



Implementation Plan

NSW Closing the Gap

Summary

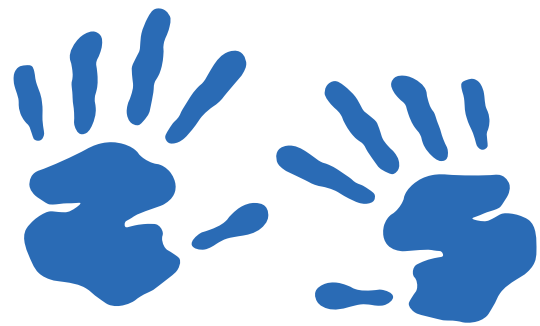
2022 - 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Government and NSW CAPO acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and meet, and the lands that we travel through on our journeys throughout New South Wales to help in Closing the Gap for Aboriginal people.

We would also like to acknowledge the Elders – Past, Present, and Emerging, and to the Stolen Generation People of this state.





The Artist

Lani Balzan is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri people of the three-river tribe. Her family originates from Mudgee but she grew up all over Australia and lived in many different towns. She now calls the Illawarra home.

Lani is a nationally recognised Aboriginal Artist, and has been creating art for over 10 years and has had continued success across the country.

One of her biggest goals and inspirations with 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 what amazing culture we have here in Australia.



www.aboriginalartbylani.com.au



The Artwork

The artwork represents the connection to the land of NSW from the red dirt, mountain ranges to the water.

The bottom part of the artwork symbolises the ocean that NSW is connected to and is connection to Salt-water people.

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

NSW is distinctively know for its many mountain ranges and escarpments which have also been 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 of the many 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 and Government working together in Closing the Gap.

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HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Background

Closing the Gap is the agreed process for governments across Australia to work with Aboriginal people to improve life outcomes.

In July 2020, the Federal Government and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (CoP) signed the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

It was the first time a genuine agreement has been made between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled representatives.

The agreement aims to improve the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It also recognises that Aboriginal people are best placed to make decisions for themselves.

This new way of working builds on the strong foundations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people already have in their communities - their deep connection to family, community, language and culture.

Each State that signed the National Agreement developed their own Implementation Plan and will report annually on their actions to achieve the outcomes of the National Agreement.

This document is a summary of the NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan for 2022-2024.

To read the full document, head to

 <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/closingthegap/>



What are the Priority Reforms?

The National Agreement is built around four Priority Reforms (one extra reform in NSW) to accelerate improvements in Closing the Gap.

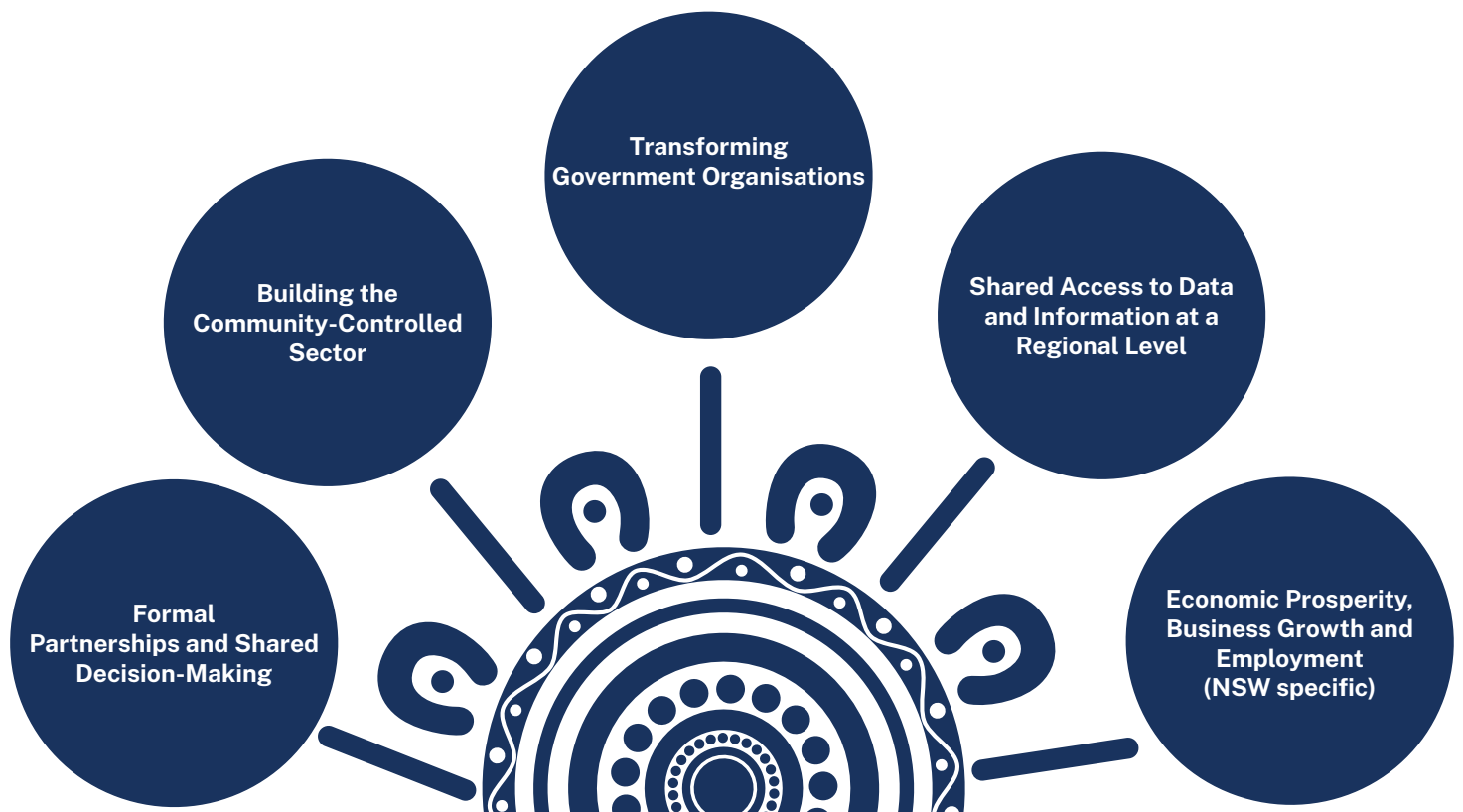
These Priority Reforms are based on what Aboriginal people have been saying for a long time to improve the lives of our people.

The National Agreement expects that each state/territory will develop their own Implementation Plan that includes timeframes, actions, funding, and ways to measure accountability in achieving the Priority Reforms.

THE PRIORITY REFORM AREAS

There are also 17 Socio-Economic Outcomes within the National Agreement to measure the progress of Closing the Gap.

The Socio-Economic Outcomes cover the life outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Health, Education, Justice & Families, Housing, Land and Water, Languages and Culture, and Digital Inclusion.



What is an Implementation Plan?

Under the National Agreement, NSW regularly develops plans for how we would implement the agreement in our state.

The Implementation Plans are documents that outline programs and policies, aligned to the National Agreement, to achieve the Priority Reforms and improve life outcomes for Aboriginal people in the 17 agreed areas.

In 2021, the first NSW Implementation Plan marked the beginning of the NSW Government's commitment to partner with Aboriginal organisations.

This plan focused mostly on what government organisations were already doing.

The plan also set out how the partnership between NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and the NSW Government would work.

The first Implementation Plan set the foundation for the second Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (this plan).

This new plan focuses on what we will do for the next two years.

The policies, programs, and direction of this plan are based on what we heard from Aboriginal communities across NSW during consultation sessions run by NSW CAPO in 2021 and 2022.

These steps mark the beginning of working with Aboriginal communities to improve life outcomes.

What we have delivered so far

In 2021, we built a strong foundation for shared-decision making and accountability through partnerships and meaningful conversations with community.

These foundations will support our work for the next eight years of the National Agreement.

We have also:

- Provided funding for NSW CAPO to employ dedicated staff to support the NSW Implementation Plan and engage with community.
- Rolled out **\$8.7 million** in Closing the Gap Grants to ACCOs and Aboriginal businesses.
- Committed **\$7.4 million** over 4-years to strengthen the four priority sectors.
- Hosted roundtables with Aboriginal businesses to share knowledge on how the NSW Government can support business growth.

We know this initial work has not done nearly enough to make changes for Aboriginal communities. That is why the 2022-2024 Implementation Plan now lays out the ambitious projects we have jointly developed for the next two years.

NSW will review these targets to improve our plan.

Based on National data on the socio-economic outcomes, NSW is ahead on one target and another five targets have improved. While other targets need further work.



HOW WE'RE WORKING DIFFERENTLY

We know the old ways of working with government have not delivered real changes for Aboriginal people. The National Agreement is a commitment to a new way of working.





Community-Led Approaches

Genuine partnership and shared decision-making means that the input of Aboriginal people will continually determine how we work over the life of the National Agreement.

Aboriginal people's voices have been heard and are central to how we have developed the Implementation Plan.

This Implementation Plan focuses on funding and supporting new programs designed in partnership with Aboriginal organisations and communities.

We will continue to ensure current policies and programmes that already exist align to Closing the Gap.

We are also making sure that relevant policies and programs already underway align with Closing the Gap.

Supporting Diverse Aboriginal People

When designing and implementing this plan, we also acknowledge the diverse groups that make up the Aboriginal community.

In all our work, we will consider the unique circumstances, strengths, and needs of:

- *Elderly Aboriginal people*
- *LGBTIQ+ people*
- *People living in regional and remote areas*
- *People living with disability*
- *Women*
- *Young people*

We also know that many Aboriginal people are included in various identity groups and again face their own unique circumstances.

That is why any program or policy that is created in the Implementation Plan will be done with these groups in mind.

You can read more about our approach to cross-cutting in the full NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan document.



Holistic Approaches

Communities have told us that the needs of Aboriginal people are connected, and services and programs should reflect this.

The outcomes we are working towards (like health, housing, education, and employment) are all linked together.

To be successful, programs and initiatives in the Implementation Plan need to cut across these different sectors.

We are working with community to break down barriers and explore further options to improve how sectors work together.

It's important to us that we are improving how government works with Aboriginal communities and how government agencies work with each other.

We know that we can't address each Priority Reform and Socio-Economic Outcome individually, but we are committed to looking at ways these sectors can work together.

Read more about cross-sector initiatives in the full Implementation Plan.

Being Accountable for our work

To create meaningful change, the NSW Government is committed to being held accountable to Aboriginal communities.

We will be consistently engaging with communities throughout all stages of the Closing the Gap program.

Regular engagement allows us to learn what's working and lets us know where we need to improve our efforts.

As well as dedicated engagements, we know that two-way communication that is open and transparent is vital for success.

To keep community and our stakeholders in the loop and actively involved, we are committed to providing plans, updates, and progress on Closing the Gap via various communication channels that communities prefer.

To get the latest updates on the NSW Closing the Gap Implementation plan head to

 <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/closingthegap/>

We are also making sure that we are reporting on our progress.

We will publish a yearly public report on Closing the Gap outcomes and commitments and senior government decision makers will regularly meet with NSW CAPO representatives to discuss progress on all of the Priority Reforms and the 17 Socio-Economic Outcomes ensuring we are on track to meet the intended Targets.



Where to from here?

The Implementation Plan is only one part of the Closing the Gap process.

Over the next two years, NSW CAPO and the NSW Government will work with communities to deliver these plans to reflect our shared vision of Aboriginal people deciding their own futures.

We will continue to support, measure, and implement initiatives with communities.


The Implementation Plan is a living document and the actions in it will be continuously measured and changed through feedback from these communities.

OUR APPROACH TO PRIORITY REFORMS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Key Action Areas and approaches have been based on what communities have told us in consultations and developed through shared decision-making between NSW CAPO and Government.

In NSW and nationally, we are figuring out the best ways to measure progress for the Priority Reforms.

Information on how NSW is progressing on the Socio-Economic Outcomes is available in the detailed Implementation Plan and on the Productivity Commission website:

 www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data

Below is a high-level summary of the Priority Reforms and Socio-Economic actions, programs, services, and policies in the NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan for 2022-2024.

All the work listed also contributes to strengthening the Priority Reforms, which are always at the core of our work.

PRIORITY REFORM 1

WE WILL:

Create and strengthen formal partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and government, to share decision-making that supports Closing the Gap.

“Fund community organisations and provide for real shared decision-making.”

Key Action Area 1

Ensuring Aboriginal communities have access to partnership arrangements in their local community and on policy issues impacting them.



You told us we need:

- ① Meaningful, community-driven, local partnerships
- ① Resources to support local partnerships
- ① Information about local organisations and services

What we will do:

- ① Establish and fund new place-based partnerships that will support communities to drive priorities in their own communities
- ① Work to make sure Aboriginal people and organisations are partners in every policy area

Key Action Area 2

Creating partnership arrangements in NSW to advance progress on Closing the Gap through joint decision-making and self-determination.



You told us we need :

- ① Fair funding and capacity-strengthening to support partnerships
- ① Partnerships that are genuine, long-term, and have equal power-sharing
- ① To strengthen partnerships that are already in place
- ① Full community involvement and transparency on partnership aims
- ① Mechanisms for communities to raise concerns and issues

What we will do:

- ① Develop an approach to funding ACCOs to make sure they can be equal partners with government
- ① Make changes so partnerships between Aboriginal organisations/communities and governments in NSW work better for Aboriginal communities
- ① Change the way the success of partnerships between Aboriginal communities/organisations and governments are measured to be more culturally appropriate

Key Action Area 3

Coordinating partnership arrangements in NSW to work together to facilitate effective and respectful relationships between community and government.



You told us we need:

- ① Community, NSW CAPO and NSW Government to come together
- ① More cohesive and coordinated partnerships
- ① An Aboriginal framework to guide how partnerships will work

What we will do:

- ① Provide funding to ensure NSW CAPO can be an equal partner with NSW Government on Closing the Gap
- ① Work to ensure partnerships in NSW work together well without duplicating effort

PRIORITY REFORM 2

Building the Community-Controlled Sector

WE WILL:

Grow and strengthen Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to meet the needs of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

“Stop funding non-Aboriginal services when there are competent Aboriginal organisations.”

Key Action Area 1

Designing a dedicated funding model for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to suit the types of services required by communities.



You told us we need:

- Locally driven approaches for Aboriginal communities on their own Country with own decision-making
- A centralised agency to coordinate funding to ACCOs with longer-term funding
- Simplified procurement processes and support to ACCOs in tender processes
- Transparency in funding for local organisations and services
- Governments contracting ACCOs and not non-Aboriginal organisations

What we will do:

- Provide \$30 million worth of grant funding to local Aboriginal communities and organisations to support projects contributing to Closing the Gap
- Develop a more sustainable model for funding ACCOs so they can continue to deliver services in Aboriginal communities, and change the way the government provides grants to make funding opportunities more accessible to Aboriginal organisations
- Share more information about local services in communities, and regularly report on how many funded services are being delivered through ACCOs
- Ensure more services for Aboriginal communities are delivered through ACCOs

Key Action Area 2

Creating a dedicated and identified workforce in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that has wage equality.



You told us we need :

- To make ACCO staff salaries and benefits competitive with wages in the mainstream NGO and government sectors
- Support for employing, retaining, and supporting Aboriginal staff
- To provide targeted training to ACCO staff
- To make sure government procurement processes also support building of ACCO capabilities

What we will do:

- Design ways to attract staff to the ACCO sector
- Improve recruitment through supporting students to work in the ACCO sector
- Investigate current barriers faced by ACCOs
- Research options for training and upskilling of ACCO employees and find ways to support staff growth in the ACCO sector

Key Action Area 3

Ensuring ACCOs have strong governance and business processes.



You told us we need:

- More capacity-building for ACCOs
- To strengthen engagement with communities.
- To build data storage and analysis capability of ACCOs
- Local meaningful partnerships driven by community priorities and needs

What we will do:

- Look at the best ways to support and build on the strengths of ACCOs
- Provide funding to support and strengthen the organisational structures of ACCOs
- Support small and medium sized ACCOs to develop networks and partnerships with government

PRIORITY REFORM 3

Transforming Government Organisations

WE WILL:

Build culturally safe and responsive government services to eliminate experiences of racism in government.

“Assimilation forced through bureaucratic process because it’s too hard to have a yarn.”

Key Action Area 1

Ensuring government organisations and services are accountable for Closing the Gap.



You told us we need:

- More evaluation on what is working
- Community involvement in local decision making for funding
- More transparency about funding and the outcomes of government-funded programs and services
- A clear and transparent way to keep government agencies and services accountable

What we will do:

- Make sure community opinions and voices are included when evaluating programs
- Include Aboriginal people and communities when assessing the impact of government funding on community
- Work to redirect funding to areas that Aboriginal communities say are priorities
- Develop solutions to keep government directly accountable to community

Key Action Area 2

Creating culturally safe government organisations and services.



You told us we need :

- To increase the number of Aboriginal people employed by mainstream organisations and services
- To increase the cultural safety of recruitment processes
- Cultural awareness at all levels of government agencies and services
- To address institutional racism and work toward a zero-tolerance approach to racism
- Culturally appropriate service delivery

What we will do:

- Increase Aboriginal employment in the public service
- Improve the cultural safety of recruitment processes
- Improve cultural awareness training and standards in all government departments
- Put in place a zero-tolerance approach to racism
- Work to make sure service-delivery is culturally-appropriate

Key Action Area 3

Improving government organisations and services so that they are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people.



You told us we need:

- Meaningful consultation with communities that includes reporting back
- Communities to be involved throughout all stages of programs
- Effective complaints channels
- More coordinated services and consultations

What we will do:

- Improve the way community can provide feedback and report issues to government organisations
- Create better processes for engaging and partnering with Aboriginal communities
- Establish a way for Aboriginal communities to share knowledge about Aboriginal programs, policies and best practices

PRIORITY REFORM 4

Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

WE WILL:

Give Aboriginal people access to and control over more relevant and usable data to support communities making decisions about Closing the Gap.

“We do not have access to data and statistics on information relating to our people and communities ... We need the government to be more open, transparent and accountable.”

Key Action Area 1

Providing ways for Aboriginal communities to access government data and insights in formats that enable local decision-making and shared decision-making with Government.



You told us we need:

- Community access to the same data and information as governments
- To provide data that is useful and accessible to people in Community
- Localised information about the availability of services in each area

What we will do:

- Provide a service that communities can use to easily find and access government data
- Develop useful ways we can share data and insights with Aboriginal communities
- Improve existing Government data systems
- Design solutions to deliver local-level information about services and funding to Aboriginal communities

Key Action Area 2

Designing an Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance model to increase Aboriginal communities' sovereignty over data about Aboriginal people.



You told us we need :

- Data that empowers sustainable self-determination and governance for Aboriginal communities
- Community control over data, the narratives told with their data, and culturally appropriate data practices

What we will do:

- Develop a plan to put data into the hands of community
- Work with community to design a model for putting the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance into action

Key Action Area 3

Empowering local community data projects and capacity building to enable Aboriginal analysis of data.



You told us we need:

- Community data projects to support local priorities
- Community data projects to support the coordination of local organisations and services
- To build on existing community strengths to build up data capabilities

What we will do:

- Fund community data projects to support community data aspirations
- Promote data-related career pathways and opportunities for Aboriginal students and communities

PRIORITY REFORM 5 & SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 8

Employment, Business Growth and Economic Prosperity
(NSW specific)

WE WILL:

Support more Aboriginal people into jobs that align with their goals and more Aboriginal businesses to achieve their employment and business goals.

“The current process really cuts out a lot of small businesses and is quite off-putting for them.”

Key Action Area 1

Ensuring Aboriginal business owners and staff, and Aboriginal people looking to start a business can make high-quality business decisions.



You told us we need:

- To address the barriers of growth for Aboriginal businesses
- Easy-to-access business support in one place that is community-controlled
- To remove barriers to accessing business advisory services
- More targeted support for businesses

What we will do:

- Host ongoing roundtables for Aboriginal businesses to discuss issues
- Establish an easily accessible online service for business support
- Provide emerging Aboriginal tourism businesses with access to services they want

Key Action Area 2

Providing Aboriginal businesses with easier access to consumers and supply chains.



You told us we need :

- To remove barriers to ongoing work and permanent employment
- An improved procurement policy

What we will do:

- Develop a strategy that will look at opportunities and barriers to employment
- Work to ensure that there is a simple procurement process for Aboriginal businesses to achieve success

Key Action Area 3

Ensuring Aboriginal people are skilled in the industries of the future.



You told us we need:

- To address long-standing and related barriers to future employment
- Training programs to directly lead to employment outcomes

What we will do:

- Develop a strategy to remove barriers to employment and achieve better employment outcomes
- Look at existing training programs to ensure they have a local approach

Key Action Area 4

Providing Aboriginal businesses access to finance and insurance services to support business growth.



You told us we need:

- To address issues that public liability insurance is either expensive or not available for cultural activities.
- More access to capital for Aboriginal businesses

What we will do:

- Look at ways for all Aboriginal businesses to increase access to Public Liability Insurance
- Work to ensure Aboriginal businesses can access capital for business growth

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR HEALTH

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 1

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE ENJOY LONG AND HEALTHY LIVES

“*As a general principle, health services for Aboriginal people should be delivered by AMSs.”*

Key Action Area 1

Improving NSW Aboriginal Cancer Primary Care

You told us we need:

- To increase rates of cancer screenings for all communities by making services more accessible and culturally appropriate

What we will do:

- Develop a better approach to support cancer prevention, screening and diagnostic services for Aboriginal people

Key Action Area 2

Increasing the uptake of Aboriginal Health Assessments

You told us we need :

- To improve access for communities to attend general health and cancer screenings

What we will do:

- Expand existing health designed specifically to support the health needs of Aboriginal people

Key Action Area 3

Enhancing the Aboriginal health workforce in government and community-controlled health sectors by building pathways and training opportunities

You told us we need:

- To recognise that Aboriginal people are best placed to provide care for their peers
- To increase investment to support the growth of the Aboriginal health workforce

What we will do:

- Develop a new 24hr Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP) Emergency Department Model to ensure that there is cultural safety in NSW services
- Work towards increasing the number of Aboriginal health workers in NSW

Key Action Area 4

Reforming other areas that impact Aboriginal health and outcomes

You told us we need:

- To develop genuine partnerships between government and community-controlled health organisations
- More information sharing between the mainstream and community-controlled sectors
- To transform government systems to support greater access for Aboriginal communities.

What we will do:

- Work to increase Aboriginal decision-making about health system and strategy
- Look at how the health system is governed and review state-wide partnerships between government and the community-controlled sector
- Develop a new Aboriginal Health plan that focuses on health outcomes for Aboriginal people

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 2

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN ARE BORN
HEALTHY AND STRONG

“Have healthy babies and
establish healthy families.”

Key Action Area 1

Expanding and supporting culturally safe maternity care services on Country



You told us we need:

- We need locally run, culturally appropriate women's services on Country

What we will do:

- Develop an approach to deliver culturally safe antenatal, post-natal and infant health services

Key Action Area 2

Supporting Birthing on Country models of maternity care



You told us we need :

- To recognise and invest in community birthing models

What we will do:

- Explore more birthing on Country models of maternity care in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

Key Action Area 3

Providing Fetal Alcohol and Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Services



You told us we need:

- To invest in holistic, wrap-around support for expecting mothers that address Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders

What we will do:

- Identify options for Aboriginal community co-designed projects to address FASD

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 4

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN THRIVE IN THEIR EARLY YEARS

“More service planning around mums and bubs groups.”

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 14

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE ENJOY HIGH LEVELS OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

“Our young people are lost and isolated suffering from mental health issues and need to be educated, empowered and provided with a sense of belonging.”

Key Action Area 1

Ensuring that Aboriginal children are properly supported in their early years



You told us we need:

- To increase the availability of services and skilled clinicians to identify early issues

What we will do:

- Expand existing initiatives focused on giving children the best start in life

Key Action Area 2

Building stronger foundations for Aboriginal children and families



You told us we need :

- To invest in targeted supports for Aboriginal children that consider disabilities and mental health

What we will do:

- Work to improve outreach programs that are culturally appropriate to support Aboriginal children from birth to their early years

Key Action Area 1

Approaching mental health through a social-emotional wellbeing lens



You told us we need:

- To address the lack of culturally safe social and emotional wellbeing programs, especially for young people

What we will do:

- Develop a sustainable and culturally safe approach for addressing Aboriginal mental health across NSW health services

Key Action Area 2

Building on the resilience of the Aboriginal community in NSW to support high levels of social and emotional wellbeing



You told us we need :

- To invest in local healing facilities to provide drug, alcohol and mental health services to address the trauma of colonisation and the Stolen Generations

What we will do:

- Expand current initiatives and opportunities to fund resilience programs for Aboriginal communities run by community-controlled health organisations

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR EDUCATION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 3

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN ARE ENGAGED IN HIGH QUALITY, CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN THEIR EARLY YEARS

“Need Indigenous people working with Indigenous children.”

Key Action Area 1

Transforming the NSW Department of Education to provide culturally safe environments in early education settings



You told us we need:

- To acknowledge there is a racism issue in NSW Government and promote positive images and stories of Aboriginal people
- Teaching and learning of Aboriginal cultures and heritage
- To provide cultural competency training to all staff that is designed by community

What we will do:

- Deliver a professional learning program to help educators better understand Aboriginal culture, histories and social experiences

Key Action Area 2

Supporting Aboriginal people at key points when moving between early childhood education and school



You told us we need :

- Aboriginal-led programs designed to support Aboriginal children
- To better support the move from preschool to mainstream school and high school for Aboriginal students

What we will do:

- Employ early childhood Aboriginal engagement officers to support children moving into primary school

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 5

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS ACHIEVE
THEIR FULL LEARNING POTENTIAL

“*Incorporate culture into
school curriculum.”*

Key Action Area 1

Transforming the NSW Department of Education to embed Aboriginal culture, community, and heritage



You told us we need:

- To address key issues facing communities that impact engagement such as suspensions, issues with personalised learning approaches and a lack of culturally relevant programs
- More support of language and culture programs
- To better support students to complete their year 12 studies
- More appropriate curricula that incorporate Aboriginal cultures and are designed for Aboriginal students

What we will do:

- Establish new approaches that support Aboriginal communities in delivering cultural educational services
- Expand existing programs that deliver Aboriginal languages in schools
- Launch an interactive campaign to support Aboriginal students in their year 12 studies
- Expand proven local NSW AECG Aboriginal curricula into more areas

Key Action Area 2

Creating a culturally safe Department of Education that's responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



You told us we need :

- Aboriginal people to lead the design of programs to support Aboriginal children
- More evaluation of current programs for students
- To acknowledge there is a racism issue in NSW Government and promote positive images and stories of Aboriginal people
- A much more effective, culturally safe, and responsive complaints process to report racism

What we will do:

- Develop a new tool to evaluate how government programs are impacting Aboriginal students
- Provide support and resources for Aboriginal families for making complaints
- Launch initiatives to support policies that tackle racism in the NSW Department of Education

Key Action Area 3

Ensuring education providers work with community to improve engagement of Aboriginal children and young people



You told us we need :

- To address key issues facing some communities and provide culturally relevant programs to support of Aboriginal students engaging with education

What we will do:

- Review suspension centres, tutorial centres and alternate programs and how they are working
- Provide funding to support programs that aim to re-engage students through tailored activities and student-based strengths, interests and skills
- Explore expansion of existing culturally appropriate engagement and goal setting programs

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 6

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL THROUGH FURTHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS

“*[We] need stronger pathways for ongoing education and employment.”*

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 7

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER YOUTH ARE ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT OR EDUCATION

“*We want to see more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in employment, especially where those jobs are in communities.”*

Key Action Area 1

Ensuring successful transitions through education pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



You told us we need:

- Stronger support for students moving between school and further education
- For Aboriginal people to lead programs that support this transition

What we will do:

- Continue to review how existing culturally appropriate mentoring programs are working
- Explore more ways to train and provide cultural awareness to career advisors

Key Action Area 1

Transforming the NSW Department of Education to embed culturally safe ways for Aboriginal people to access employment, education, and training



You told us we need:

- Clear plans and strategies that address racism at all levels of schooling and government work

What we will do:

- Develop an Aboriginal Workforce and Leadership Strategy and a 2022-2025 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

Key Action Area 2

Ensuring Aboriginal people are supported at important points when moving into education and employment



You told us we need :

- Stronger support to move between school and further education
- Opportunities for vocational education and training in communities

What we will do:

- Continue to review how existing culturally appropriate mentoring programs are working
- Provide grant funding to support training and employment opportunities

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR JUSTICE AND FAMILIES

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 10

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ADULTS ARE NOT
OVERREPRESENTED IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

“Local community circle sentencing is a great model, although there is a need for investment.”

Key Action Area 1

Transforming the justice system to support the needs and goals of Aboriginal communities



You told us we need:

- To make sure that programs and policies are designed and delivered by Aboriginal communities through shared decision-making
- Culturally safe, therapeutic and trauma-informed support, that focuses on mental health, disability, and the needs of others groups (such as the LGBTIQ + community)

What we will do:

- Work with Aboriginal communities to co-design and run a new program that changes how the justice system supports Aboriginal communities
- Develop goals to strengthen community-controlled organisations delivering justice services to Aboriginal adults
- Design new ways to ensure all Closing the Gap activities are culturally safe, therapeutic and trauma-informed

Key Action Area 2

Preventing entry into the justice system and reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal adults in custody



You told us we need :

- To prioritise community-led, local early assistance and prevention initiatives
- Police officers to receive cultural, trauma, disability, and mental health training and to build connections with community
- Services to divert entry into the justice system must be culturally safe, and be guided by people with relevant lived experience

What we will do:

- Co-design and deliver community led programs to make sure Aboriginal people thrive to prevent contact with the justice system
- Identify gaps in existing diversion programs and make improvements led by community

Key Action Area 3

Increase of adults who are receiving and complying with bail



You told us we need :

- Greater community-led bail advocacy and support services for Aboriginal people
- To urgently increase support for referral to services (especially for women) as current bail conditions are often unrealistic and inappropriate

What we will do:

- Co-design and deliver improved bail systems by finding new ways to deliver bail
- Work to establish an Aboriginal-led wrap-around support program to reduce reoffending

Key Action Area 4

Transforming existing programs to increase community-based sentences and reduce imprisonment



You told us we need:

- ① Genuine community involvement in decision making throughout the justice system
- ① Courts to better engage with Aboriginal communities and consider alternative sentencing, including through strengthening and expanding 'circle sentencing'

What we will do:

- ① Test new ways of sentencing that include Aboriginal Elders & respected community members in the process
- ① Develop tailored approaches that increase community involvement in the justice system by co-designing

Key Action Area 5

Increasing successful completion of requirements after release from prison



You told us we need :

- ① To support people while in prison and on release by responding to individual requirements, such as disability and mental health needs, drug and alcohol support, and housing
- ① To ensure culturally-appropriate and accessible holistic programs are available in every community
- ① Education pathways to be part of post-release support to help people leaving prison to get employment

What we will do:

- ① Co-design and trial an initiative that includes Aboriginal Elders and respected community members in monitoring court requirements
- ① Review and improve the current system for community-based orders



SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 11

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT OVERREPRESENTED IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

“*We need to figure out what’s missing for kids in their lives. The kids should be driving that. As opposed to adults coming in and assuming what they need and want.”*

Key Action Area 1

Transforming the youth justice system to best support the needs and goals of Aboriginal young people



You told us we need:

- To make sure 'co-designing' is genuine and to have programs and policies where the design and delivery of programs is led by Aboriginal people
- Culturally safe, therapeutic and trauma-informed support, that focuses on mental health, disability, and the needs of others groups of Aboriginal young people (such as the LGBTIQ + community)

What we will do:

- Work in collaboration with Aboriginal communities to change how decisions are made on youth justice issues
- Work to have more justice services for Aboriginal young people are delivered through Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations
- Develop approaches for culturally safe, therapeutic, and trauma-informed services

Key Action Area 2

Preventing and responding early to youth offending



You told us we need :

- Better support networks, meaningful community activities, and cultural programs that respond to the what young people need to prevent entry into the justice system
- Structural change of the justice system with more shared decision-making, accountability, and improving how young people experience the justice system

What we will do:

- Establish programs that provide bail support advocacy for Aboriginal young people
- Work towards improving services to better address underlying causes of youth offending
- Increase service delivery by the Aboriginal community-controlled sector

Key Action Area 3

Creating ways to divert from court and create positive pathways with communities



You told us we need :

- To urgently reduce how many Aboriginal young people and children come into contact with the justice system
- Education and health systems to meaningfully support Aboriginal young people to reduce interactions with the justice system

What we will do:

- Look at ways to reduce court appearances
- Look at programs and options that replace court with community service

Key Action Area 4

Appropriately diverting young people from court through existing or additional options



You told us we need:

- Culturally informed youth justice responses to prevent repeat offending and reduce use of prison sentences
- Aboriginal communities to be actively involved in sentencing to prevent time in custody and inconsistencies in sentencing

What we will do:

- Develop culturally appropriate court processes
- Establish programs that provide bail support advocacy for Aboriginal young people

Key Action Area 5

Ensuring that young people leaving prison are supported and given opportunities to thrive



You told us we need :

- To focus on gaps in services for young people leaving detention and deliver ambitious change to the system
- To provide young people intensive support that meets their needs before and after they leave detention and help them to thrive

What we will do:

- Work with Aboriginal communities and government agencies to create culturally safe programs for Aboriginal young people



SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 12

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN ARE NOT OVERREPRESENTED IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

“Need people in the community who are there working for the community.”

Key Action Area 1

Supporting Aboriginal children and young people to remain with their families and reduce the number of Aboriginal children reported at risk of harm

You told us we need:

- Early intervention services with Aboriginal workers to deliver culturally safe supports
- To provide families with more supports and advocacy
- To support vulnerable families early to prevent entry into out of home care

What we will do:

- Shift funding from crisis services to strengthen early intervention and diversion programs and keep Aboriginal children with their families
- Pilot a new Aboriginal Legal Service project for families at risk of having their children removed through holistic and early assistance

Key Action Area 2

Supporting Aboriginal children and young people to live safely within their extended family and, where possible, on Country

You told us we need :

- Culturally appropriate casework to support Aboriginal children and young people, and support communities to keep them safe
- To better support families to stay together

What we will do:

- Improve the quality of casework and child protection decision making for Aboriginal children
- Ensure family preservation support programs are delivered by Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations

Key Action Area 3

Growing the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to provide culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal children and young people who have entered out of home care

You told us we need :

- Support for guardianship and kinship care within families
- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in out-of-home care
- To resource and listen to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations

What we will do:

- Work to create a new approach to support Aboriginal children and young people to stay with a kinship guardian rather than foster care
- Increase Aboriginal community-controlled delivery of out-of-home-care services

Key Action Area 4

Empowering Aboriginal communities to design, deliver and oversee local services, supports and processes

You told us we need :

- To support self-determination for improving outcomes for Aboriginal children, families and communities
- Increased Aboriginal community-control and more support for Aboriginal services

What we will do:

- Meaningfully include Aboriginal communities in service delivery
- Develop a new strategy for Aboriginal communities to have decision-making power over how programs in community are designed and delivered

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 13

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS ARE SAFE

“*We don't have services in our community designed for Aboriginal people.”*

Key Action Area 1

Supporting self-determination solutions led by Aboriginal people and communities with a focus on long term and generational change



You told us we need:

- To ensure that domestic and family violence work is led by Aboriginal communities
- To address domestic and family violence holistically and have a trauma-informed understanding of the issue that addresses the loss of cultural cohesion, authority and control that underpins violence in communities

What we will do:

- Establish and resource an Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network that addresses domestic and family violence

Key Action Area 2

Ensuring violence and abuse against Aboriginal women and children is prevented through early intervention



You told us we need :

- To address domestic violence as a complex, issue that that relates with many social, economic and historical factors

What we will do:

- Work with an Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network towards a plan and programs that focus on early intervention

Key Action Area 3

Supporting recovery healing and positive life outcomes through the development of culturally appropriate and safe responses



You told us we need :

- To develop culturally appropriate and responses to Aboriginal women and children that acknowledge the strength, resilience and richness of Aboriginal Cultures
- A coordinated, holistic system of services that supports healing, recovery and positive life outcomes for Aboriginal people

What we will do:

- Work with an Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network towards a plan for recovery and healing and positive life outcomes

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR HOUSING

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 9

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE SECURE
APPROPRIATE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THEIR
PRIORITIES AND NEED

“*Housing should be adaptable
to local needs and based on the
individual tenant.”*

Key Action Area 1

Increasing the supply of appropriate housing and growing the capacity of the community-controlled sector to deliver housing to Aboriginal communities



You told us we need:

- To increase the supply of social and affordable housing that responds to community needs
- To develop a better understanding of Aboriginal culture
- More Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to deliver housing services
- More, larger regional Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to efficiently provide housing
- To support home ownership for Aboriginal people

What we will do:

- Provide a construction program for the Aboriginal Community Housing sector that builds more dedicated housing for Aboriginal people
- Support the growth of Aboriginal Community Housing Providers
- Expand programs that support home ownership for Aboriginal people through education, advice, and grants

Key Action Area 2

Improving understanding of suitable housing for Aboriginal people, and addressing crowding from a culturally safe perspective



You told us we need :

- To involve communities in the process of designing houses
- To respond to demand for housing design that responds to community requirements
- More accountability and transparency between Government, organisations, and communities, especially when evaluating how well programs are working

What we will do:

- Partner with Aboriginal communities to develop building standards and design principles for housing that consider Aboriginal needs and goals for housing
- Create a way of measuring housing-related wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people

Key Action Area 3

Ensuring that housing can respond to people moving throughout the year and is culturally responsive



You told us we need :

- To better understand how Aboriginal cultures relate to housing and overcrowding
- More culturally safe and Aboriginal-specific emergency housing to support people experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness
- More flexible housing responses to alleviate the risk of homelessness and sustain additional loads on housing

What we will do:

- Research how moving between areas impacts overcrowding and other housing issues
- Develop houses that allow families to provide accommodation for kin
- Expand community-controlled services to strengthen Aboriginal tenancies

Key Action Area 4

Strengthening the Aboriginal Community Housing Provider sector



You told us we need:

- To make sure housing service providers understand Aboriginal cultures and
- More community-controlled services for housing
- To make sure that investments into housing are managed by Aboriginal people
- To urgently address the much-needed repairs and maintenance for housing

What we will do:

- Trial a culturally safe support service in Moree to support community with repairing community-owned housing stock
- Work with communities to design a new housing approach that is focused on outcomes valued by community
- Implement an approach that supports isolated and remote communities

Key Action Area 5

Improving how well housing is managed and maintained



You told us we need :

- To make sure Aboriginal housing stock is well maintained with regular repairs

What we will do:

- Maintain community housing
- Improve health outcomes through better maintained housing hardware delivered through Aboriginal Community Housing Providers



SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR LAND & WATER

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 15

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE MAINTAIN
A DISTINCTIVE CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC
RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR LAND AND WATERS

*Land and water is “spiritually
and culturally important, but also
an essential element of future
economic strength and prosperity.”*

Key Action Area 1

Improving how different systems (Aboriginal Land Rights and Native Title) work together

You told us we need:

- A more effective system for managing how Native Title and Land Rights work together in NSW
- To increase the return of land to Aboriginal communities

What we will do:

- Bring together relevant groups to redesign how the Native title and Land rights systems work together
- Develop more ways to increase the return of land to Aboriginal communities

Key Action Area 2

Increasing the amount of sea and inland water that Aboriginal people own and have access to

You told us we need :

- To support and improve access to land rights to include water and sea rights
- To make sure that communities can use clean and usable water systems for cultural and community purposes
- To improve current water systems in NSW
- Aboriginal people to have more jobs in fishing and farming industries

What we will do:

- Support more access to cultural fishing rights
- Review current ways that Aboriginal people participate in ownership of water and identifying issues with current systems

Key Action Area 3

Improving support for Aboriginal people to realise their legal rights and interests over land, sea, and water, before, after, and during the return

You told us we need :

- More support for Aboriginal landowners following the return of land
- Meaningful partnership to support land management
- Government organisations to work better together and make it easier for community to access services they need

What we will do:

- Improve the support provided after land transfers
- Work to establish a centralised service for services related to land ownership

Key Action Area 4

Improving joint-management arrangements for land, sea and inland water

You told us we need :

- To establish joint management arrangements that maximise the self-determination of the Aboriginal communities in the arrangement

What we will do:

- Work to improve existing joint-management arrangements to meets the needs and goals of Aboriginal communities

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 16

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES AND
LANGUAGES ARE STRONG, SUPPORTED AND FLOURISHING

“*We need to teach our ways
in community on Country.”*

Key Action Area 1

Supporting Aboriginal communities to define what makes their Languages “strong and healthy” so we can measure progress in this area

You told us we need:

- Communities need to have ownership over their own languages and its intellectual property
- Data to measure improvement in this outcome area
- To invest time and resources into supporting communities with measuring and evaluating their languages

What we will do:

- Establish a set of agreed principles for how language ownership is respected and upheld
- Pilot a program to measure and evaluate practices for language at a local level to help understand progress in this area at a state level

Key Action Area 2

Improving Aboriginal peoples access and giving communities the appropriate materials in the archives for Language revitalisation

You told us we need :

- To support communities to access and control archival materials about their families, histories and Languages.
- To promote state archives as an employment and training opportunity, including by creating safe and secure working environments

What we will do:

- Develop a partnership with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations and government about languages policy to improve Aboriginal people’s experience in accessing archival material about their families, histories and languages
- Hire a team of Aboriginal people to work with State archives
- Search the State Archives collection for records on Aboriginal peoples and languages

Key Action Area 3

Looking at the establishment and operation of local Aboriginal Languages centres

You told us we need :

- Language centres to be owned and controlled by communities to make sure they are dedicated and safe spaces for learning, creating and storing resources, gathering and networking, and employment and training

What we will do:

- Explore options for local community-led Language centres to best support communities’ goals
- Provide community resources to support the growing and nurturing of Aboriginal Languages across NSW

Key Action Area 4

Improving Aboriginal Communities access to Country for Languages learning and education

You told us we need :

- Communities to gain access to Country for Languages because Language belongs to Country

What we will do:

- Better understand and work to remove barriers for Communities accessing Country for Languages and culture learning and education

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOME 17

BY 2026 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE HAVE
EQUAL LEVELS OF DIGITAL INCLUSION

“[Schools] expect families to support the young ones to use [digital] resources but they were never given the upskills to do so.”

Key Action Area 1

Increasing knowledge about technological inclusion for Aboriginal people in NSW

You told us we need:

- To have programs for digital inclusion that are in line with what communities need
- To address the different issues facing communities accessing the digital world

What we will do:

- Review the current ways we measure digital inclusion so we can understand progress in this area
- Consult with community to identify the key challenges for digital inclusion and develop a way to measure how effectively programs are working

Key Action Area 2

Increasing access to digital devices for Aboriginal people and communities

You told us we need :

- To develop and deliver programs that will increase access to digital devices
- To create culturally safe spaces where community members can learn about and use digital technology

What we will do:

- Run a program that will empower local communities to design local solutions to increase the level of digital inclusion
- Pilot a grants program for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and remote areas to get digital devices for community to use
- Design, with community, a voucher program so community can buy devices that work with modern systems

Key Action Area 3

Increasing digital ability

You told us we need :

- To make sure Aboriginal communities develop and build their skills and knowledge with digital devices and services

What we will do:

- Work with Aboriginal controlled digital organisations to develop and implement ways for community to gain more digital skills



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