New South Wales (NSW) signed the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020–2031 (the National Agreement) alongside all Australian governments (the federal government and all states and territories), the Australian Local Government Association, and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (the Coalition of Peaks) – the peak body representing Aboriginal people in Closing the Gap. In NSW, the Coalition of Peaks is represented by the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO).

The NSW Government is working in partnership with NSW CAPO and other Aboriginal partners as well as Local Government NSW on every part of Closing the Gap. We continue to work on building an equal partnership, including through strategies to operationalise the Partnership Agreement and address imbalances across the partnership.

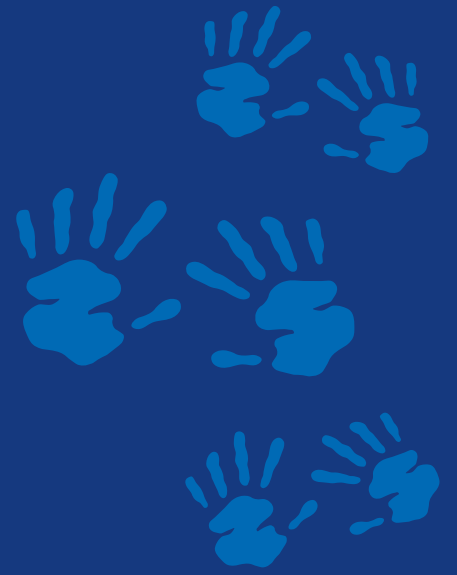
This 2022–2023 Annual Report has been jointly developed by the NSW Government and NSW CAPO. The report meets the requirement of the National Agreement (Clause 118) to publicly report progress.

The report reviews the progress made in NSW in 2022–23, noting outcomes achieved, acknowledging where we need to do more, and tracking how the commitments made in the *2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap* are progressing.

This report includes details of how Aboriginal people were actively involved in meaningful consultations led by NSW CAPO and how we continued to embed shared decision-making into the design and delivery of policy and programs across all parts of the National Agreement.

In addition to these positive examples, there remain areas where more needs to be done to embed partnership and shared decision-making. By working together, we can achieve more with Aboriginal people and communities.

We note that the full report of the Productivity Commission’s review of Closing the Gap is due to be released in December 2023 and that – while this Annual Report relates to the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan – more needs to be done to progress implementation of the Priority Reforms, including increasing accountability. The Productivity Commission report will be considered in future NSW Annual Reports to ensure alignment with recommendations regarding reporting.



# How we work in NSW

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# 2

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# How we work in NSW

## Working in partnership

As co-signatories to the National Agreement, the NSW Government and NSW CAPO have formed the NSW Partnership on Closing the Gap. This shared accountability and new approach is a key difference to previous approaches, and is a crucial opportunity to do things better, together. While good progress has been made, there remains more work to do to put this into practice.

NSW CAPO is a member of the national Coalition of Peaks and comprises the below member organisations:

- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW
- Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)
- BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation
- First Peoples Disability Network Australia
- Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation.

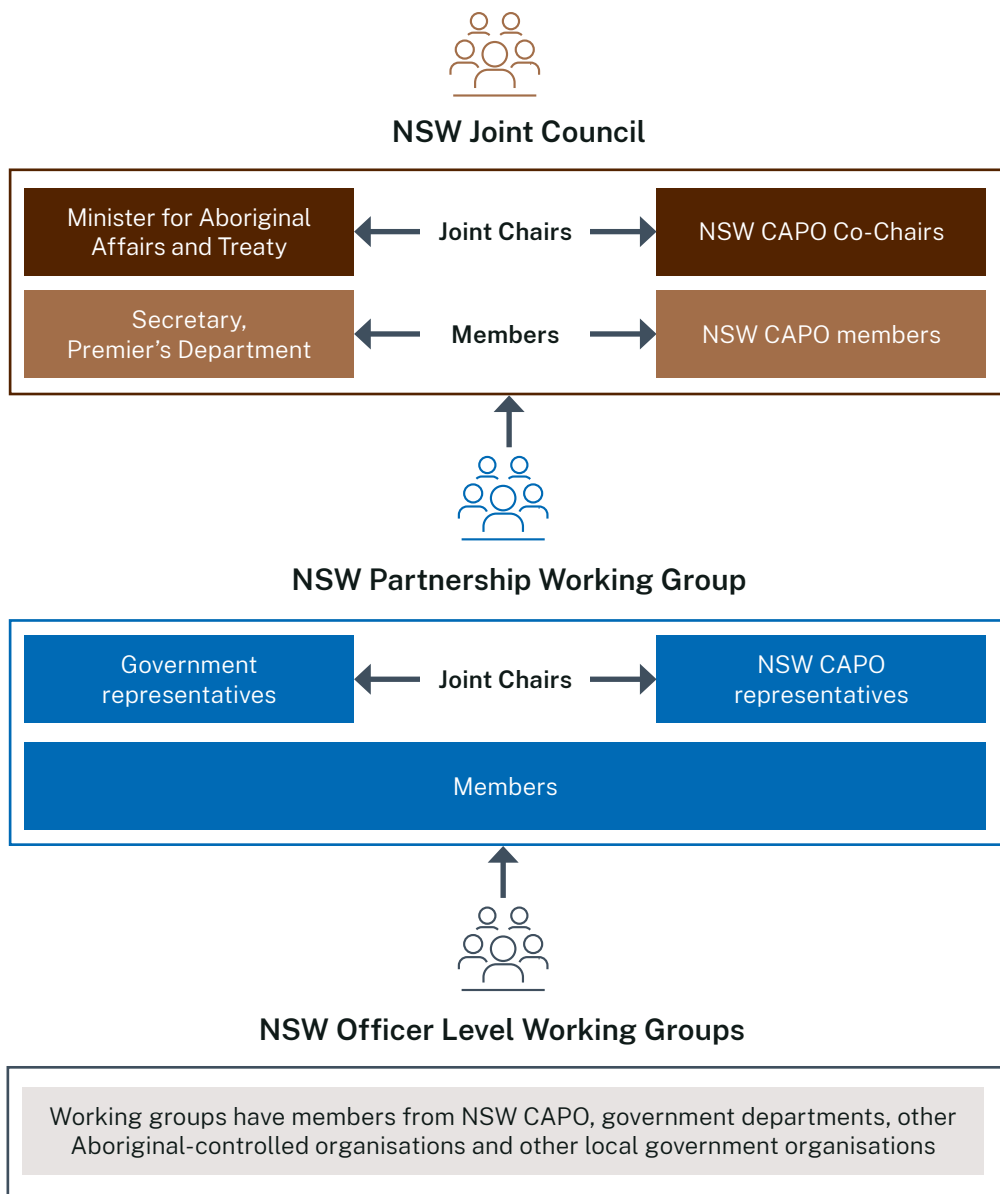
The NSW Government is working in partnership with NSW CAPO to deliver initiatives under the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan to achieve their targets for the Priority Reforms and Socio-Economic Outcomes areas.

## NSW Governance for Closing the Gap

Closing the Gap is a whole-of-government responsibility. Every part of the NSW Government and public service has a role to play in transforming the way it works with Aboriginal communities to deliver better outcomes. Work will continue throughout the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan period to ensure that tangible actions and accountabilities are embedded.

Closing the Gap governance arrangements have been established to ensure shared decision-making and partnership are embedded throughout our work. They include:

- **NSW Joint Council** – a key decision-making group overseeing the planning and implementation of the National Agreement in NSW
- **NSW Partnership Working Group** – monitors performance, endorses key deliverables and processes to develop the NSW Implementation Plan and proposes initiatives to fulfil National Agreement requirements
- **13 Officer Level Working Groups (OLWGs)** – aligned to each of the targets and the 5 Priority Reforms, offering subject matter expertise to develop and progress action towards Closing the Gap outcomes. Not all OWLGs functioned to the same degree due to varying degrees of commitment. This will be addressed through refreshed governance arrangements with revised membership and participation requirements.



We are reviewing current governance arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose, provide necessary accountability mechanisms and address the challenges presented by existing arrangements as we move to a delivery phase.

## 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan

The NSW Government and NSW CAPO are committed to Closing the Gap’s 10-year journey of reform across all parts and levels of government, to achieve the change we need in partnership and through extensive community engagement.

The 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan outlines our work, detailing the vision, purpose, methods and approach to partnership of NSW CAPO and the NSW Government.

It details our commitment to a new way of working to shift the dial towards shared decision-making and genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities. It also describes our commitment to ensuring that work done to support Aboriginal peoples and communities is holistic, addresses the unique needs of different groups of Aboriginal people and is done in genuine partnership.

The plan embeds and invests in the Priority Reforms, which drives a greater focus on the 17 Socio-Economic Outcome areas.

It includes 142 initiatives across all of NSW Government.

## Reporting and accountability

The NSW Government and NSW CAPO strongly believe in working in partnership with Aboriginal communities in NSW. We want to ensure everyone is accountable for their actions so we can achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal people in our state. More work is needed across government to meet this intent. We are continuing to work to improve accountability, including by revising governance arrangements for NSW Closing the Gap.

The NSW Government, NSW CAPO and our partners are responsible for delivering change and are accountable to Aboriginal communities through robust governance and reporting mechanisms and regular and ongoing NSW CAPO-led engagement with Aboriginal communities.

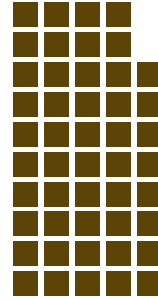
Our governance structures are intended to create a mechanism to come together, share decisions, track progress and provide regular reports to the NSW Partnership.

Government agencies and their respective NSW CAPO partners produce joint quarterly reports that are provided to the NSW Joint Council. These reports inform discussions at ministerial meetings.

### NSW Implementation Plan

# 142

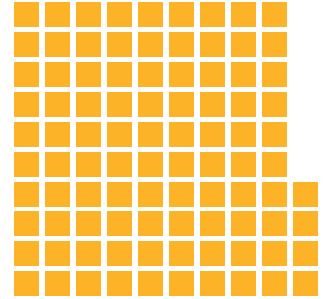
initiatives across all of NSW Government



## 48

initiatives  
associated  
with the

**5 Priority Reforms**



## 94

initiatives  
associated with the  
**17 Socio-Economic  
Outcome areas**



# The Priority Reforms

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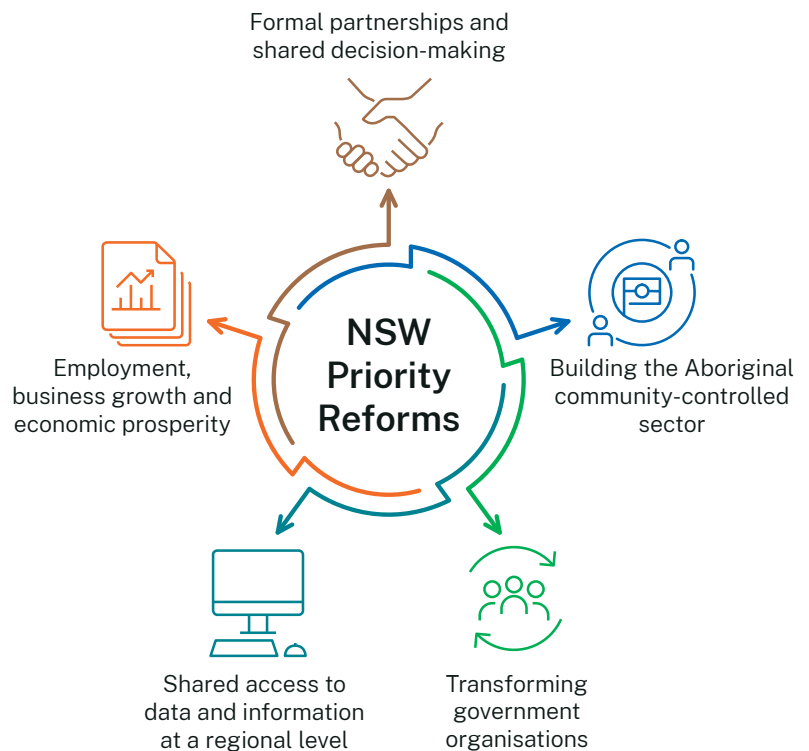
# The Priority Reforms

## How we are embedding the Priority Reforms

The National Agreement is built around 4 Priority Reforms directly informed by Aboriginal people. These Priority Reforms aim to fundamentally change the way governments work with Aboriginal people. They are:

- Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
- Building the Aboriginal community-controlled sector
- Transforming government organisations
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

NSW is the only state with a fifth Priority Reform: Employment, business growth and economic prosperity. We also recognise that the Priority Reform areas should not be addressed in isolation, but with each one supporting the others.



When achieved, the Priority Reforms will embed the systemic and organisational cultural changes envisioned within the Closing the Gap Agreement. When government is working with Aboriginal people in genuine partnership, has transformed how it works, and is delivering through a strong Aboriginal community-controlled sector with access to, and control over, the data needed to make decisions, we will start to see meaningful change.

It is only through embedding the Priority Reforms in all the work we do – for example, in health, education and justice – that we can achieve the Socio-Economic Outcomes. Working towards the Socio-Economic Outcomes will improve life outcomes for Aboriginal people, but fully achieving the Priority Reforms will ensure these changes are sustainable and that Aboriginal communities can thrive in the long term.

## Progress on the Priority Reforms

Progress towards achieving the Priority Reforms is currently being measured qualitatively, based on reporting against progress for the 48 Priority Reform-specific initiatives outlined in the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan.

We are assisting national efforts to develop and measure data for the Priority Reforms, with a long-term objective of ensuring we have a frequent and comprehensive picture of progress in NSW against each Priority Reform.

The actions in the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan are intended as immediate actions to start work on implementing the Priority Reforms; however, there remains significant work to fully and comprehensively implement their full intent. Our key actions and progress made against the Priority Reform areas in 2022–2023 are reported below.



# Priority Reform 1 – Formal partnerships and shared decision-making



## Outcome

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.



## Target

There will be formal partnership arrangements in place to support Closing the Gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments in each state and territory, enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have chosen their own representatives.

Priority Reform 1 of the National Agreement is a commitment to building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal people to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress against Closing the Gap. It is about creating genuine partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities at all levels of government and ensuring shared decision-making is embedded across NSW.

Implementing Priority Reform 1 is a whole-of-government responsibility and work is being done by various government agencies and Aboriginal stakeholders to improve and expand the number of partnerships. This approach recognises the critical role of genuine partnership in driving progress, and that Aboriginal people must be key decision-makers in policy matters that affect their lives and communities.

In the 2022–2024 Implementation Plan, we committed to progress this Priority Reform area by supporting:

- all Aboriginal communities to have access to partnership arrangements in their local community and on policy issues impacting them, where their voice can be heard
- all partnership arrangements in NSW to work effectively to advance Closing the Gap through joint decision-making and self-determination
- partnership arrangements in NSW to be coordinated and work cohesively together to facilitate effective and respectful relationships between community and government.

## Overview of progress

### Partnership stocktake

As part of the National Agreement, all jurisdictions are required to count their partnerships and evaluate them based on the principles of strong partnership. Through NSW CAPO-led community engagement, we have heard that even where partnerships currently exist, they are often not working as intended for the Aboriginal partners involved due to a lack of formal shared decision-making and a lack of dedicated funding or support.

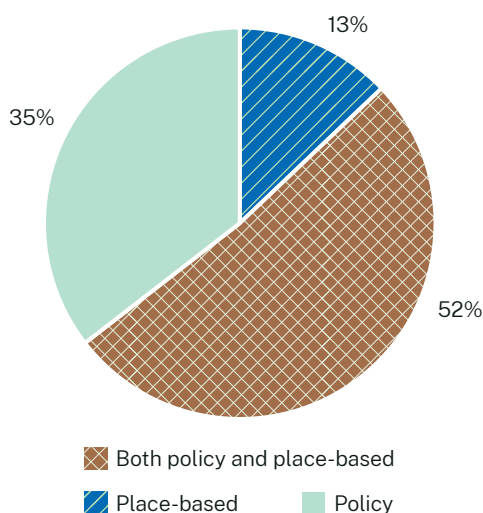
NSW CAPO and the NSW Government carried out a review of current partnerships between NSW governments – including local government – and Aboriginal partners across all policy and program areas, and assessed them against the ‘Strong Partnership Elements’ in the National Agreement: membership, formal agreement, consensus decision-making and funding.

We received information on more than 230 self-reported arrangements from local councils and government agencies in NSW. We analysed the information provided to determine whether the arrangements qualified as partnerships (i.e. if there was an element of shared decision-making in the arrangement), as opposed to advisory bodies, service delivery arrangements, events or other

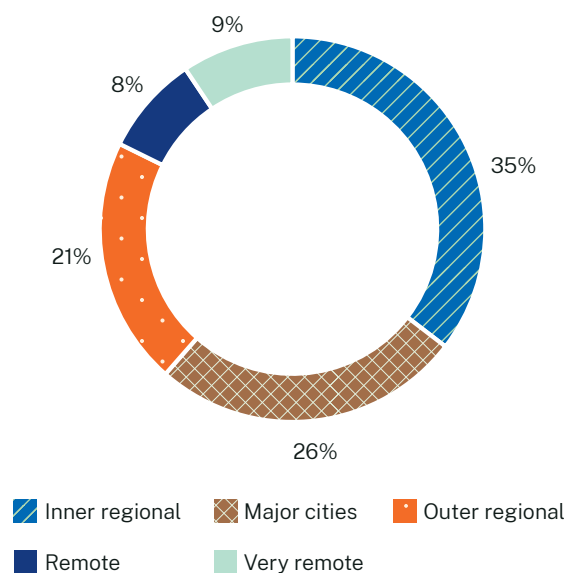
non-partnership structures. This provided an overall picture of general partnership trends in NSW, which informed an effective baseline for strengthening activities.<sup>1</sup>

Our analysis identified 31 formal partnerships. Of these, 80% met the Strong Partnership Element relating to membership (cl. 32a), 42% met the formal agreements element (cl. 32b), 55% met the decision-making element (cl. 32c), and 23% met the funding element (cl. 33). Overall findings are shown in the graphs below.

**Type of partnership**

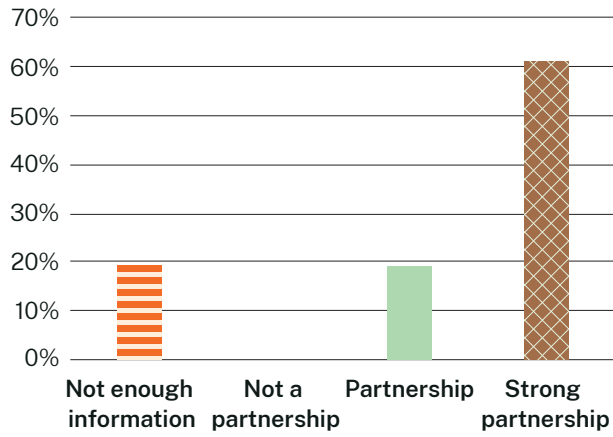


**Proportion of partnerships by remoteness**

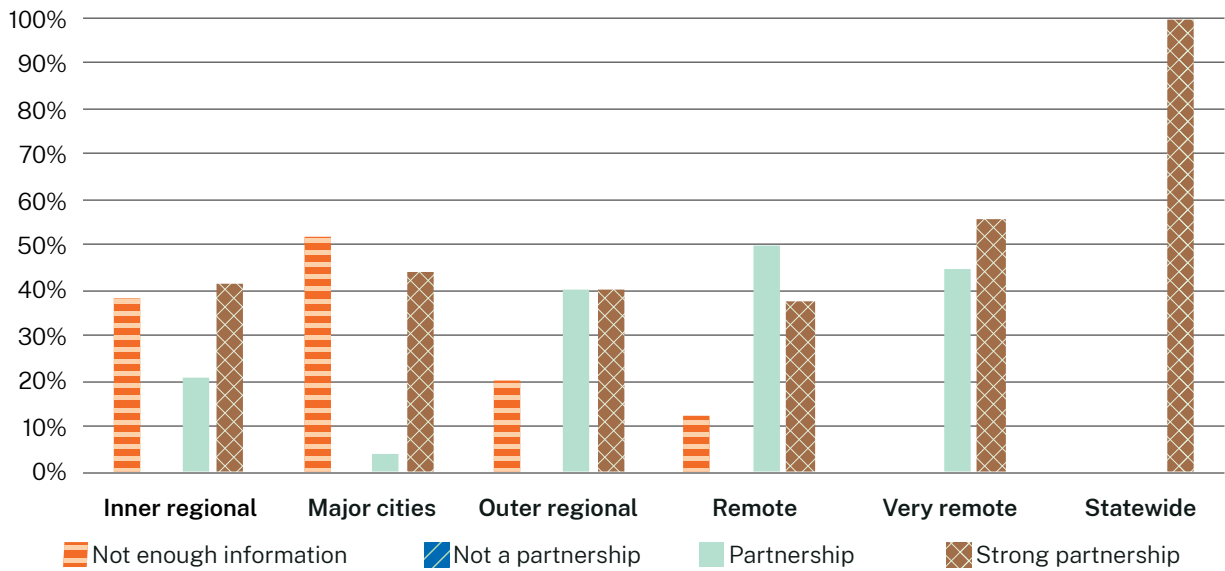


<sup>1</sup> The information provided by government agencies and councils was not cross-checked with Aboriginal partners, given the difficulties in confirming specific partners, particularly for local government partnerships, and the importance of consistency in process across all partnerships. Given the varying levels of comprehensiveness of the information provided, in some instances effective assessment of the strength of particular partnership elements was difficult. As a result, the important products of the review are the overall trends identified in the data as a whole, rather than individual scores.

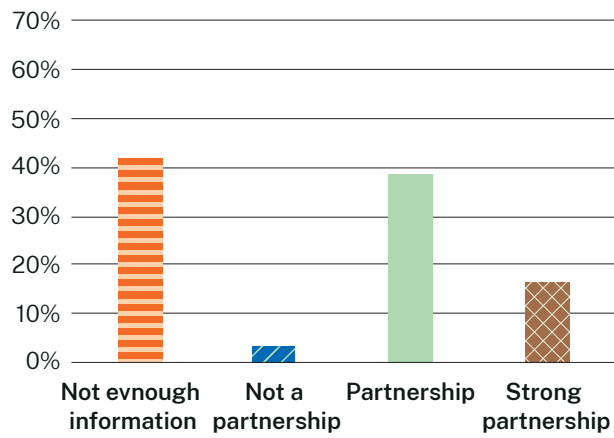
### Assessment of membership



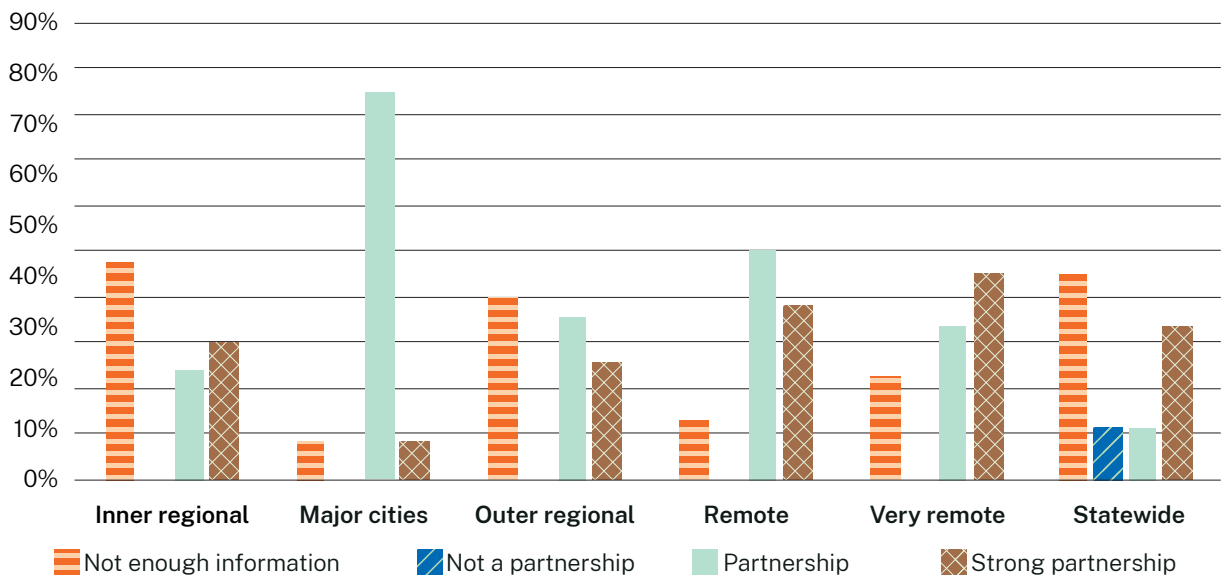
### Assessment of membership by remoteness area



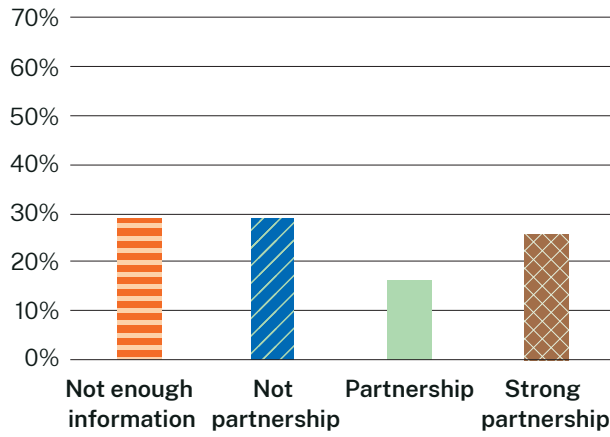
### Assessment of decision-making



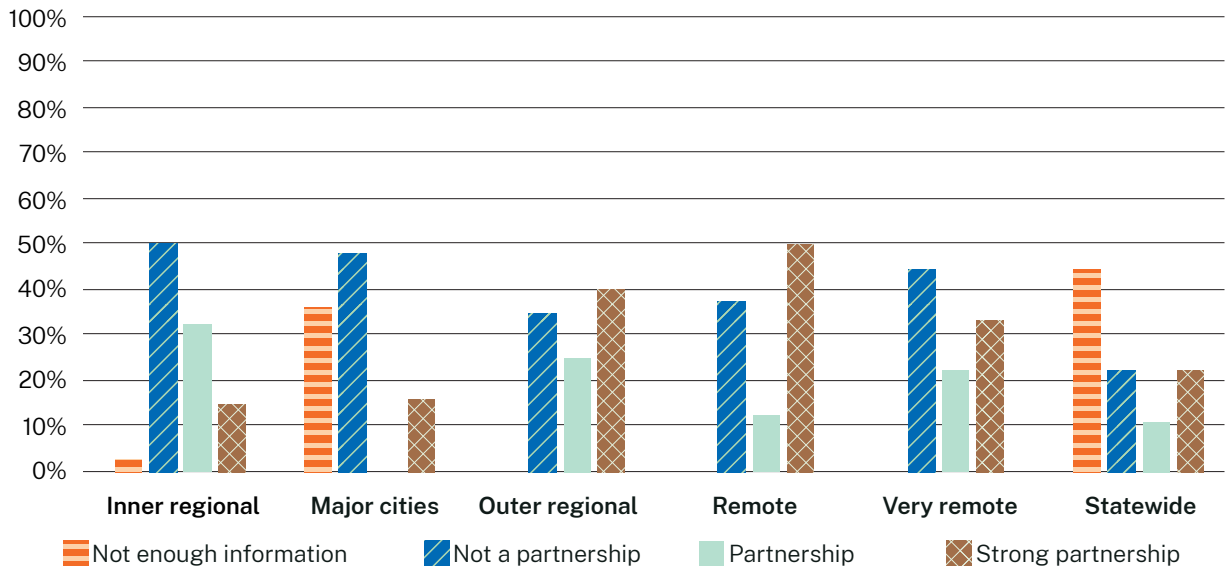
### Assessment of decision-making by remoteness area



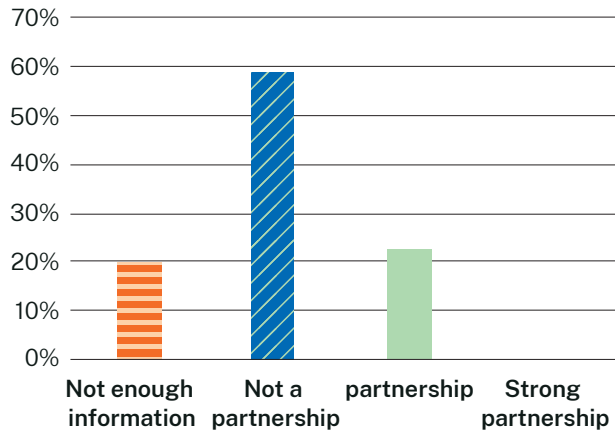
### Assessment of formal agreements



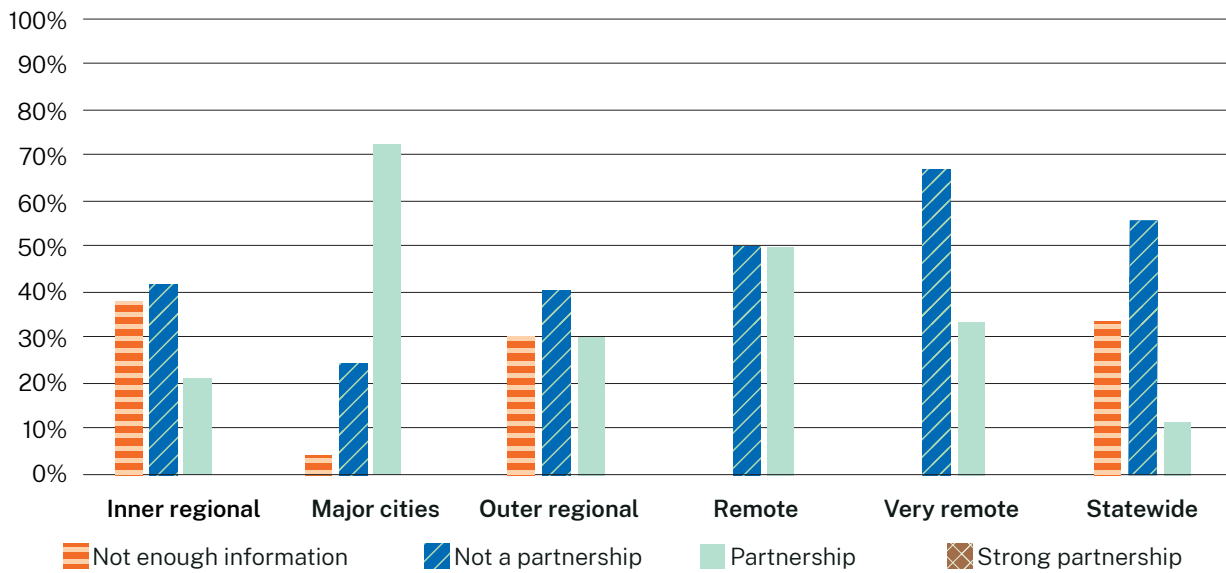
### Assessment of agreement by remoteness area



### Assessment of funding



### Assessment of funding by remoteness area



NSW CAPO and the NSW Government are undertaking further analysis of the data to identify trends and explore opportunities to effectively strengthen partnerships, to support government organisations and Aboriginal communities. We are engaging with Aboriginal partners, councils and agencies across NSW to develop a partnership strengthening package.

### **National place-based partnerships**

Under Clause 39 of the National Agreement, NSW has committed to establish a place-based partnership to drive progress on Closing the Gap in a local community.

The NSW Joint Council endorsed Tamworth as a location for a place-based partnership due to the strong interest expressed by the Tamworth community and the demonstrated strong and established leadership and regional governance. Work is currently underway to engage with the Tamworth community and design how the place-based partnership will operate.

NSW CAPO has been provided \$9.8 million to establish the Tamworth place-based partnership as well as 3 new place-based partnership sites in NSW. This contributes to work outlined under the current Implementation Plan to ensure Aboriginal communities have access to partnership arrangements in their local community and on policy issues impacting them.

### **Case study: Delivering better outcomes in partnership**

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) is the peak community advisory body to the NSW Department of Education (DoE) on Aboriginal education. The ongoing partnership between the NSW AECG and the DoE is recognised in the current Walking Together, Working Together 10-year Partnership Agreement.

The DoE and NSW AECG are currently working together to develop the Ngaarr Dhuwi Girls Academy program. The program aims to provide mentoring and support to female Aboriginal students in Years 7 to 12 in NSW public schools in the Newcastle region. It aims to increase school attendance, increase HSC attainment, provide support with post-school transitions, improve retention rates, promote self-determination, and improve health and wellbeing. The program is designed to help female students make active choices toward realising their full potential in all aspects of their education, development, cultural identity and wellbeing.

The Walking Together, Working Together Partnership Agreement has proven to be a solid foundation to support the development of the Girls Academy program. As a result, the NSW DoE is co-developing the program with NSW public schools and the NSW AECG. The partnership includes robust consultation with school executives, established Aboriginal workers, parents of enrolled students and community to ensure there is dedicated high-quality support to empower Aboriginal students through their educational journeys.

The partnership will continue to be instrumental in supporting female Aboriginal students in NSW public schools.

## Progress against 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan commitments

### On track

- Develop an overarching framework to coordinate all partnerships in NSW.

### In progress

- Establish new place-based partnerships.
- Expand policy partnerships across all sectors.
- Align partnerships with the National Agreement and community expectations.
- Reform accountability and transparency measures in partnerships to ensure they are culturally appropriate.
- Develop a funding approach and resources to support Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations' (ACCOs) participation in partnerships.
- Enhance how the NSW CAPO–NSW Government Partnership on Closing the Gap operates.

## Priority Reform 2 – Building the Aboriginal 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 peoples across the country.



### Target

Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

Priority Reform 2 in the National Agreement is a commitment to a strong and sustainable Aboriginal community-controlled sector that delivers high-quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people across the country.

This Priority Reform is about increasing services delivered by ACCOs, as these services have been shown to achieve better results and employ more Aboriginal people, and are often preferred by Aboriginal people over mainstream service offerings.

Through NSW CAPO-led community consultations, we have heard of many issues preventing ACCOs from delivering more services, including inaccessible procurement processes, onerous monitoring and reporting requirements, a need for longer term funding contracts, and a need for support for recruiting and maintaining staff.

NSW is committed to addressing these systemic issues and building the ACCO sector, acknowledging that this sector is best placed to drive positive change in the lives of Aboriginal people. A project team has been established under Priority Reform 2 to undertake a comprehensive study of the challenges faced by ACCOs and opportunities to increase service delivery through ACCOs.

## Overview of progress

### Sector strengthening – virtual joint fund

Clause 49 of the National Agreement requires the development of sector strengthening plans. The NSW Government is contributing \$7.4 million over 4 years to the 'virtual joint fund' established by the



Australian Government, states and territories in July 2020 when the National Agreement on Closing the Gap was signed. The purpose of the fund is to increase the capacity and quality of, and provide resources to strengthen, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services.

Of the \$7.4 million contributed, \$4.6 million has been provided to Aboriginal peak organisations, including the Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association, First Peoples Disability Network and Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council.

## Forward evaluation

The NSW Government has committed to developing a forward plan that prioritises the evaluation of existing programs targeted at Aboriginal people to identify opportunities to meet outcomes more effectively. These forward schedules are being developed in partnership by agencies and NSW CAPO organisations. This work is planned to be completed by the beginning of 2024.

## Community and Place Grants funding

The Community and Place Grants program aims to support one-off projects developed by local Aboriginal communities and with local community support to drive change in alignment with the National Agreement.

Over \$20 million in grants was distributed in the 2022–23 financial year to support local ACCOs delivering outcomes against Closing the Gap targets. For the 2023–24 financial year, \$15 million will be allocated through a future grants round.

The NSW Government acknowledges there is still work to do in making the grant application process more accessible and user friendly. The NSW Government and NSW CAPO will continue to work to improve the way this funding is administered for future rounds.

## Prioritisation policy

NSW has committed to scoping policy options to prioritise funding to ACCOs. This work is underway in close engagement with relevant stakeholders. In practice, this may mean ensuring services provided to Aboriginal communities are provided by an ACCO. Sector strengthening work will occur at the same time to ensure the ACCO sector can increase service delivery and meet the required outcomes.

## Progress against NSW Implementation Plan commitments

### On track

- Community and place grant funding.
- Establish an Aboriginal-led commissioning model.

### In progress

- Reform the funding arrangements for ACCOs.
- Increase accessibility of grants opportunities and appropriateness of reporting processes.
- Prioritise ACCOs in service delivery to Aboriginal communities.
- Improve attraction through investigating current barriers faced by ACCOs and designing solutions in partnership.
- Improve capability and retention through improved training and support for ACCO employees.
- Build on current ACCO strengths and opportunities to ensure strong organisational processes.
- Support ACCO partnerships at local and regional levels.

### Planned

- Improve recruitment through supporting students to work in the ACCO sector.

# 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 peoples, including through the services they fund.



## Target

Decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have experiences of racism.

Priority Reform 3 is about changing the way governments work so they are more responsive and able to meet the needs of Aboriginal people. The National Agreement sets out 6 elements that must be addressed to achieve this positive transformation:

- eliminating racism
- embedding cultural safety
- delivering services in partnership
- increasing transparency and accountability for funding
- supporting the cultures of Aboriginal people
- increasing engagement with Aboriginal people.

We know there is more to be done on all elements if we are going to embed Priority Reform 3, achieve transformational change and reach zero racism in NSW. NSW is committed to delivering services that are strengths-based and culturally safe to meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

## Overview of progress

### People Matter Employment Survey

The annual NSW People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) asks NSW Government employees about their experiences and perceptions in relation to a range of workplace issues and practices, including management and leadership, service delivery, employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, public sector values and unacceptable conduct.

In 2022 there was significant variation in results relating to unacceptable conduct among participants, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees more likely to report experiencing negative workplace behaviour including experiences of bullying, racism and discrimination.

The higher incidence of negative workplace experiences reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees did not appear to impact employee engagement scores. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees' average engagement score was 65 – one point higher than the overall NSW public sector engagement score of 64. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee scores were lower than the public sector overall score for wellbeing (1 point lower), inclusion and diversity (4 points lower), and employee voice (2 points lower).

### Independent mechanism

The National Agreement commits government parties to develop or strengthen an independent, Aboriginal-led mechanism to monitor the transformation of government. NSW CAPO has been funded \$1.7 million for a new team to design options for an accountability mechanism. Work on this project is

underway, with a range of engagement activities scheduled for the second half of 2023 to inform the development of mechanism options.

## Strengthening community engagement

NSW CAPO-led community engagement identified consultation fatigue as a significant concern for Aboriginal communities. To address this, the NSW Partnership has developed guidelines for government agencies engaging with Aboriginal communities. These guidelines will ensure that when organisations are asking for the time and expertise of Aboriginal communities, this is done respectfully and communities are informed of how this information is being used.

The guidelines are being rolled out during 2023, alongside a coordination hub to enable collaboration and coordination between government agencies and community organisations.

### Case study: Winanga-li – Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework

In September 2022, the Department of Planning and Environment's (DPE) Office of the Secretary officially launched Winanga-li, a department-wide Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework designed to build Aboriginal cultural knowledge and understanding among all employees through e-learning and interactive training.

The Aboriginal People and Culture team led the creation of the framework, designed in collaboration with department employees and Aboriginal stakeholders. The new framework is designed to create and support a culturally safe environment for all the Aboriginal people DPE works with and the Aboriginal communities it serves.

The framework signals the department's ongoing commitment to advancing the aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities in NSW.

## Progress against NSW Implementation Plan commitments

### On track

- Embed Aboriginal perspectives into program evaluation and report to communities on funding for and the impact of programs for Aboriginal communities.

### In progress

- Design an independent, Aboriginal-led accountability mechanism to monitor government accountability.
- Strengthen the Aboriginal Employment Strategy to increase Aboriginal employment in the public service.
- Enhance the cultural safety of recruitment processes.
- Improving cultural capability training and standards in government.
- Implement a zero-tolerance approach to racism.
- Address structural racism in government organisations and services and work towards culturally safe service delivery.
- Develop and implement guidelines to support work in partnership with Aboriginal people.
- Government organisations are well coordinated in their engagement with Aboriginal communities.
- Reform government budget processes to better capture the perspectives of Aboriginal communities on where funding should be directed.
- Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives and involve Aboriginal stakeholders in assessing outcomes achieved through government funding.
- Government organisations and services are coordinated effectively to ensure that Aboriginal communities are centred in policy and program decisions.

## Priority Reform 4 – Shared access to data and information at a regional level



### Outcome

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 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.



### Target

Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

Priority Reform 4 is a commitment to ensure Aboriginal people have shared access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information. Separately, the NSW Data Strategy commits NSW to implement the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, government data systems in NSW collect the data they need for their own operations, which doesn't necessarily reflect the information that Aboriginal communities are interested in. Data about Aboriginal communities is often reported in a decontextualised way, which can result in partial or deficit-based reporting. Government data systems also struggle to share data with Aboriginal communities, reflecting broader system challenges in sharing data that are especially acute for smaller populations.

NSW CAPO and government have co-developed an \$18.8 million work program that tackles whole-of-system challenges and builds whole-of-system enablers to transform the relationship between Aboriginal communities and government around data. This focus on 'foundations' recognises that many challenges cannot be resolved through project-by-project approaches.

The program is, by design, structured to be jointly delivered. This promotes ongoing dialogue to build mutual trust and respect, contribute respective strengths, forge shared understandings and embed Aboriginal perspectives across government agencies. An aim of the program is for participants to form a cohort of people in ACCOs (Priority Reform 2) and across all government agencies (Priority Reform 3) who are committed to and know how to drive change in genuine partnership (Priority Reform 1).

The program will be driven by community's information and knowledge aspirations and needs – meaning that community defines both the topics of data and how data is collected, provided, managed, interpreted and used. Three interconnected components exist to enable this:

1. NSW CAPO has a dedicated team that collaborates with community through NSW CAPO-led consultation, incorporating technical inputs from experts and government partners to develop a roadmap for putting Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance into practice across communities and government.
2. Community data ecosystems are supported to mature via:
  - a. a Community Data Fund that supports community data aspirations (whether in terms of specific collections or general capability strengthening)
  - b. work dedicated to promoting and developing data-related training and career pathways for Aboriginal people of all ages (Department of Education and NSW AECG-led)
  - c. a specific place-based data project in Blacktown, funded separately under the Australian Government's Community Data Portal sites project.

2 Indigenous Data Sovereignty (ID-Sov) refers to the rights of Indigenous peoples to exercise ownership over Indigenous data. Ownership of data can be expressed through the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous data (Kukutai & Taylor 2016; Snipp 2016). ID-Sov centres on Indigenous collective and individual rights to data about our peoples, territories, lifeways and natural resources. Source: Maïam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Collective and Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (2018). Indigenous Data Sovereignty Communique. [www.maïamnayriwingara.org](http://www.maïamnayriwingara.org)

3. Government data ecosystems will start to transform by:

- a. government establishing a data connector service and reform roadmap so it can better respond to community requests for data, and collect, share, analyse and report data in more culturally appropriate and useful ways
- b. increasing transparency around the lifecycle of data requests and, in turn, dialogue that improves the quality and authenticity of government data holdings and the way stories are told using data.

While we are in the early days of implementation, we expect that the combination of visionary and practical program components will help us identify the changes needed to meaningfully realise the Priority Reform 4 intended outcome of shared access to data and information at a regional and local level.

## Overview of progress

### Transforming government data ecosystems

Work is underway to establish a data connector service for the period of the Implementation Plan. The service is intended to coordinate across government to better respond to community requests for data and ensure data is shared in more culturally appropriate and useful ways. Resolving outstanding data requests is also a key priority, as is better understanding the barriers preventing, and enablers that support, timely and useful sharing of data and information with communities. Early work analysing processes and policy frameworks used across governments has revealed there is opportunity to promote better transparency among government agencies on the data they hold and the processes for requesting data, to support communities.

### Blacktown community data project

The National Agreement includes a commitment to set up Community Data Projects in up to 6 locations across Australia by 2023. The Western Sydney Community Data Project is being run in partnership between the Premier's Department and NSW CAPO. The project is currently in its community engagement phase, which includes targeted education sessions with ACCOs to determine their data priorities and engaging with community members (service users) to understand their needs and expectations to inform a governance structure and protocols.

### Case study: NSW Health statistics

HealthStats NSW ([healthstats.nsw.gov.au](https://healthstats.nsw.gov.au)) is a public, open-data platform servicing a wide range of users with customisable data downloads and insights across key health sources and topics from a single standard interface. HealthStats NSW was first released in 2011 and includes considerable indicator content reporting on the health of the Aboriginal population in NSW.

The platform was rebuilt in 2021 including new features to improve its ease of use for a wider range of groups and individuals. One such feature was the inclusion of Topic pages to bring together content with relevant policy context and resources, and links to data content on that topic.

An Aboriginal Health Topic page has been created, with text content developed with NSW Ministry of Health policy experts in areas including Aboriginal health policy and programs, mental health, oral health, prevention and response to violence, epidemiology and evaluation, population health, environmental health, and maternal and infant health.

The HealthStats NSW Aboriginal Health Topic page provides links to more than 80 indicators covering:

- important health risk factors (including emergency department presentations for suicidal thoughts, not smoking in pregnancy, and being born with a healthy birthweight)
- major diseases (including chronic kidney disease and dialysis, diabetes and heart disease)
- interventions (immunisation and healthy living practices)
- preventable hospitalisations and deaths.

HealthStats NSW has 1,300 to 1,500 unique users a month and the Aboriginal Health Topic page is in the 'Top 5 topic pages visited' in our analytics. The interactive data pages allow users to customise graphs and tables to download or share information for their own use.

Further work is underway, in collaboration with the Closing the Gap 'data connectors' in the Ministry of Health and other Aboriginal health policy colleagues, to identify existing and new content that can be analysed and presented to better meet the needs of local Aboriginal communities. There is also work underway to improve the content to better reflect and promote a strength-based approach to reporting on Aboriginal health indicators.

## Progress against NSW Implementation Plan commitments

### In progress

- Establish a 'data connector' service to support communities to more easily find and access government-held data that they need.
- Share data and insights with Aboriginal communities in a useful form.
- Investigate reform of NSW data systems and the ongoing operating model to address systemic barriers to useful data collection and data/insight sharing.
- Investigate what steps are needed to deliver a service mapping capability to support provision of local-level information about services and funding relevant to the needs of Aboriginal communities.
- Increase opportunities for community involvement in ACCO service delivery and provide more information to community.
- Develop a roadmap that sets out a shared understanding of what Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance means in NSW.
- Design a model to implement the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance in practice.
- Fund community data projects to support community data aspirations.
- Promote data-related career pathways and opportunities for Aboriginal students and communities.

## Priority Reform 5 – Employment, business growth and economic prosperity (NSW-specific)



### Outcome

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW are empowered to access pathways, including education and training, to achieve employment that aligns with their aspirations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses grow and flourish.



### Target

An increase in jobs and pathways to employment, investment in the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, and an integrated approach to procurement across the NSW Government.

Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, there are 4 Priority Reforms. The NSW Partnership identified the need for a fifth priority reform to drive economic prosperity, employment and enterprise for Aboriginal people and communities.

This approach recognises that Aboriginal businesses play a crucial role in promoting self-determination, leading to positive economic outcomes.

## Overview of progress

### NSW Roadmap for Aboriginal Business Growth

The NSW Government, in partnership with the Aboriginal business sector, is accelerating the sector's prosperity with the release of the *NSW Roadmap for Aboriginal Business Growth*.

The roadmap includes 3 pathways aligned with key themes from Aboriginal Business Roundtable events:

- **Strengthening accountability** – this pathway aims to ensure opportunities for growth, expansion and diversification are directed toward genuine Aboriginal businesses, and overcome issues such as 'black cladding', where non-Indigenous businesses take unfair advantage to gain access to otherwise inaccessible procurement opportunities.
- **Supporting business** – this pathway acknowledges that many Aboriginal businesses are new, less established and may need tailored support.
- **Growing potential** – this pathway will work to help Aboriginal businesses achieve recognition, and potentially access capital and develop their businesses.

These pathways form the foundation for the NSW Roadmap.

### Aboriginal Business Roundtables

Three business roundtables were held in NSW in 2022 and 2023. Businesses discussed how the NSW Government could better engage with them and work supportively with the Aboriginal private sector to achieve growth and prosperity.

The third roundtable, held in Dubbo in 2023, focused on how to better partner with local government to support Aboriginal businesses.

The Aboriginal Business Roundtables continue to evolve as work continues.

## Reviewing the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy

NSW Treasury has reviewed the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders. More than 300 stakeholders were consulted, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses, the broader Aboriginal community, verification bodies and government staff, with more than 2,000 pieces of feedback collated. The review evaluated the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Procurement Policy and explored potential improvements to address challenges faced by Aboriginal businesses when trying to access government procurement. There were 17 recommendations developed to improve how the Aboriginal Procurement Policy works. The NSW Government will consider the recommendations of the review as it develops a new Aboriginal Procurement Policy that makes it easier for NSW Government and Aboriginal businesses to work together and deliver better outcomes for the Aboriginal community.

## Aboriginal Employment and Enterprise Strategic Framework

Investment NSW is responsible for developing the Aboriginal Employment and Enterprise Strategic Framework, which includes:

- an approach that considers place-specific barriers and opportunities faced by Aboriginal people and businesses in relation to employment across a range of cohorts. This includes issues affecting employment participation, in both the supply and demand for labour
- piloting the framework approach in Western Sydney, guiding the co-development of a local employment and enterprise strategy to increase sustainable employment, and prioritise practical actions that build on local strengths and respond to local needs.

The strategy will:

- employ a consultative, whole-of-government approach that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal individuals and communities
- include private sector participation and planning for the workforce for future industries
- leverage best practice in behavioural economics and program design to ensure Aboriginal people have access to sustainable employment and job opportunities that enable economic prosperity.

### Case study: One-stop shop for Aboriginal business owners

Investment NSW is developing a one-stop shop for business support for Aboriginal businesses. It will take the form of an online portal, which will include information on and links to relevant existing government services in an easy-to-access destination for Aboriginal business owners.

As part of this project, existing services for Aboriginal businesses will be evaluated to understand how they are working and identify what can be improved, to inform the development of an effective, targeted and holistic approach to business support. This stage of the project is progressing with the aim of improving services based on the evaluation by 2024.

## Progress against NSW Implementation Plan commitments

See [Socio-Economic Outcome 8](#): Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.





# Socio-Economic Outcomes and targets

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# Socio-Economic Outcomes and targets

## Performance summary

The performance data outlined below provides a snapshot of NSW's progress on the 17 Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome areas. However, more data is required to build a comprehensive picture of Closing the Gap progress in NSW.

NSW performance summary	# of targets <sup>3</sup>	% of targets
Target met	1	5
Target on track	6	32
Target improving, but not on track	3	16
No change from baseline	1	5
Target worsening	5	26
Data not available on current performance	3	16

## Guide to this report

This report includes a dedicated section for each Socio-Economic Outcome and associated target. Each section includes the most recent data used to measure the relevant target. There is commentary included that provides context and further information about progress, and assesses whether the data has improved or worsened from the baseline (the data collected before the National Agreement was signed) and whether NSW is on track to achieve the target.

There is also an update on progress, as of July 2023, against initiatives committed to in the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan, and whether each initiative is completed, on track (under original timelines), in progress (commenced, but experiencing some delays) or still being planned.

<sup>3</sup> Note: The total number of targets adds up to 19 as targets 9 and 15 each have 2 sub-targets. The Productivity Commission does not articulate state-level targets. To calculate the gap to target, this report makes the following assumptions:

- Where the target is to achieve a certain percentage – for example, 91% of babies born with a healthy birthweight – that same percentage target is used in the NSW context.
- Where a target is expressed as a percent increase or decrease – for example, a 15% reduction in incarceration – the target is calculated by applying the increase or decrease to the NSW baseline.

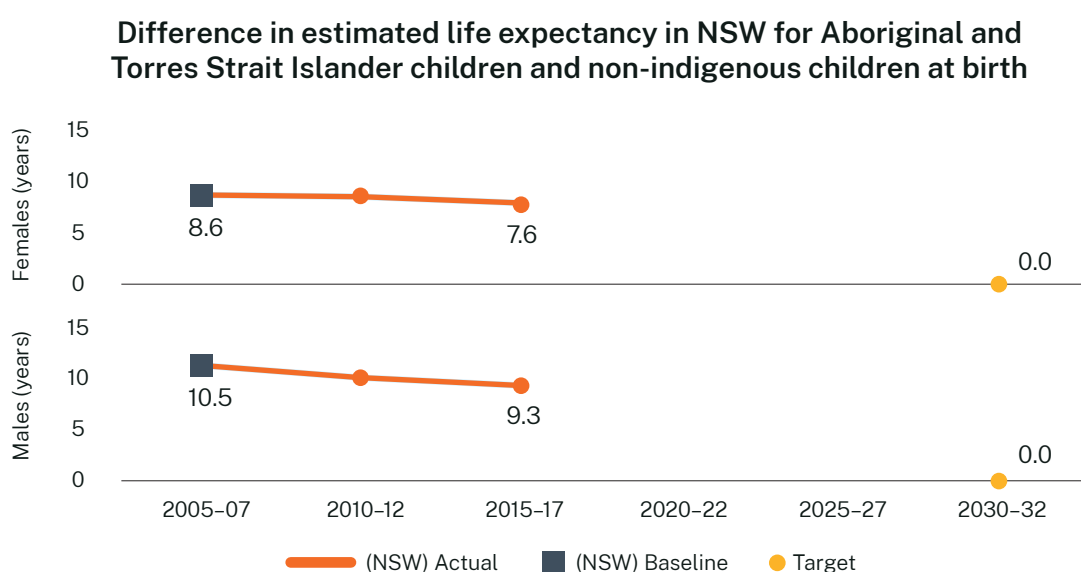
# Socio-Economic Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.	Improving	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with Ministry of Health.

## Overview of progress

### Official measure



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

## Commentary on progress

In NSW there has been no new data since the 2015–2017 update included in the previous Annual Report, where the difference in life expectancy was 7.6 years for women and 9.3 years for men. There is due to be an update to the data for life expectancy by December 2023.

While there have been gradual improvements over the past 10 years in this area, increased action is necessary to eliminate the difference in life expectancy. This requires collective, whole-of-government and community action that considers and addresses the social and cultural determinants of health, including by increasing employment rates, educational outcomes, access to housing, and levels of cultural safety. It should also be noted that data is affected by changes in Aboriginal identification over time.

Life expectancy at birth is a summary indicator of overall population health and reflects all Closing the Gap Socioeconomic Outcome Areas. The combined influence of the determinants of health – which include socioeconomic and environmental factors, health behaviours and community capacities – impacts health and wellbeing, and ultimately life expectancy. Achieving the target of Closing the Gap in life expectancy can only occur if all the factors contributing to health and wellbeing are addressed adequately. Progress against all Closing the Gap targets should be considered when assessing progress towards Closing the Gap in life expectancy under this outcome.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### On track

- Develop a new model of care.
- Expand the 715 Health Checks Project.
- Develop a new 24-hour Aboriginal Health Practitioner Emergency Department Model.

### In progress

- Review and refresh the new NSW Health Aboriginal Health Plan.
- Develop a new Aboriginal Health Governance and Accountability Framework.
- Implement new sector strengthening for workforce development.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong

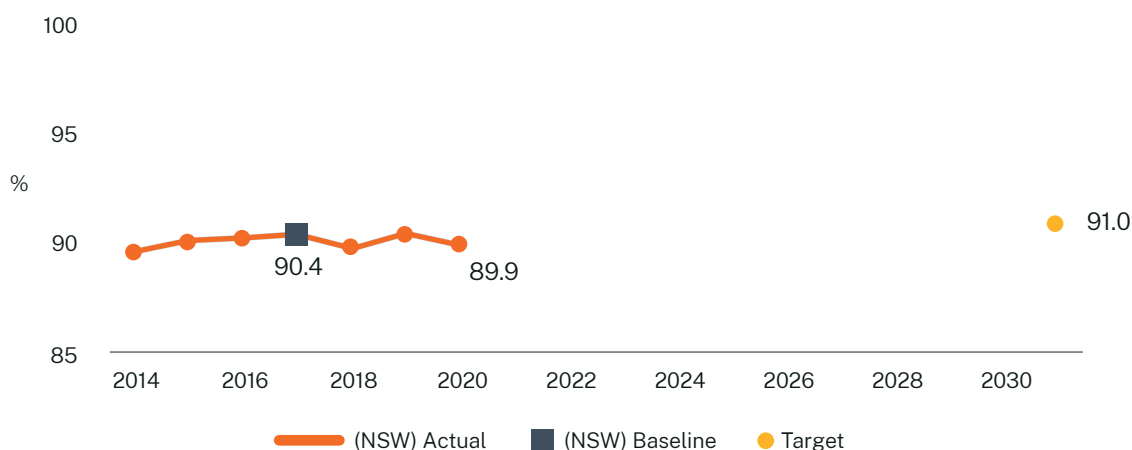
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91%.	Worsening	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with Ministry of Health.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure

Proportion of live-born singleton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies of healthy birthweight in NSW (mother's usual residence)



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

### Commentary on progress

While there have been minor fluctuations, the proportion of Aboriginal babies with a healthy birthweight in NSW is stable at approximately 90%. To achieve the target, an absolute increase of 1 percentage point is needed. To achieve this, there will need to be further community-led action to support early and consistent access to high-quality and culturally safe antenatal care; improve the health and wellbeing of mothers; and reduce harmful behaviours during pregnancy, such as smoking and alcohol consumption.

The proportion of Aboriginal women who receive antenatal care before 14 weeks gestation has been increasing over time, from 50% in 2013 to 76% in 2020, and to 79% in 2021 (nearly 4 in 5 women). Access to antenatal care early in pregnancy, as well as ongoing care with a known clinician (e.g. GP, midwife, GP obstetrician or obstetrician) for screening, diagnosis, referral and treatment supports a healthy pregnancy and healthy fetal development.

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### In progress

- Expand the Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations.
- Explore and develop innovative Birthing on Country models.
- Identify options for Aboriginal community co-designed projects to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

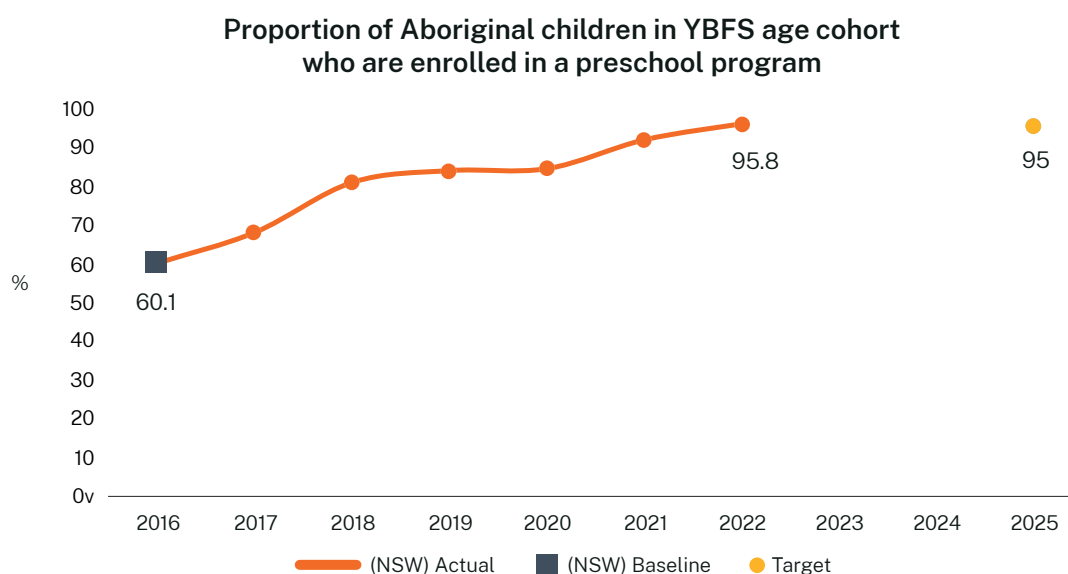
## Socio-Economic Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high-quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
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%.	Improving	Met

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Education.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure



### Commentary on progress

Enrolment in 600 hours of a quality early childhood education program in the 2 years before school is associated with better outcomes for children. In NSW, as of 2022, 95.8% of Aboriginal children in the year-before-school age cohort were enrolled in a preschool program. Based on this data, the target has been met ahead of schedule.

However, while this is promising progress, there are still issues to be resolved in relation to the affordability and availability of preschools. Aboriginal children's and families' continued experiences of racism and a lack of cultural capability among preschools can also prevent further engagement with preschool education by Aboriginal children and families. A strengthened and sustained focus on cultural safety in early childhood services will address systemic racism and contribute to achievement of the target.

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### In progress

- Develop a Cultural Safety Framework.

#### Planned

- Deliver Connecting to Country training for early childhood educators.
- Establish early childhood Aboriginal engagement officers.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years

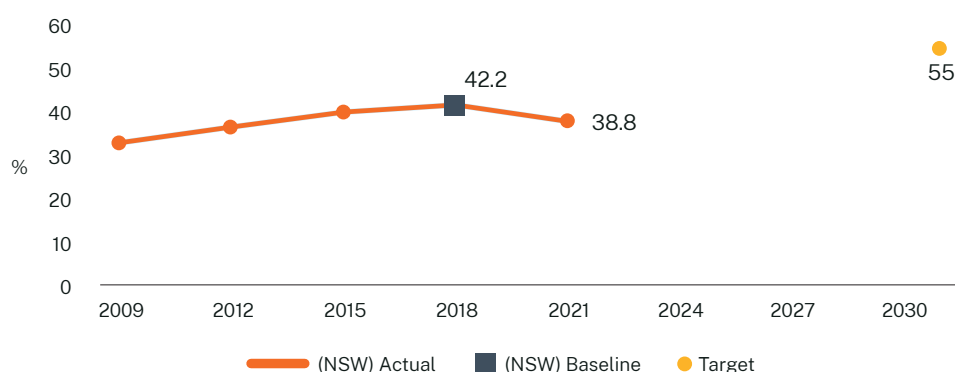
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all 5 domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 55%.	Worsening	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with Ministry of Health.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in NSW assessed as developmentally on track in all 5 domains of the Australian Early Development Census



Source: Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment

### Commentary on progress

There has been no new data for this outcome since the previous Annual Report. In NSW, the proportion of Aboriginal children who are developmentally on track has increased over time but dipped between the baseline measure in 2018 and 2021. To achieve the target, an absolute increase of 16.2 percentage points is needed. While Closing the Gap programs and responses may take years to translate into improvements in early childhood development, further and more ambitious action is required to achieve this target by 2031.

Aboriginal childhood development is supported by a high level of enrolment in preschool programs in the year before starting school. Continued cross-government work is needed to develop and support a holistic model of care that addresses the social factors that impact child development (such as inadequate housing and food insecurity).

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### In progress

- Enhance Brighter Beginnings accelerator initiatives.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential

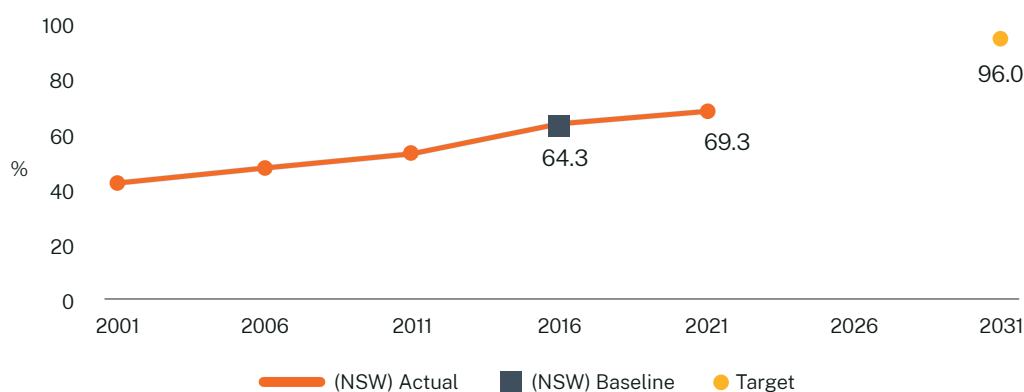
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 20 to 24) attaining Year 12 or an equivalent qualification to 96%.	Improving	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Education.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or Certificate III or above, 20–24 years



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Commentary on progress

The proportion of Aboriginal people (aged 20 to 24) in NSW who have attained a Year 12 or equivalent qualification has increased by 5 percentage points from 64.3% in 2016 to 69.3% in 2021. However, the rate of change will need to increase to achieve the target by 2031.

Data indicates the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NSW attaining an HSC was 38% in 2022. This is an interim figure as some students will complete their HSC over 3 years and final results will be available in early 2024.

It is important to note that the Year 12 cohort in 2022 experienced major disruption to their learning throughout their entire senior secondary schooling. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, which led to long periods of learning from home, as well as major disruptions in some parts of the state from the 2019–2020 bushfires and 2021 flooding events. These have had a discernible impact on students' attendance and retention patterns, which are key indicators for HSC attainment.



## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### On track

- Expand on proven local NSW AECG Aboriginal curricula.
- Develop Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework.
- Deliver the Perfect Presence Pilot Program.
- Review Personalised Learning Pathways guidelines.
- Support the Anti-Racism Policy.

### In progress

- Deliver My Future, My Culture, My Way.
- Explore the expansion of Pirru Thangkuray Cultural Engagement and Goal Setting Program.
- Review suspension and tutorial centres.

### Planned

- Establish a NSW AECG Regional Operations Model.
- Expand the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.
- Promote support and resources for Aboriginal families for making complaints.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways

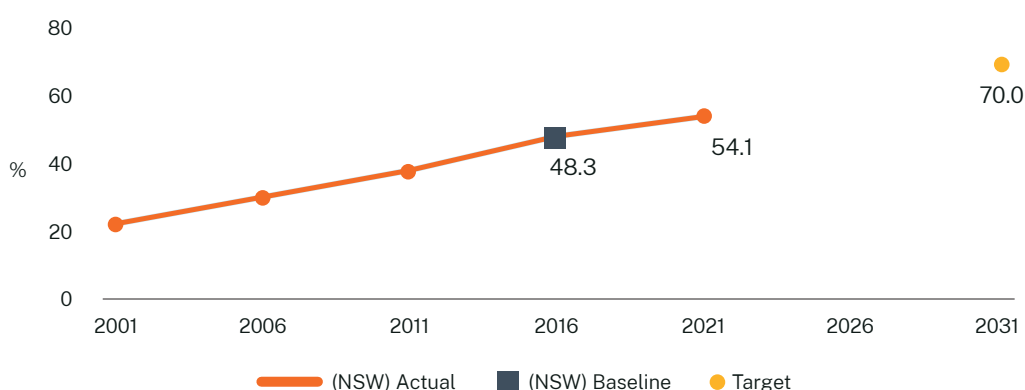
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 to 34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.	Improving	On track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Education.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW who have completed Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate level III or above, 25–34 years



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Commentary on progress

The proportion of Aboriginal people (aged 25 to 34) in NSW who have attained a Certificate III or higher qualification has increased by 5.8%, from 48.3% in 2016 to 54.1% in 2021. If this rate continues, the target of 70% will be achieved by 2031. However, the proportion of Aboriginal students aged 34 years or younger who commenced Certificate III or above qualifications declined in 2020, likely due to uncertainty driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further pathways connecting secondary and tertiary education, and greater access to culturally informed mentors will support a continued increase in the proportion of Aboriginal people achieving this qualification to 2031.

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### On track

- Ensure that Barranggirra – Skilling for Employment Initiative is optimally effective.
- Expand Career Guidance Service, Careers NSW.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education

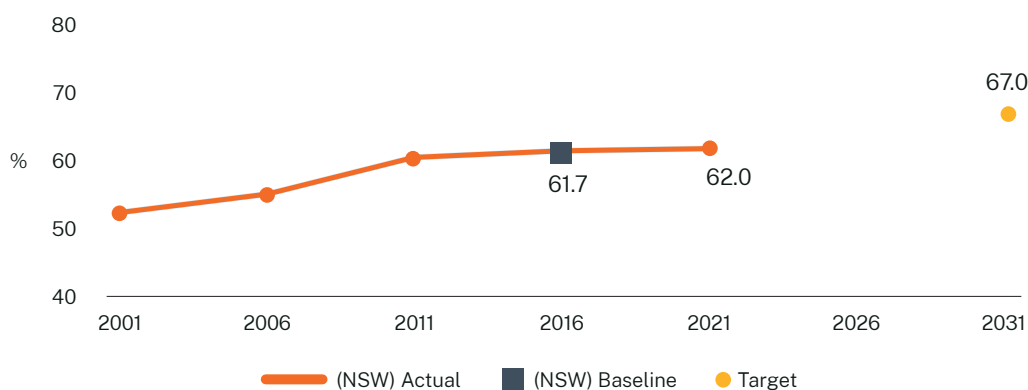
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15 to 24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%.	Improving	On track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Education.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure

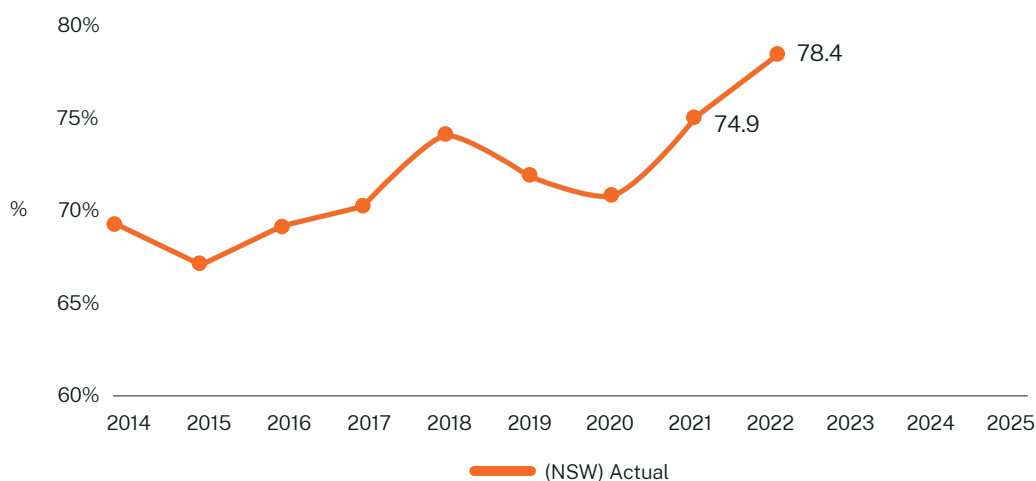
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW, aged 15–24 years, who are fully engaged in employment, education or training



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

#### Additional information

NSW indicator(s): Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who recently left school in NSW and are in employment, education or training



Source: NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey

## Commentary on progress

The proportion of Aboriginal people (aged 15 to 24) in NSW who are fully engaged in employment, education or training increased by 0.3%, from 61.7% in 2016 to 62.0% in 2021. While this is only a small increase, this target is projected to be met due to data from the NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey, which shows a 7.5% increase between 2020 and 2022 in Aboriginal people who are engaged in employment, education or training at the time of the survey.

The major reasons for Aboriginal people not fully engaging in employment, education or training are that they provide unpaid care to others, work part-time, or require assistance for these activities.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### On track

- Ensure that the Barranggirra – Skilling for Employment Initiative is optimally effective.
- Expand Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant.
- Expand the Career Guidance Service, Careers NSW.
- Develop 2022–2025 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

### In progress

- Develop an Aboriginal Workforce and Leadership Strategy.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

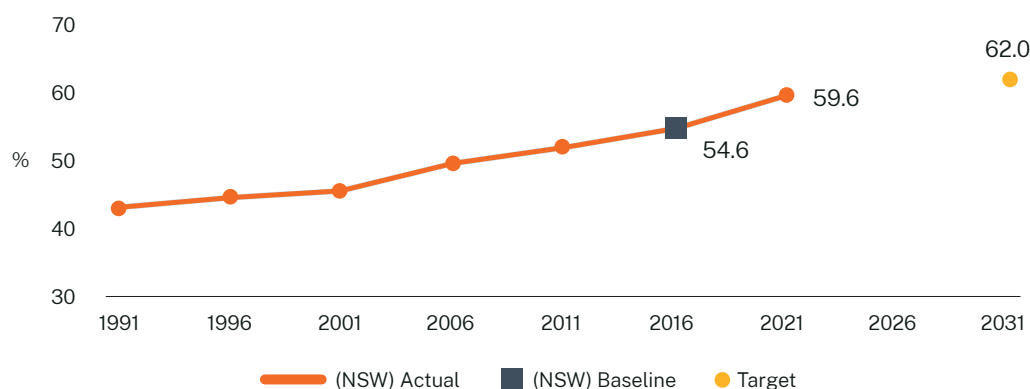
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 to 64 who are employed to 62%.	Improving	On track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure

Share of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW, aged 25–64 years, who are employed



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Commentary on progress

The proportion of Aboriginal people (aged 25 to 64 years) in NSW who are employed has increased by 5 percentage points, from 54.6% in 2016 to 59.6% in 2021. If current trends continue, the target of 62% is likely to be achieved by 2031.

While this progress is promising, the employment rates of Aboriginal people could be further increased by reducing racism in the labour market, increasing employment in regional areas, and increasing levels of educational attainment, particularly training that supports sustainable employment.

Macroeconomic conditions in the coming years may also have a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal employment outcomes as historical disadvantage and exclusion has meant Aboriginal workers can be concentrated in industries employing low-skilled workers and with less secure jobs. The Aboriginal labour market is also younger than the non-Indigenous workforce, making Aboriginal unemployment and participation particularly sensitive to changes in macroeconomic conditions.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### Complete

- Hold ongoing Aboriginal business roundtables to support Aboriginal economic advancement.
- Review access to public liability insurance.
- Review access to capital for Aboriginal businesses.

### On track

- Establish a one-stop shop for business support.
- Implement the Aboriginal Tourism Business Activation Program.
- Develop an Aboriginal Enterprise Strategy.
- Review the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy.

### In progress

- Scope a training review.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
9A: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88%.	Improving	On track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Planning and Environment.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure



### Commentary on progress

Current trends indicate that NSW is on track to exceed the target. As Australian Bureau of Statistics data for this measure is only available every 5 years, the Department of Communities and Justice will monitor the proportion of Aboriginal households in social housing that are appropriately sized (not overcrowded) by housing program (public housing, Aboriginal Housing Office and community housing) on a more frequent basis. While this measure will not have a target set, monitoring its trajectory will provide some insight on performance.

While Target 9A is on track, we know Aboriginal communities are facing a housing crisis, and ‘appropriately sized’ housing does not reflect the actual housing needs or aspirations of communities.

In addition, the crowding measures used are based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard. We know that any measure of crowding needs to be culturally responsive and recognise Aboriginal mobility and kinship obligations. We also recognise that while some households may not consider themselves ‘overcrowded’, they may not have as many people in the house if more housing stock were available. We are working towards a strengths-based, culturally informed approach to determine whether Aboriginal households consider themselves to be overcrowded.

To support this, and Aboriginal housing delivery more broadly, we are working on strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to provide culturally safe housing delivery and services.

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
<p><b>9B:</b> By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard</li> <li>II. in or near 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’).</li> </ul>	No data	Unknown

As a newly developed target, 9B does not yet have an agreed data source to measure progress against. Work is underway to identify and formalise indicators to measure this target in future.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### On track

- Support the Aboriginal Community Housing Provider (ACHP) sector’s aspirations for growth.
- Research and understand mobility as a key driver of overcrowding and other housing issues.

### In progress

- Develop the Aboriginal Wellbeing Framework for Aboriginal people living in social housing in NSW.
- Expand ACCO services to strengthen Aboriginal tenancies (social and private).
- Expand home ownership programs and investigate opportunities to build on existing models.
- Maintain the hardware of community housing that impacts on health outcomes through ACHP asset management.

### Planned

- Provide an additional construction stimulus program for the ACHP sector to provide new supply of dedicated Aboriginal housing stock.
- Develop culturally responsive building standards and design principles for Aboriginal housing in partnership with Aboriginal communities.
- Embed flexible asset responses for families providing accommodation to support kin.
- Trial ACHP delivery of outcomes-focused housing model.
- Design a framework for expanding the outcomes-focused housing model.



# Socio-Economic Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

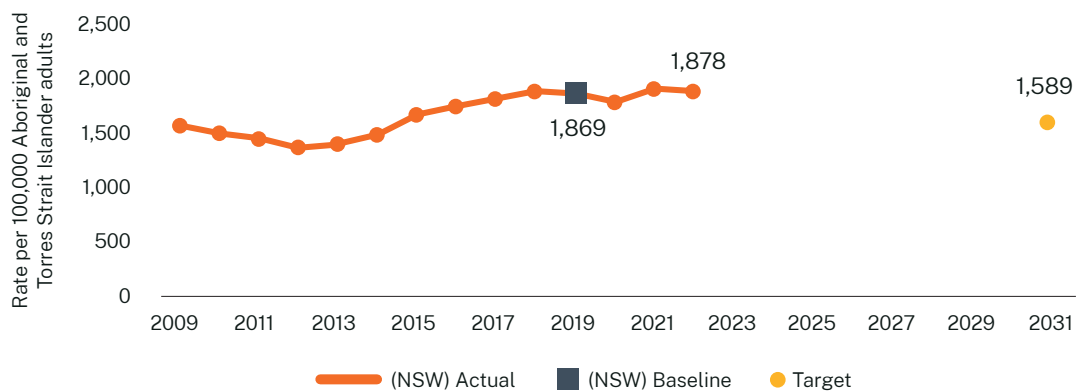
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15%.	Worsening	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Communities and Justice.

## Overview of progress

### Official measure

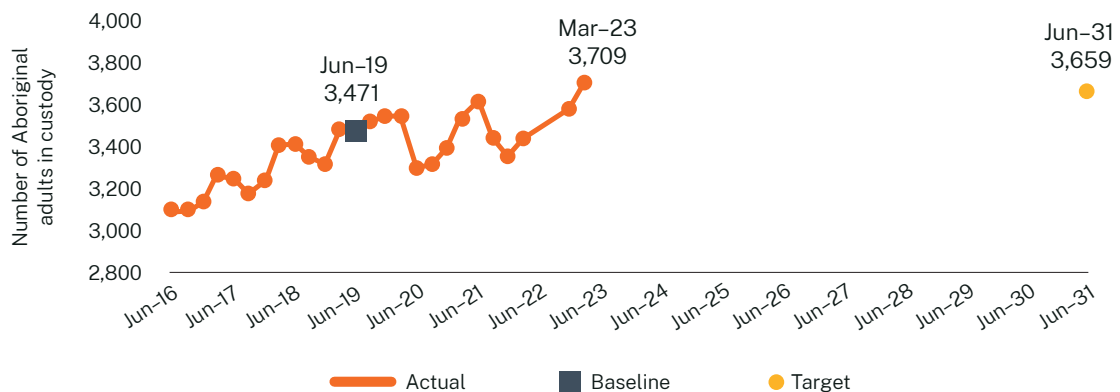
Age-standardised imprisonment rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in NSW (ABS)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Additional information

NSW Indicator(s): Number of Aboriginal adults in custody



Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

## Commentary on progress

If current trends continue, this target will not be achieved by 2031. The proportion of Aboriginal people in custody now is greater than the baseline measure, increasing from 1,869 people per 100,000 in 2019 to 1,878.3 people per 100,000 in 2022. While there was a reduction in the Aboriginal prison population as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Aboriginal people in custody in NSW has since returned to pre-pandemic levels.<sup>4</sup>

At 31 March 2023, the Aboriginal adult prison population was 3,709. This is an increase of 206 Aboriginal people (or 5.9%) from the same time last year. This is the highest number since the start of the pandemic. The growth in the Aboriginal prison population is largely driven by those on remand (which increased by 122 people or 8.9%).<sup>5</sup> The increase in the number of Aboriginal people on remand is being driven by an increased volume of Aboriginal people proceeded against by NSW Police; an increase in the number of Aboriginal people refused bail; an increase in the volume of bail breaches and revocations; and an increase in the average number of days Aboriginal people are on remand awaiting court finalisation.

Through NSW CAPO-led consultations, Aboriginal communities across NSW have continually reinforced their deep levels of frustration with the lack of action to address the increasing rates of incarceration of Aboriginal people. Communities have said that to reverse current trends, there need to be long-lasting structural changes to the NSW justice system, including through:

- genuine partnerships on justice system processes
- increased investment in preventative services
- more support provided to NSW ACCOs and legal services across the sector, including involvement in Closing the Gap processes.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### On track

- Optimise existing court diversion programs to increase successful diversion.
- Implement new ways to include the particular circumstances of Aboriginal offenders in the sentencing exercise.

### In progress

- Expand the Justice Reinvestment Program to address underlying causes of crime for Aboriginal people.
- Conduct a jurisdictional scan to identify diversion programs that could be implemented to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW.
- Include Aboriginal Elders and respected community members in decision-making across diversion, bail determinations, sentencing, parole, monitoring of orders and breach proceedings.
- Test new and improved ways of administering bail in one court location.
- Increase the use of community-based sentences.
- Improve the engagement of Aboriginal offenders on supervised order.
- Increase the role of Aboriginal communities and organisations, including Elders and respected community members, in decision-making around corrections programs and policies.
- Identify gaps in existing diversion programs and implement a program to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal defendants.
- Implement performance targets and management processes for existing court diversion programs.
- Co-design and test culturally appropriate trauma-informed corrections model.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_pages/Closing-the-Gap.aspx](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_pages/Closing-the-Gap.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> [www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_custody\\_stats/bocsar\\_custody\\_stats.aspx](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_custody_stats/bocsar_custody_stats.aspx)

- Design a young adult problem-solving court model, including learnings from the Youth Jurisdiction and staged response options.
- Expand and strengthen Circle Sentencing.
- ALS Bail Advocacy and Support Program.
- Improve the current framework for engaging Aboriginal people on community-based orders on the Balund-a Program.

## **Planned**

- Establish a Short-Term Remand Project in the Local Court.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people obtaining parole at their earliest release date.
- Design and implement a Throughcare model to reduce the number of Aboriginal people returning to prison.
- Explore initiatives to divert people from arrest, including mental health diversion.
- Co-design a place-based community policing model involving local service coordination to provide diversion options for Aboriginal adults.
- Improve the operation of bail courts and bail systems. Test and monitor strategies to improve the operation of bail courts and systems in one location prior to expanding to additional locations.
- Optimise the current bail system to remove barriers to bail with a focus on the impact of remand.
- Test new ways of sentencing Aboriginal defendants.
- Undertake a cultural audit of Community Corrections policies and procedures.

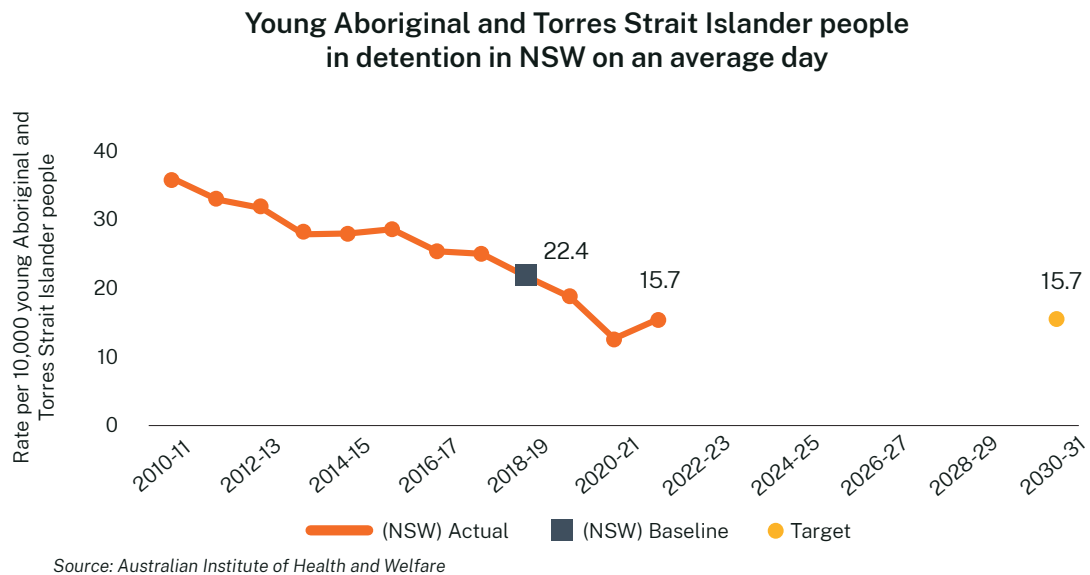
# Socio-Economic Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10 to 17 years) in detention by at least 30%.	Improving	On track

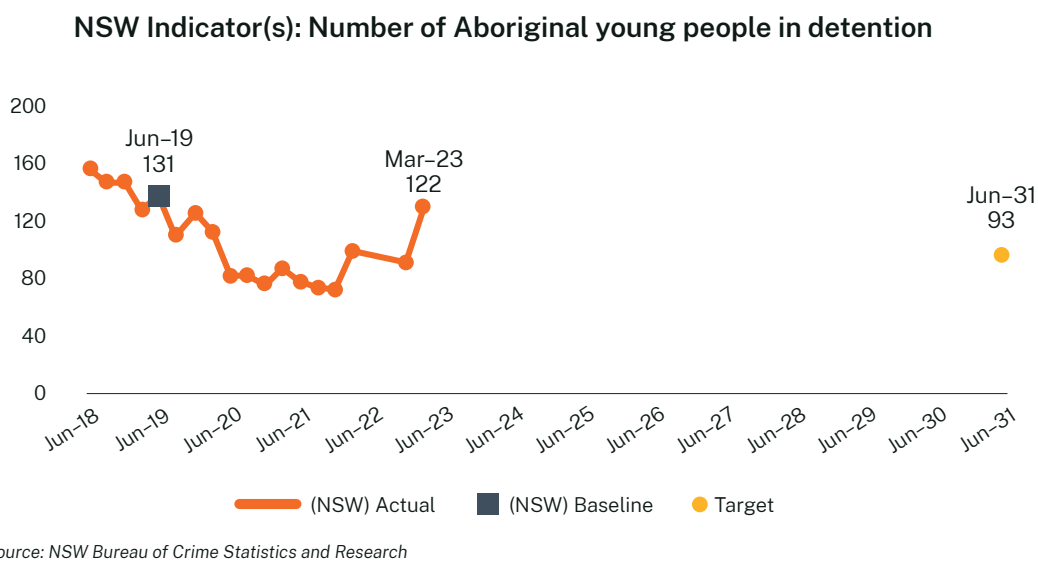
Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Communities and Justice.

## Overview of progress

### Official measure



## Additional information



## Commentary on progress

The proportion of Aboriginal young people in detention has decreased from 22.3 per 10,000 people in 2018–19 to 15.7 per 10,000 people in 2022.

At the end of March 2023, the number of Aboriginal young people in detention in NSW was 122. This is an increase of 28.4% from March 2022. The growth over the last 12 months has been driven by both the remand (up 11 or 13.6%) and sentenced populations (up 16 or 114.3%).<sup>6</sup>

The main drivers contributing to the recent increase in the youth remand population include an increase in Aboriginal young people being remanded for property offences (theft, break and enter, and robbery) and assault.

Despite some recent positive trends, the rate of Aboriginal young people in detention, including children under the age of 14, remains unacceptably high. The proportion of Aboriginal young people in detention compared to non-Indigenous young people continues to increase.

Through NSW CAPO-led consultation, Aboriginal communities have continually highlighted the need for urgent action to reduce the number of young people interacting with the justice system, including through continued agency collaboration with police to enable diversionary actions where appropriate; raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14; and transforming the youth justice system so that it is culturally safe, trauma-informed, therapeutic and ensures access to holistic supports. Limited progress will be seen without a strong commitment and approach in addressing these key issues.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### In progress

- Cultural therapeutic court model for the Children's Court.

### Planned

- Develop an Aboriginal Justice Partnership.
- Co-design and test a culturally appropriate, trauma-informed corrections model.
- Design therapeutic pathways for young people.
- Strengthen community-led early assistance and support programs across NSW.
- Reduce the number of young people arrested, including through increased diversionary action.
- Divert children and young people into relevant supports and services.
- Identify and implement actions to reduce the number of bail refusals, breaches and bail revocations for Aboriginal young people.
- Co-design and implement an Early Magistrates Bail Determination pilot.
- Co-design an Aboriginal Throughcare Strategy for children and young people.
- Co-design community-led local initiatives with young people to reduce reoffending (informed by the Throughcare Strategy).
- Short-Term Remand Project in the Local Court.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_pages/Closing-the-Gap.aspx](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_pages/Closing-the-Gap.aspx)

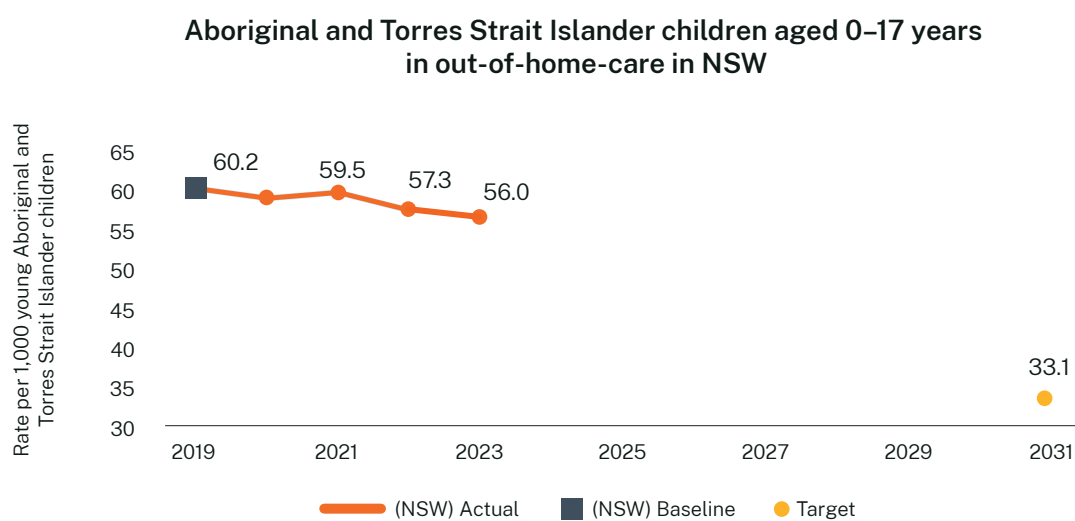
## Socio-Economic Outcome 12: Aboriginal children are not over-represented in the child protection system

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45%.	Improving	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Communities and Justice.

### Overview of progress

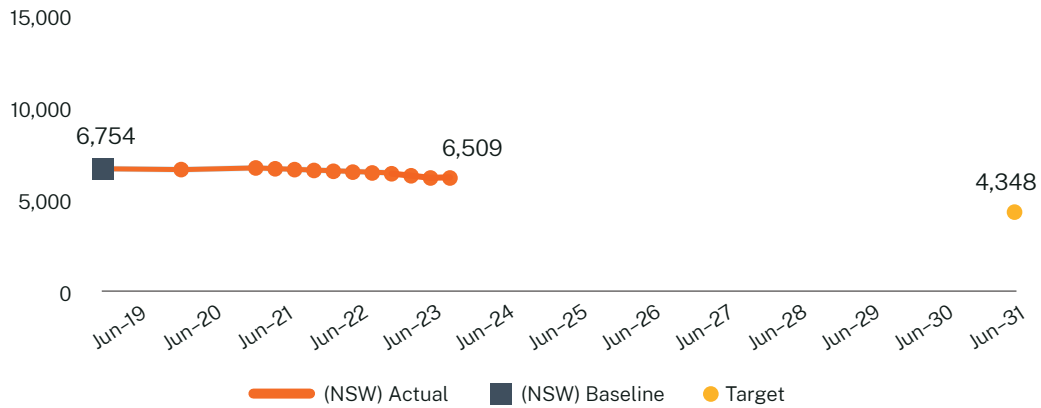
#### Official measure



Source: NSW Government, Australian Bureau of Statistics

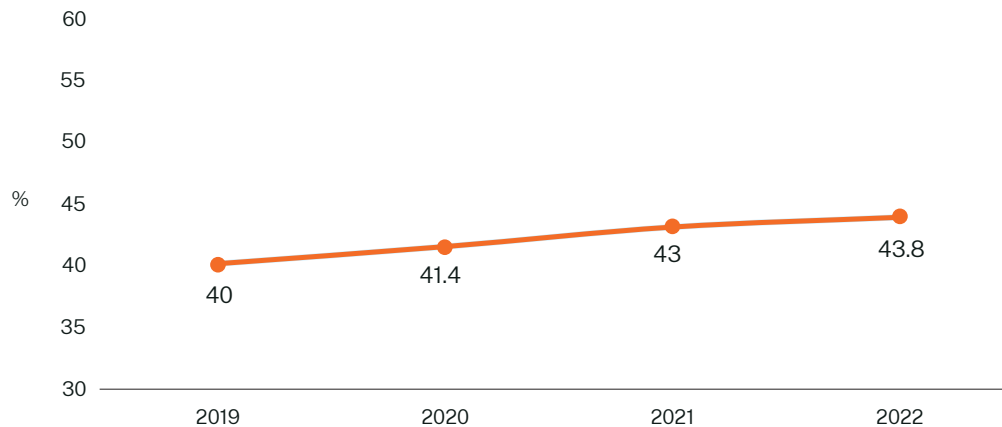
## Additional information

**NSW Indicator(s): Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home-care in NSW (NSW Govt, June 2022)**



Source: Family and Community Services Insights Analysis and Research

**Proportion of children (%) aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care in NSW who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

## Commentary on progress

NSW is tracking in the right direction for this outcome, with the rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care (OOHC) continuing to decline from 60.2 per 1,000 in June 2019 to 57.3 in June 2022 and 56.0 in March 2023. However, despite the trend of incremental improvement, the trajectory remains well off track to meet the target. Although more Aboriginal children are exiting OOHC than entering each month, the number of non-Aboriginal children entering OOHC is declining at a faster rate than that of Aboriginal children. This has meant that the proportion of children in OOHC who are Aboriginal has remained at 44% for the entire 2022–23 financial year.

Significant structural reform and additional family supports will be required to meet the target of 33.1 per 1,000 children in OOHC and address the unacceptably high rates of Aboriginal children in OOHC. To reduce the rate of Aboriginal children in OOHC, the child protection system will need to focus more on targeted early intervention, family strengthening and community-informed decision-making.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### On track

- Review Child Wellbeing Units.
- Aboriginal Guardian Support Model.

### In progress

- Cultural Capability Training.
- Aboriginal Family Preservation Model.
- Reallocation of Family Preservation Permanency Support Program funding.
- Case management transfer to ACCOs.
- Family is Culture.
- Full implementation of Aboriginal Case Management Policy.
- Strong Families, Our Way.
- Aboriginal-led Commissioning Model.
- Aboriginal Legal Service Child and Family Advocacy Support.
- NSW Human Services Investment Plan.
- Transition investment from crisis to early intervention and prevention.
- Casework quality assurance.
- Structured decision-making.

### Planned

- Holistic partnerships.



# Socio-Economic Outcome 13: Aboriginal families and households are safe

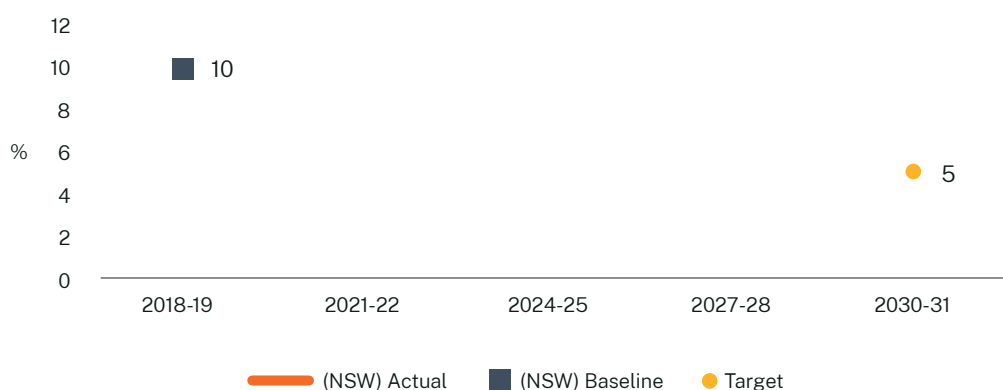
Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.	Worsening	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Communities and Justice.

## Overview of progress

### Official measure

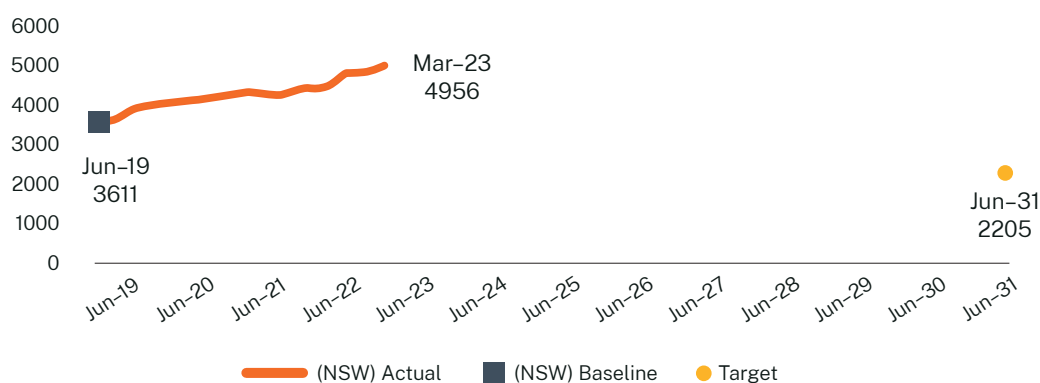
**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 15+ years old in NSW who experienced domestic physical or threatened physical harm**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Additional information

**NSW Indicator(s): Number of domestic violence-related assault victims (Aboriginal women and children) reported to NSW Police**



Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

## Commentary on performance

There is no new data on the official Closing the Gap measure for this target, which is based on the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. The NSW proxy measure (an alternative measure used to indicate progress against the outcome) is the number of domestic violence-related assault victims (women and children) reported to NSW Police. In NSW, the number of domestic assault incidents against Aboriginal women and children for the latest 12-month period (April 2022 to March 2023) was 4,956. This is an increase of 12.6% from 2 years prior.

In NSW, information about whether victims identify as Aboriginal in the criminal justice system is often based on information recorded by NSW Police. Prior to 2022, the proportion of people with an 'unknown' Aboriginality status in police data was around 20% for many offences. This made it harder to use this data effectively. In response to this data quality issue, in January 2022 NSW Police made it mandatory for officers to ask most victims and offenders about their Aboriginal identification. This has significantly improved the quality of Aboriginal identification in police data. The proportion of people with an 'unknown' Aboriginality has fallen to below 5%; however, there has been a corresponding jump in people recorded as 'Aboriginal'. Without context, this can give the inaccurate appearance of a rapid increase in Aboriginal victimisation and offending. It also means that raw data from 2022 onwards is not comparable with data from 2021 or earlier. As a result, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) has implemented a measure of derived Aboriginality for victims of crime recorded by the NSW Police. This will allow a consistent time series for this indicator. Accordingly, BOCSAR has reset the baseline for Target 13 using the updated data series.

Through NSW CAPO-led consultation, Aboriginal communities have made clear that whole-of-system change is required to decrease the rates of domestic and family violence against Aboriginal victims. This will involve changing how policies and programs are designed and delivered, to prioritise self-determined, long-term and locally tailored solutions. It will also require increasing support for preventative, community-led programs that focus on recovery and healing, as well as social, residential and emergency accommodation.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

### Completed

- Establish Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network.

### On track

- Co-design a plan for early intervention and prevention focused on recovery and healing.

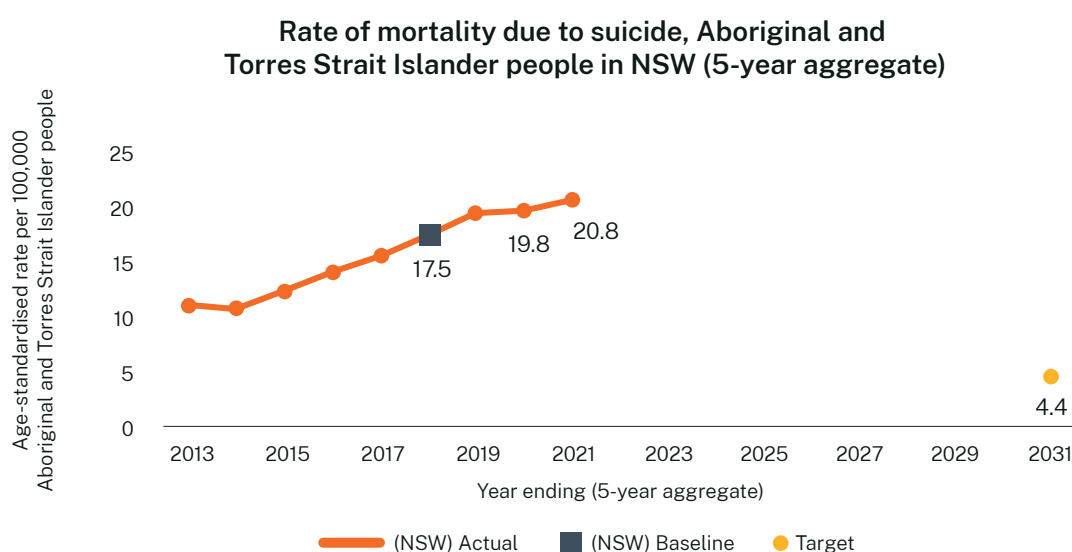
## Socio-Economic Outcome 14: Aboriginal people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.	Worsening	Off track

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Ministry of Health.

### Overview of performance

#### Official measure



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Commentary on performance

While there is no specified trajectory or expected timeline for achieving zero suicides, a trajectory of a 75% reduction in the suicide rate is presented here as it is the most ambitious of the 4 target trajectories (20%, 25%, 50% and 75%) developed through National Agreement processes.

In NSW, the suicide rate and the number of suicides among Aboriginal people have been consistently increasing since 2014, rising from a rate of 17.5 per 100,000 people in 2014–2018 to 20.8 in 2017–2021. While Closing the Gap responses may take years to translate into improvements in suicide reduction, reversing the current trend and decreasing the suicide rate will require continued investment in Aboriginal-led mental health and suicide prevention programs that are adaptable to local needs.

It should also be noted that the data being measured is affected by changes in Aboriginal identification over time.

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### On track

- Develop a new Aboriginal mental health model of care.
- Expand the Building on Aboriginal Communities' Resilience program.

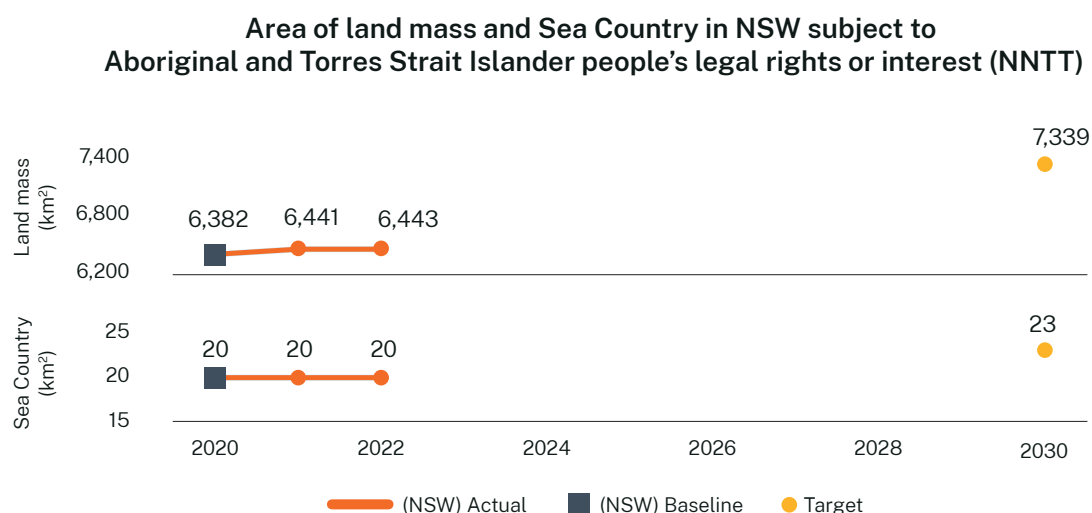
## Socio-Economic Outcome 15: Aboriginal people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
15a: By 2030, a 15% increase in Australia's land mass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.	Improving	On track
15b: By 2030, a 15% increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.	No change	Off track

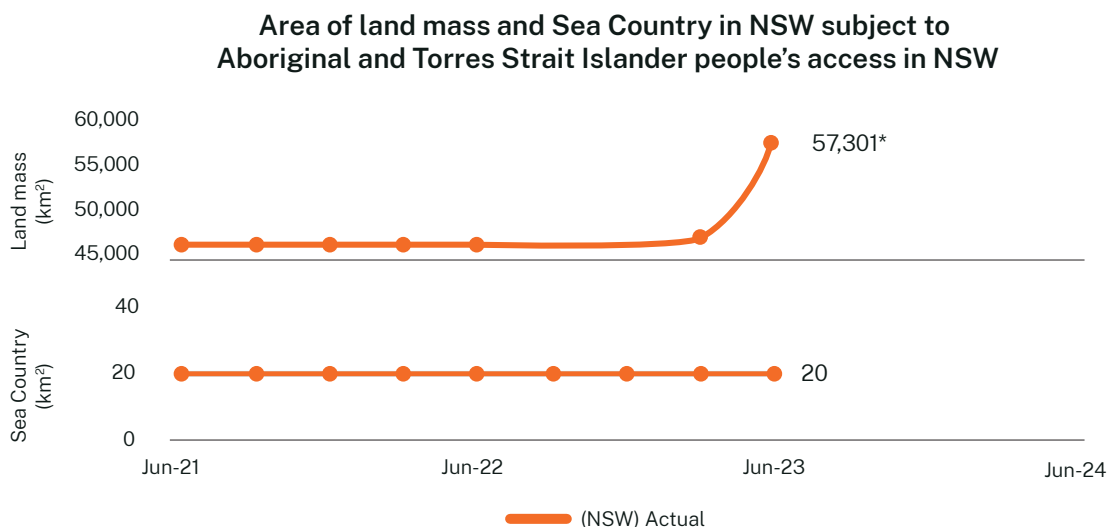
Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Planning and Environment.

### Overview of progress

#### Official measure



## Additional information



Source: NSW Government

## Commentary on progress

There has been an increase in land 'subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests' from 6,382 km<sup>2</sup> in 2020 to 6,443 km<sup>2</sup> in 2022–23. Evidence shows that there are significant advantages for Aboriginal communities in leveraging their land and water into economic opportunities. Currently, these opportunities are impacted by a large backlog in both land claim and native title determinations, and a more ambitious approach to improve these processes is required.

There has been no increase in Sea Country that is subject to Aboriginal peoples' legal rights. We know community have long been advocating for Aboriginal community-owned cultural and economic flows, and increased water rights and entitlements. Work in this space is not sufficient, and there needs to be significantly increased efforts, and genuine partnership approaches between NSW CAPO and the NSW Government to address this target.

The NSW indicator for land mass differs from the reported Productivity Commission figure, which only measures native title determinations, providing a limited view of progress. Drivers reported by NSW are listed in the following table:

Driver	Description	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Aboriginal Land Claims granted (including part-granted)	Area of land granted to Local Aboriginal Land Councils	1,732.19
Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)	Area of total ILUAs between native title parties and other people or bodies about the use and management of areas of land and/or waters	27,306.77
Native title determinations	Land area subject to determinations for recognition of native title rights	4,966.21
National parks joint agreements	Area of national park under Aboriginal joint management	23,346.21

Further work needs to be undertaken between the Australian Government and NSW to determine a target and baseline for NSW that considers and accurately reflects the varied drivers of the rights and interests that Aboriginal people have available to them in NSW (i.e. land claims, co-management agreements, ILUAs).

In 2022–23, land was returned to 67 different Local Aboriginal Land Councils. A concerted effort to increase the number of positive-outcome determinations was made, with 70% of current determinations (year-to-date) resulting in grants or part-grants. Historically, only 25% of determinations were grants or part-grants.

## Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

There are 7 initiatives committed to under the *2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap* related to Socio-Economic Outcome 15. As of June 2023, 5 initiatives are in progress or planned with work underway to progress the initiatives. Agreement is yet to be reached on how 2 initiatives are to be delivered. We anticipate that the initiation of funded initiatives will increase the amount of land subject to the rights and interests of Aboriginal communities in NSW, supporting NSW to meet target 15a.

### In progress

- Establish a one-stop shop to support Aboriginal landowners.
- Increase Aboriginal ownership of Sea Country and inland water through reimagined models of water management.
- Improve and enhance joint management arrangements as funded and led by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

### Planned

- Establish a taskforce to negotiate a redesign of the native title and land rights systems.
- Pilot models for increasing Aboriginal land ownership and management.
- Provide improved support following land transfers.
- Support increased access to cultural fishing rights.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 16: Aboriginal cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2031, there is a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.	N/A – no data	N/A – no data

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Aboriginal Languages Trust.

There is no current baseline data or measurement for Socio-Economic Outcome 16. The 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan includes a commitment to establish this baseline and a way to measure the target, informed by how NSW Aboriginal communities define ‘strong, supported and flourishing’ languages.

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### Complete

- Develop Aboriginal languages data sovereignty principles.

#### On track

- Grow communities’ capability and capacity in working with languages data.
- Build the Aboriginal archive workforce.
- Commence a search and discovery of the State Archives collection.
- Provide community resources on options for establishing and operating language centres.
- Complete an Access to Country research paper and establish supporting partnerships.

#### In progress

- Pilot place-based agreement-making for establishing the languages baseline.
- Develop an Aboriginal Languages Policy Partnership to support the Access to Archive Material project.
- Complete community language centres research paper.

## Socio-Economic Outcome 17: Aboriginal people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

Target	Progress from baseline	Trajectory
By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equal levels of digital inclusion	N/A – no data	N/A – no data

Accountability for this Socio-Economic Outcome sits with the Department of Customer Service.

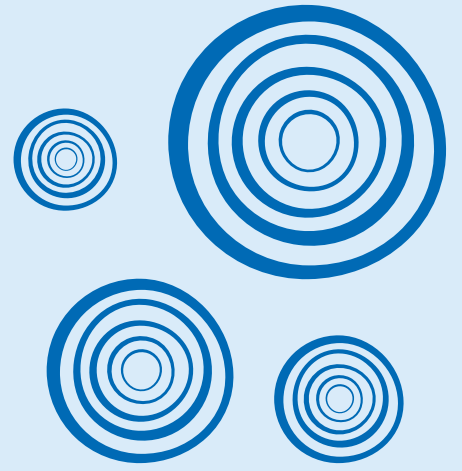
There is currently insufficient data to measure progress on Socio-Economic Outcome 17 in NSW. A research and evaluation project was funded under the 2022–2024 NSW Implementation Plan. This project will develop a shared understanding of digital inclusion and address data gaps to establish an accurate and relevant baseline for Aboriginal people and communities in NSW. This research and evaluation project is fundamental in providing an ongoing measurement of digital inclusion, which will be informed by the voices and lived experience of Aboriginal people and communities in NSW.

### Progress on NSW Implementation Plan actions

#### In progress

- Undertake a research and evaluation project to inform the design of improved digital inclusion initiatives and principles, which can be transferred to upcoming initiatives aimed at Aboriginal people. Planning and scoping of this project has commenced.
- Run digital inclusion place-based pilot programs to support community-led initiatives for Aboriginal people in NSW. Communities for the pilot programs will be determined through the community and stakeholder consultations of the above research and evaluation project. Initial scoping has commenced; however, it will be an ongoing process that will not be finalised until the above baseline project is complete.





# Annual reporting requirements

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# Annual reporting requirements

Annual report requirements	Relevant sections
Parties will include in their annual reports (Clauses 118 and 119) information on partnerships, including the number of partnerships, those that have been reviewed, for each partnership which strong partnership elements are met and unmet, and what has been achieved through the partnerships. (Clause 37)	Priority Reform 1
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. (Clause 47)	Priority Reform 2
Parties will include in their annual reports information on how they are undertaking and meeting the transformation elements. (Clause 65)	Priority Reform 3
Parties will include in their annual reports information on action taken to improve access to data and information by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. (Clause 73)	Priority Reform 4
Parties, by July 2022, agree to review and identify current spending on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services to identify reprioritisation opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, particularly to community-controlled organisations. Actions taken to implement the outcomes of these reviews will be included in Jurisdictional implementation plans and annual reports. (Clause 113)	Priority Reform 2
The Parties agree to make public information on their progress on the Agreement and their Implementation Plans through annual public reports. The annual public reports will: (Clause 118)	
draw from the dashboard and annual Productivity Commission data compilation report, to ensure consistency of measures of progress	Socio-Economic Outcomes
include information on efforts to implement this Agreement's 4 Priority Reform areas, particularly outlining how implementation aligns with the principles for action	Priority Reforms
demonstrate how efforts, investment and actions are aligned and support the achievement of Closing the Gap goals	Throughout
list the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that have been allocated funding for the purposes of Clause 24, 55a and 55b, and 135 of this Agreement; and subject to confidentiality requirements, also list the names of the organisations and the amount allocated. (Clause 118)	Information on spending with ACCOs is included under Priority Reform 2
Be tabled in parliament (Clause 119)	Tabled in 2023.



## More information

[aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/closingthegap](http://aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/closingthegap)

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