

CLOSING THE GAP

Northern Territory Implementation Plan

Acronyms

AIHW	Australian Institution of Health and Welfare	DoE	Department of Education
APO NT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory	DoH	Department of Health
AGD	Department of Attorney-General and Justice	LGANT	Local Government Association of the NT
AHNT	Aboriginal Housing NT	NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
CM&C	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet	NTG	Northern Territory Government
CRF	Cultural Responsiveness Framework	NTPFES	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
COP	Coalition of Peaks	OAA	Office of Aboriginal Affairs
DCDD	Department of Corporate and Digital Development	PC	Productivity Commission
DITT	Department of Investment, Tourism and Trade	TFHaC	Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities

Acknowledgements

The Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people of this country and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders past, present and emerging.

While this implementation plan uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations peoples living in the Northern Territory, and 'Aboriginal' Territorians should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.

Cover Artwork

The painting was created by Elaina Tilmouth, an Aboriginal student in Grade 6 in the Northern Territory and granddaughter of the late Kwementyaye 'Tracker' Tilmouth, a member of the Stolen Generation and prominent Aboriginal activist of his time. The painting represents the changing of the 2 different seasons that we have in the Northern Territory. The arrows represent everybody coming together to walk on a shared path.

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Opening Statement (Minister, APO NT & LGANT - Joint Statement)

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) reflects a shared genuine and meaningful commitment to improve equality for First Nations people.

Closing the Gap represents a fundamental shift in the relationship between the different levels of government, and Aboriginal people, communities, and organisations. For the first time, the National Agreement has been developed in genuine partnership between the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations and Australian governments. This ensures that the voices of Aboriginal people are being heard, and power and control is being given back to Aboriginal people and their communities, and we are all being held accountable.

It is our shared goal to realise equity in life outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Territorians. The Northern Territory Closing the Gap Implementation Plan sets out how Northern Territory policies and projects are aligned to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and what we will do to ensure we achieve the priority reforms.

The NT Government's *Everyone Together* Aboriginal Affairs Strategy supports the objectives and priorities of the National Agreement. The alignment of both through our Closing the Gap NT Implementation Plan provides for a comprehensive and unified strategic plan and monitoring framework for Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory going forward.

We look forward to moulding and strengthening the partnership at the heart of the National Agreement, to address real and urgent issues at the centre of our work as a Government and of our wider society. We look forward to celebrating the positive achievements which can and must emerge from collaborative and dedicated efforts.

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal organisations and communities across the Territory share in decision making with governments on policies and programs that impact on us, and to expanding opportunities for Aboriginal community control.

The gap in life outcomes between our peoples and other Territorians will only be fully closed when we address the political and structural gaps that currently sees us excluded from too many decisions about the policies and programs that impact on us, and when we can flourish as First Nations peoples, with our distinct cultures and languages and a strong connection to our Lands.

We believe that the Partnership and National Agreements on Closing the Gap (the Agreements) start to address this structural gap and also start to recognise the importance of our status as First Australians. The Agreements set out a new way of working for governments and our organisations and communities based on genuine partnerships and share decision making. The challenge now is to make the commitments in the Agreements a reality.

The Northern Territory Implementation Plan sets out an initial response from the Northern Territory Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group to the Agreements and the new governance arrangements between the Northern Territory Government, APO NT and LGANT to oversight and share decisions under the Implementation Plan provide a way to build on this initial response and support a sustained and accountable effort.

APO NT has come together with the Northern Territory Government to change the way they work with all Aboriginal peoples, organisations and communities, not only for our organisations and members. We hope that all Aboriginal peoples across the Territory will be able to use the Agreements and the Northern Territory Implementation Plan to drive their own futures.

Local Government Association of the Northern Territory

The Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (2019-2029) represents the first time that Local Government is an official signatory to Closing the Gap. The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the NT Government and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) in the preparation of the NT's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

As the 'local' level of government, our councils witness first-hand the challenges facing Aboriginal communities. In regional council areas, most elected council members are Aboriginal as are the communities they represent. In these areas, our councils are the major employer of Aboriginal people. They are also the providers of essential community services and place-based programs to Aboriginal communities.

Despite the collective efforts of local government councils and many others, too many Aboriginal people in the NT remain significantly disadvantaged. To effect greater meaningful change, governments at all levels (i.e. Commonwealth, Territory and Local) must work collaboratively and in genuine partnership with Aboriginal peoples.

We support the Agreement's commitment to set out a future where policy making that impacts on the lives of Aboriginal people is done in full and genuine partnership.



NT Context and Key Stats

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics and NT Government data.

50%
of the Territory's land and about

80%
of the coastline is Aboriginal owned, under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.



Over 54,000

Territorians speak an Aboriginal language at home. English is often their third or fourth language.



Aboriginal median age in the Northern Territory is

25 years old

vs Northern Territory median age of

32 years old.

Northern Territory has the highest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide rate of all jurisdictions. The Northern Territory Aboriginal suicide rate is

30.8 per 100,000

compared to the non-Aboriginal suicide rate of

16.4 per 100,000.



99%

of the children and young people in detention are Aboriginal.



More than

100 Yo! Palya!

Aboriginal languages and dialects spoken in the Northern Territory.



96 remote communities

>500 homelands and outstations across the Northern Territory.



42.7%

of students enrolled in NTG schools are Aboriginal.



Estimated Aboriginal population

74,546

(NT total 246,500)

30.3% of NT population is Aboriginal



76.6%

of the NT's Aboriginal population lives in remote or very remote areas



Proportion of Aboriginal children on track for school readiness, in all five domains for the Australian Early Development Census

NT Aboriginal

18%

NT non-Aboriginal

55%

NT Female Victimisation rate for Offences Against the Person

Indigenous females = **12,956** per 100,000

Non-Indigenous females = **1,356** per 100,000

Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment

NT Aboriginal

37.5%

NT non-Aboriginal

83.8%

Proportion of working age employed in the NT

NT Aboriginal

35.4%

NT non-Aboriginal

84.8%



(lowest in Australia)



(highest in Australia)

Proportion of people living in overcrowded housing in the NT

NT Aboriginal

61.6%

NT non-Aboriginal

9.8%



Overcrowding accounts for over

80%

of homelessness in the NT



NT accounts for 1% of national population but

11.79%

of national homelessness

Adult incarceration rate for the NT

NT Aboriginal

2,438.4

per 100,000

NT non-Aboriginal

215.3

per 100,000



OVERVIEW

of the Implementation Plan – working in partnership

The NT Government, in partnership with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT), has committed through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) to collectively address the four priority reform areas and the disparity in the life outcomes experienced by Aboriginal Territorians.

Aboriginal peoples and cultures enrich everyone in the Northern Territory. The fact that 77 per cent of our Aboriginal population live in remote Northern Territory is our significant strength.

We know that ineffective policies and governance have significant impacts on Aboriginal Territorians and this is reflected through the wide gap that exists across the Closing the Gap targets between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

The National Agreement and this Implementation Plan are centred on the belief that when Aboriginal people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved.

The National Agreement includes new engagement and accountability mechanisms requiring governments to work in partnership with Aboriginal people and organisations to implement the National Agreement. In sharing this accountability, the NT Government, APO NT and LGANT have developed this Implementation Plan to address

the priority reform areas and socio-economic targets outlined in the National Agreement.

The Implementation Plan identifies practical actions that will work towards achieving outcomes, and acknowledges and responds to the unique and diverse needs of the Northern Territory. All actions are new, except those marked with “*” which represent an existing initiative that has been reformed to align with Closing the Gap.

In addition to the parties of this Implementation Plan, it is acknowledged that the Commonwealth Government plays a significant role in the lives of Aboriginal Territorians and their life outcomes through their significant and ongoing funding and their legislative and administrative responsibilities.

Parties to the Implementation Plan will inform the broader Northern Territory community at the regional level through its communication and engagement approach identified on page 40 of this plan.

Purpose of this Implementation Plan

The objective of this Implementation Plan is to give effect to the commitments in the National Agreement at the Northern Territory level, including the enabling and strengthening of partnerships and decision-making between governments, APO NT and Aboriginal Territorians.

This Implementation Plan, in taking forward the overarching vision of the National Agreement, sets out actions for the NT Government and its partners to improve the life outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians with a primary focus on four priority reform areas that address systemic change.

This Implementation Plan should be read in conjunction with the National Agreement.

A phased approach

The Northern Territory will take a phased approach to the implementation of Closing the Gap, in line with the timeframes set out in the National Agreement and reflecting the unique circumstances of the Territory.

This first Implementation Plan provides an initial response that is focussed on embedding the Priority Reforms. It is acknowledged that further work is required to address the socio-economic targets of the National Agreement.

Over time, the Implementation Plan will be revised to reflect new challenges, priorities and opportunities.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this Implementation Plan mirror the outcomes of the National Agreement, which are:

1. Shared decision-making: Aboriginal Territorians are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

2. Building the community-controlled sector: there is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal Territorians.
3. 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 Territorians, including through the services they fund.
4. Aboriginal-led data: Aboriginal Territorians have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.
5. The socio-economic outcomes: deliver on the socio-economic outcomes within Northern Territory based trajectories.

Guiding Principles

This Implementation Plan will be guided by the priority reforms and other commitments in the National Agreement, including the commitment to promote and support Aboriginal cultures in how government policies are designed and implemented. The Implementation Plan also takes account of APO NT Partnership Principles (Appendix 2) and the NT Government's *Everyone Together* Aboriginal Affairs Strategy (the Strategy) principles of Healing, Respect and Engagement, which reflect the new approach to partnerships between Aboriginal Territorians and all levels of governments.

Term and changes to the NT Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan will exist alongside the National Agreement which took effect on 27 July 2020 and will be an ongoing Agreement until replaced by a future Agreement.

As a living document, the Implementation Plan may be varied as required on an annual basis through the approval of the NT Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs (the Council) as advised by the NT Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group and giving consideration to Joint Council's guidance and direction.

Strengthening the way we work

In the Northern Territory, we are committed to embedding the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms into the way that we work. We understand that shared decision-making through genuine partnerships with Aboriginal people leads to better decisions and significant improvements to equality for all Territorians.

The NT Government is improving and strengthening the way it works with Aboriginal Territorians, including our commitment to partnerships, through:

- Local decision making and strengthening partnerships with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector.
- A regional approach with the understanding that decisions are best made closer to the communities affected.
- Building a culturally responsive public sector through the development and implementation of a cultural responsiveness framework.
- The newly established NT Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs that will guide and influence the Aboriginal Affairs agenda in the Northern Territory at a high-level.

Working in equal partnership is central to driving community-led change; as is the integral role that the Aboriginal community-controlled sector plays in the lives of Aboriginal Territorians.

All parties to the agreement are deeply committed to its objectives and new approach to working together, which includes implementing all activities within this Implementation Plan in a way that takes full account of, promotes and does not diminish, in any way the cultures of Aboriginal Territorians.

NT Government's Everyone Together Aboriginal Affairs Strategy

The *Everyone Together* Aboriginal Affairs Strategy and associated Performance and Reporting Framework was launched in March 2020 as a whole-of-government policy and includes 67 measures and 21 primary initiatives under 10 focus areas: truth and healing; language and culture; land and sea; children

and families; housing and essential infrastructure; health; education; justice; safety; and jobs and economy.

The National Agreement acknowledges that all jurisdictions, including the Northern Territory, have existing policies and programs in place to improve the lives of Aboriginal Territorians. In the Northern Territory context this includes the *Everyone Together* Aboriginal Affairs Strategy (the Strategy).

The National Agreement commits the NT Government to review and strengthen its existing policies in partnership with Aboriginal peoples, and bring them in line with the Priority Reforms.

The integration of the Strategy and the National Agreement is an opportunity for a comprehensive and unified strategic plan and monitoring framework for improving outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

To enable alignment and a streamlined reporting process for both the Strategy and the National Agreement, it is envisaged that the Strategy's 67 measures will be mapped against the Closing the Gap targets, and where alignment occurs these measures will be adopted to address the Closing the Gap targets. Where gaps are identified, new measures/actions will be developed.

NT Government have undertaken initial mapping work and in partnership with APO NT will jointly review this work and the Strategy for consistency with the National Agreement over the next 6-12 months.

Treaty

The NT Government has committed to working in genuine partnership and side by side with Aboriginal Territorians. Truth telling is a means for acknowledging the injustices of the past and is essential to improving the lives of Aboriginal people.

In 2018, the historic Barunga Agreement was signed between the four Northern Territory Statutory Land Councils and the NT Government. This provided details of how a Treaty Framework will be developed and established the NT Treaty Commission, an independent office, and an NT Treaty Commissioner to lead the process.

The key objective of any Treaty in the Northern Territory must be to achieve real change and substantive, long term, benefits for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Community Voice

The National Agreement and actions under this Implementation Plan are intended to compliment and strengthen existing partnership structures in the Territory. This includes the NT Aboriginal Health Forum and the Children and Families Tripartite Forum.

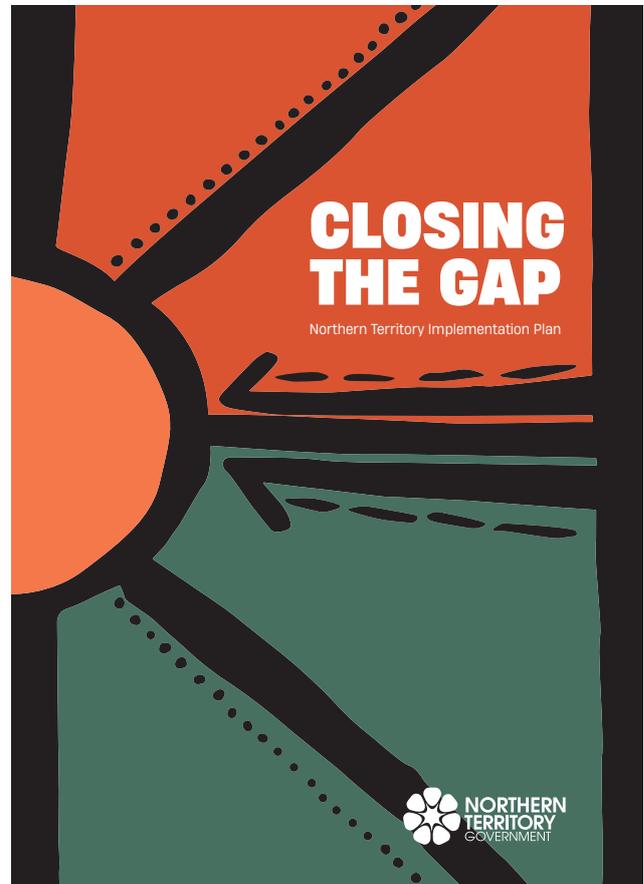
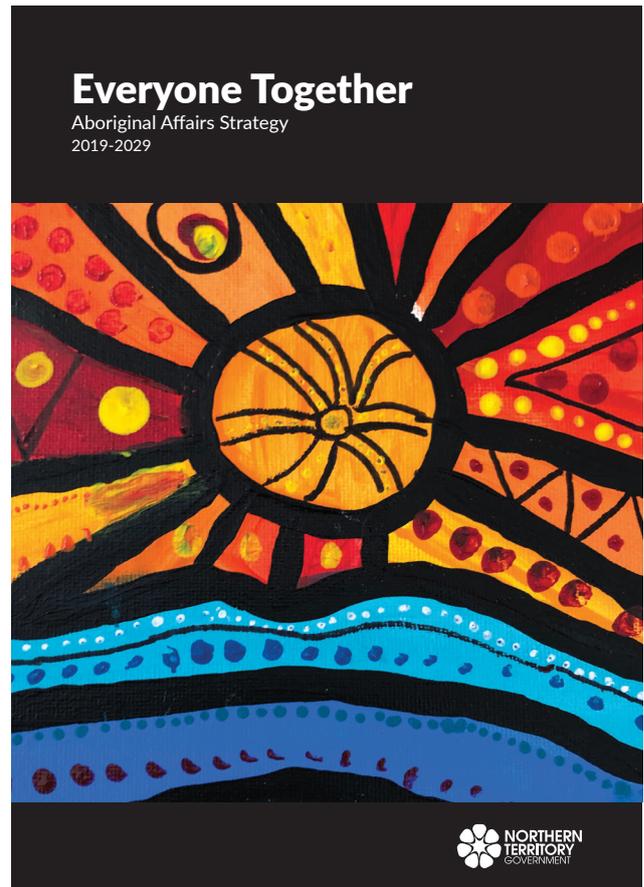
As new partnerships are developed, as envisaged under Priority Reform One of the National Agreement, the NT Government and APO NT will work to ensure that the voices of Aboriginal Territorians who are most affected by government policies and changes can have a say and be heard.

Reporting, monitoring and accountability

Reporting and Evaluation

The Implementation Plan and all requirements under the National Agreement will be reported alongside the Aboriginal Affairs Strategy on an annual basis. This reporting will form the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs annual update to parliament on Closing the Gap and will be tabled in Parliament every August, or the next possible opportunity subject to the release of Productivity Commission data, and published on the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, LGANT and APO NT websites.

As per section nine of the National Agreement, the Productivity Commission will undertake a comprehensive review of progress every three years to inform the ongoing implementation of the agreement. Within 12 months of these reviews, an Aboriginal led review will also be carried out, with Joint Council agreeing its scope and conduct. Any review recommendations will then be considered by Joint Council for potential changes to the agreement. In addition, in the Northern Territory, with the integration of the Strategy and Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, the commitment to a biennial review of the strategy will also apply to the Implementation Plan. The process for this will be advised by the Council.



Aboriginal Affairs/Closing the Gap Governance Structure

As part of strengthening the way we work, the NT Government and APO NT have established a new governance structure to oversee the implementation of Closing the Gap and the Strategy that mirrors the national governance structure.

National Closing The Gap Governance Structure



Closing The Gap Governance Structure



NT Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs

The Council is a key component to the implementation of Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory. The Council's purpose is to oversee the Northern Territory coordination and implementation of the National Agreement, and monitor the Territory's performance against this Implementation Plan, its targets and actions under the priority reform areas. It will provide for structured and sustained high level engagement between its members.

Council membership includes the NT Government and APO NT with an invitation to be extended to the Commonwealth Government and LGANT.

It will be the role of the Council, as underpinned by its Terms of Reference, to:

- Oversee the Northern Territory coordination and implementation on Closing the Gap and provide advice to the National Joint Council on Closing the Gap as required.
- Have an ongoing role in monitoring Northern Territory performance against the framework, targets and actions under the priority reform areas.

- Oversee the implementation of those aspects of the revised NT Government's Aboriginal Affairs Strategy that Council members agree are consistent with Closing the Gap framework, targets and actions under the priority reform areas and agree a way to respond and bring other aspects of the Aboriginal Affairs Strategy in line with the National Agreement, noting that the Priority Reforms apply to all government policies and programs that have a significant impact on Aboriginal Territorians.
- Develop its program of work to deliver on the actions in the Implementation Plan and National Agreement relating to partnership and jurisdictional actions.

The Council is to be co-chaired by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and a representative nominated by APO NT.

It is important that governments continue to ensure that agencies and overarching forums are not operating in isolation. The Council will inform and be informed by the already established NT Aboriginal Health Forum and the Tripartite Forum.



Priority Reforms

At the heart of the National Agreement are the four Priority Reform Areas that seek to change the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The priority reforms have resulted from the partnership between Governments and the Coalition of Peaks and were directly informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the formal engagements on the National Agreement in 2019.

The NT's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan is primarily focused on the four priority reforms and identifies actions agreed and endorsed by its partners. APO NT and the Coalition of Peaks have consistently told government to focus on the priority reforms, as success in these areas will underpin success across the board.

The National Agreement sets out partnership actions (to be undertaken by all parties) and jurisdictional actions (to be undertaken by all governments) to implement the Priority Reform Areas. Each priority reform has a corresponding target and identified jurisdictional and partnership actions. This implementation plan provides related commitments to achieving these targets and major reforms (set out in the following pages).

PRIORITY REFORM

Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

EXCERPT FROM THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

PRIORITY REFORM ONE

Outcome - Shared decision-making: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in place in each state and territory enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have chosen their own representatives.

INDICATORS

- Partnerships reviewed (new or existing) meeting the 'strong partnership elements' (as defined in the National Agreement) [Clause 32 and 33 of the National Agreement]:
 - Partnerships are accountable and representative [as per Clause 32.a. of the National Agreement]
 - Partnerships having a written formal agreement [as per Clause 32.b. of the National Agreement]
 - Partnerships having clear provisions of shared decision-making between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners [as per Clause 32.c. of the National Agreement]
 - Adequate funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parties to be partners with governments in formal partnerships [as per Clause 33 of the National Agreement]
- Number of partnerships by function, such as decision-making or strategic

Outcome indicators:

- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting they are able to have a say in their community on issues important to them
- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting improvements in their communities

DISAGGREGATION

- By jurisdiction
- Closing the Gap outcome areas relevant to the partnerships



Why is this important?

Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory need to be at the centre of decisions about policies and programs that have a significant impact on their lives - this will ensure that government policies to close the gap are built around the aspirations, experiences, expertise and strengths of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

Formal partnerships between the NT Government and Aboriginal representatives, based on community-control, are needed to support shared decision making about policies and programs.

In the Northern Territory one of our key strengths is our Aboriginal people and their Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. Recognising and supporting this power through equal partnerships is fundamental to meeting the Closing the Gap targets, and is why Priority Reform One is critical to our overall success.

Actions to support Priority Reform One

The National Agreement sets out key elements for shared decision-making arrangements and partnerships between the Northern Territory Government and Aboriginal representatives. The NT Government is committed to incorporating these elements in its actions to implement Priority Reform One.

Actions to support Priority Reform One

JURISDICTIONAL ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JAI.1 Government Parties commit to establishing policy and place-based partnerships within jurisdictions and which respond to local priorities. These partnerships will include the partnership elements outlined in the section above, unless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations choose not to pursue elements.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The Northern Territory will prioritise the establishment of new partnerships through the following actions:

a. The operation of the NT Executive Council, consisting of APO NT, LGANT and NT Government - Overarching governance of Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

The NT Executive Council partnership arrangements will be agreed by end of July 2021.

PARTIES

APO NT, LGANT and NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

b. As a priority, establish an Aboriginal led NT Justice Policy Partnership, which will build on the recommendations of the national Justice Policy Partnership.

This policy partnership will, among other things:

- work to strengthen and build on existing arrangements including the Criminal Justice Forum and the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Governance Committee.
- progress the commitment to reduce adult and youth incarceration and recidivism rates in the NT.
- contribute to the development of the terms of reference for an 18 month independent evaluation of the *Youth Justice Amendment Act 2021* which will include evaluating its alignment with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and its impact on achieving the Closing the Gap outcomes 10 and 11.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

The Justice policy partnership will be established by end of October 2021, so that it can inform the NT's contribution to the national policy partnership on Justice.

PARTIES

APO NT and NTG

LEAD AGENCY

TFHaC, CM&C, AGD and NTPFES

c. As a priority, establish policy partnership arrangements for the education sector that are Aboriginal led.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

PARTIES

APO NT and NTG

TIMEFRAME

The Education policy partnership will be formed and priorities agreed by end of November 2021.

LEAD AGENCY

DoE and APO NT

d. Develop a regional governance framework to provide clear and well-integrated governance and engagement arrangements across agencies, stakeholders, business, Traditional Owners and communities to provide a clear regional voice to government.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

PARTIES

NTG, APO NT, NIAA and LGANT

TIMEFRAME

End of 2021

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and APO NT

e. Establish a consultative mechanism for engagement on Aboriginal Economic Development.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

PARTIES

CM&C and APO NT

TIMEFRAME

End of 2021

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

2. The Northern Territory will prioritise the strengthening of partnerships:

The Housing partnership, and its priorities and membership, will be reviewed by an Aboriginal led process and look at establishing potential pilot arrangements for community controlled housing in remote areas, with appropriate resourcing.*

RESOURCES

\$TBD

PARTIES

The Council and NIAA

TIMEFRAME

Review to be completed within six months from the finalisation of the Implementation Plan.

LEAD AGENCY

TFHaC and AHNT

* Represents existing initiatives that have been reformed to align with Closing the Gap

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA1.2 Review existing partnership arrangements to assess how they meet the partnership elements at Clauses 32 and 33 of the National Agreement.

- a. By 2022, undertake a review of existing partnership arrangements and provide a report to the Joint Council.
- b. By 2023, review and strengthen existing partnerships to meet the strong partnership elements.
- c. Provide a report on this review, including the number of partnerships, changes made to existing partnerships, and which strong partnership elements are met and unmet for all partnerships to be considered by Joint Council.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The Council will determine the terms of reference for the review, noting it will be an Aboriginal led review consistent with the National Agreement.

The review of existing partnership arrangements will inform how to strengthen existing partnerships and advise whether new partnerships are required.

The report will also be provided to Joint Council and made public on the OAA website.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

The Council to agree terms of reference for the review by end September 2021, as well as timeframes for undertaking the review and preparing the report to Joint Council and to be made public.

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

2. The Council will take into account the Public Accounts Committee’s Inquiry and report on the implementation and future of the Local Decision Making Framework.

Following NT Executive Council consideration of the report, NT Government will work with APO NT to review LDM in line with the strong partnership elements in Priority Reform One and all other priority reform areas.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

PARTIES

The Council

TIMEFRAME

By July 2022.

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JAI.3 Government 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.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. Guided by the NT Executive Council, annual reporting will include reporting on all priority reform areas (and Clauses 118 and 119) under Priority Reform One and all other priority reform areas. Annual Progress Reports will be made publicly available and tabled in the NT parliament.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

PARTIES

The Council, NTG and APO NT

TIMEFRAME

Annual Report to be finalised in August each year (to be tabled in NT Parliament soon after and subject to the timing of the Productivity Commission’s annual data compilation).

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA1.1 By 2022, the Joint Council will establish a joint approach to five policy priority areas, between the Commonwealth, states and territories and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. These will identify opportunities to work more effectively across governments, reduce gaps and duplication, and improve outcomes under Closing the Gap. These areas respond to the engagements and are:

- a. justice (adult and youth incarceration)
- b. social and emotional wellbeing (mental health)
- c. housing
- d. early childhood care and development
- e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. **Justice has been identified as the first of the policy partnerships to be progressed. Action JA1.1(b) to establish an NT policy partnership will support representatives at the Partnership Working Group level, and ensure that APO NT members and relevant Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations are included in decisions on policy partnerships. The NT will adopt this model for the remaining policy areas as they are established.**

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

NT policy partnerships will be established to support each of national policy partnerships

PARTIES

APO NT, ACCOs and NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

2. **As per Action JA1.1(c), education has been identified by the NT CTG Partnership Working Group as a priority policy partnership to be progressed outside of the five policy areas identified under the National Agreement.**

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

The Education policy partnership will be formed by end of November 2021.

PARTIES

APO NT and NTG

LEAD AGENCY

DoE and APO NT

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA1.2 By 2024, six new place-based partnerships will be established across Australia under Jurisdictional Implementation Plans. These place-based partnerships will be between the Commonwealth, relevant states or territories, local government and agreed communities. They will be consistent with the agreed partnership elements and build on existing place based approaches. Locations will be considered by Joint Council within 12 months of the commencement of this Agreement.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group will identify potential sites for a new place-based partnerships. Proposals will be presented to the Council for final decision, and proposal to Joint Council.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

By November 2021

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA1.3 In 2025, the Parties to the Agreement will meet and consider progress on Priority Reform One and make additional partnership actions if needed and the Agreement will be updated accordingly.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group will develop proposals to further progress Priority Reform One to be considered by the Council and Joint Council.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

In the first quarter of 2025.

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

PRIORITY REFORM

Building the community-controlled sector

EXCERPT FROM THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

PRIORITY REFORM TWO

There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people across the country.

TARGET

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

INDICATORS

- Number of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) contracted by governments across the Closing the Gap socio-economic outcome areas of the Agreement
- Number of government contracts awarded to ACCOs
 - By agency with a funding prioritisation policies across all Closing the Gap outcomes (as per Clause 55a)
 - Under new funding initiatives decided by government which are intended to service the broader population across socio-economic outcome areas (as per Clause 55b)
- Number of sectors with elements of a strong sector (Clause 45), by element:
 - Number with sustained investment in capacity building
 - Number with a dedicated workforce and wage parity
 - Number supported by a peak organisation with strong governance and policy development capability
 - Number with consistent and sustained funding arrangements to support agreed service delivery standards

Outcome indicator

- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting fewer barriers in accessing services

DISAGGREGATION

- By jurisdiction
- Closing the Gap outcome areas



DATA DEVELOPMENT

Explore options to measure and report:

- Proportion of sector funding by governments going to ACCOs across socio-economic outcome areas of the Agreement
- Proportion of services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, by socio-economic outcome area
- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using ACCOs' services
- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed by ACCO's

Why is this important?

Priority Reform Two goes hand-in-hand with the first priority reform. Ensuring we have a strong community-controlled sector supports the ability for Aboriginal Territorians and organisations to participate in partnerships and shared decision-making, and vice versa. Strong ACCOs are integral to strong Aboriginal communities. They provide invaluable support and services aligning with community needs which lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal people. By their nature, they are expressions of self-determination.

Actions to support Priority Reform Two

JURISDICTIONAL ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA2.1 Building strong Aboriginal community-controlled sectors and organisations in line with the strong sector elements at Clause 45 to deliver Closing the Gap services and programs, in partnership with Aboriginal representatives.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The Northern Territory will prioritise the establishment and strengthening of Aboriginal peak bodies in the NT for the following:

a. Education - the NT Government and APO NT will jointly establish a peak Aboriginal education body.

Phase 1 to establish an interim steering committee of Aboriginal educators to oversee the development of an Action Plan for the formation of an Aboriginal Education Policy Partnership and Peak Body.

RESOURCES

A joint approach will be made to the Commonwealth Government for additional resources to support the establishment of this body.

TIMEFRAME

Ongoing - phase 1 by end of January 2022

PARTIES

APO NT and DoE

LEAD AGENCY

APO NT and DoE

b. Justice - the NT Government and APO NT will jointly establish a peak Aboriginal justice body (building on the Criminal Justice Forum and Aboriginal Justice Agreement Governance Committee).

RESOURCES

A joint approach will be made to the Commonwealth Government for additional resources to support the establishment of this body.

TIMEFRAME

Ongoing

PARTIES

APO NT, AGD, NTPFES, TFHAC and CM&C

LEAD AGENCY

APO NT and NTG

- c. Housing - the NT Government and APO NT will jointly work to strengthen the Aboriginal housing sector, including establishing pilot sites for community controlled housing in remote areas, with appropriate resourcing

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Ongoing	TFHaC and APO NT

2. The Northern Territory will also support and strengthen the ACCO sector through the following actions:

- a. Work with the Commonwealth to resource the provision of efficient, coordinated governance support for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations through the Aboriginal Governance and Management Program (APO NT).

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG and APO NT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Ongoing	APO NT and CM&C

- b. Prioritisation of funding to ACCOs to provide place-based community led Family Support services that support the prevention of Aboriginal children's entry into out-of-home-care and the return of Aboriginal children to their family.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$36 million	NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
5 years commencing 1 October 2021	TFHaC

- c. Develop a Northern Territory Disability Strategy to complement the National Disability Strategy with an included focus on supporting Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver services to Aboriginal Territorians with a disability.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG and APO NT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Completion 2021	TFHaC (Office of Disability)

d. Noting the review process and subject to consistency with the Priority Reforms and with the exception of transition of community-controlled health services, Local Decision Making will continue to be the vehicle used to hand back control of government services to Aboriginal organisations.*

RESOURCES	PARTIES
Place-based approach	NTG and APO NT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Ongoing	CM&C and APO NT

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA2.2 Include in government annual reports, information on action taken to strengthen the community-controlled sector based on the elements of a strong sector as outlined in the agreement.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government will demonstrate actions to strengthen the community-controlled sector:

a. Actions will be outlined in annual Aboriginal Affairs Strategy and Closing the Gap reporting

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	APO NT and NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Annual Report to be finalised in August each year (to be tabled in NT Parliament soon after).	CM&C

* Represents existing initiatives that have been reformed to align with Closing the Gap

PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA2.1 The Parties agree to identify sectors for joint national strengthening effort every three years through Sector Strengthening Plans which will identify actions against the strong sector elements at Clause 45.

The initial sectors are:

- a. Early childhood care and development
- b. Housing
- c. Health
- d. Disability

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The Coalition of Peaks is leading the development of sector strengthening plans. The NT Government is represented through the sector strengthening plan working groups and will continue to contribute to the plans.

A partnership arrangement will be established in the NT for each of these priority sectors, so they can inform the Northern Territory's contribution to each of these sector strengthening plan working groups (note the additional sectors being prioritised in the NT: justice and education)

RESOURCES

OAA and NT Government agency representatives

TIMEFRAME

The early childhood and health plans are due in November 2021.

The plans for housing and disability are due in April 2022.

Partnership arrangements in the NT to be established ASAP.

PARTIES

CoP, NTG and APO NT

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

2. All jurisdictions have committed funding towards a funding pool, and agreed on investment priorities, to build the ACCO sector. The NT Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group will decide on the allocation of NT Government funding contribution in line with these investment priorities primarily to strengthen governance and support coordination of funding towards joined up and sustainable sectors in these areas.*

RESOURCES

NT Government contribution is \$2million over four years

Further funding allocation from the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments to be agreed as sector strengthening plans are developed.

TIMEFRAME

Ongoing.

PARTIES

APO NT and NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and APO NT

* Represents existing initiatives that have been reformed to align with Closing the Gap

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA2.2 Government Parties agree to implement measures to increase the proportion of services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, particularly community-controlled organisations, by implementing funding prioritisation policies.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. Under Clause 55.(a) and (b) of the National Agreement, the NT Government will:

- a. Work with APO NT to develop an NT Government Aboriginal Grants policy to increase the proportion of grant funding awarded to the Aboriginal community-controlled sector (Clause 55 a and b).

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	APO NT and NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
End 2021.	CM&C and NTIBN

- b. Establish an Aboriginal Procurement Policy to increase the proportion of all government funding delivered through Aboriginal organisations, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	APO NT and NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
By end of October 2021, noting full implementation is required by 2024	CM&C and DITT

- c. Agree additional steps to ensure the full implementation of Clause 55a and 55b of the National Agreement, and update the Implementation Plan setting out the agreed initiatives and timeframes for completion. This will include reviewing the APO NT partnership principles and how they can be applied to progressively build the capacity of the community-controlled sector to take on additional service delivery responsibilities over time.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Following initial scoping of the Aboriginal Procurement and Grants Policies; and as required	APO NT and CM&C

- d. Once agreed, report on the implementation approaches used, and proportions awarded, under Clause 55b.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Annually	CM&C

2. The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory will: demonstrate actions to strengthen the community-controlled sector:

- a. Review its procurement practices with the objective of encouraging greater Aboriginal Business involvement. It will encourage its member councils to conduct similar reviews.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	LGANT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
By July 2022	LGANT

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA2.3 Additional actions

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT will undertake the following additional actions under priority reform two:

- a. The Council will consider progress on Priority Reform Two and make additional partnership actions if needed.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
By 2025	CM&C

- b. The NT Government will review and identify current spending on Aboriginal programs and services to identify reprioritisation opportunities to Aboriginal organisations, particularly community-controlled organisations (Clause 113) in line with APO NT partnership principles. A report by region will be provided to Joint Council for consideration (Clause 114).

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
By July 2022	CM&C

- c. The NT Closing the Gap Annual Report will list the number and types of Aboriginal organisations that have been allocated funding for the purposes of Clause 118d of the National Agreement.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Annually	CM&C

PRIORITY REFORM

Transforming government organisations

EXCERPT FROM THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

PRIORITY REFORM THREE

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 people, including through the services they fund.

TARGET

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

INDICATORS

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in government mainstream institutions and agencies:
 - Total number, by level and agency
 - Number of identified Indigenous Australian positions by level and agency
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in governance positions in government mainstream institutions and agencies:
 - Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership on Boards
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory bodies
- Number and proportion of government mainstream institutions and agencies with Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in place, by RAP type
- Government mainstream institutions and agencies reporting actions to implement the transformation elements:
 - Identify and eliminate racism
 - Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety
 - Deliver services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people
 - Increase accountability through transparent funding allocations
 - Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
 - Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Outcome indicators

- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting experiences of racism
- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as feeling culturally safe in dealing with government mainstream institutions and agencies



DISAGGREGATION

- By jurisdiction
- Closing the Gap outcome areas

DATA DEVELOPMENT

- Response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting racism

Why is this important?

In order to achieve equity, all NT Public Sector employees must have the skills to adequately serve all Territorians. This means having the knowledge and skills to be a culturally aware and responsive workplace and organisation. It's imperative that the Aboriginal context is understood so that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. Also, the number of Aboriginal staff at each level is equally as important.

Actions to support Priority Reform Three

JURISDICTIONAL ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA3.1 In partnership with Aboriginal Territorians, commit to systemic and structural transformation to ensure government mainstream institutions and agencies are free of institutionalised racism and promote cultural safety in line with the transformation elements in the agreement.

JA3.2 Commit to challenge unconscious biases that result in decisions based on stereotypes.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government commits to the following whole-of-government actions to implement systemic and structural transformation:

- a. Work with APO NT to develop and implement a whole of government overarching Cultural Responsiveness Framework (CRF) to improve and strengthen the cultural security of the NT Public Service (will include an Anti-Racism Strategy).

As part of the broader CRF and NTG anti-racism strategy, the Department of Attorney-General and Justice will develop a specific justice anti-racism strategy.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

End of 2021

Implement from 2022

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and APO NT

- b. Increase the Aboriginal representation on NT Government boards and committees to align with its gender balance approach.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

TBC

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

c. Implement the Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy seeking to maximise Aboriginal employment and support Aboriginal employees in the NT Public Service.*

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
End of July 2021	OCPE

d. Additional support and resources for the Anti-Discrimination Commission to expand their presence and services in remote and regional locations.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
TBC	CM&C

2. The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory commits to actions to implement systemic and structural transformation:

a. LGANT will review its employment policies to remove any barriers to the employment of Aboriginal people, and encourage its member councils to conduct similar reviews.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	LGANT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
End of July 2022	LGANT

b. LGANT will prepare and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and encourage those councils that have not already done so to implement their own RAPs.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	LGANT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
December 2023	LGANT

* Represents existing initiatives that have been reformed to align with Closing the Gap

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA3.3 Change, design or deliver government policies that impact on the outcomes of the agreement, in line with the agreement.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government will ensure that all agencies consider the impacts of their policies by:

- a. Amending the NT Cabinet process to include a Closing the Gap impact statement requiring agencies, through the Cabinet process, to demonstrate how the submission aligns or does not align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

TBC

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

- b. Developing a model to engage with Aboriginal people on new policies and legislation at the policy-design phase through to finalisation. The model will be consistent with the engagement principles in the National Agreement.

The next steps on the National Partnership on Remote Aboriginal Investment and underpinned by the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2021 will also be considered under this model.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

End of September 2021

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and APO NT

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA3.4 Commit to share and publish engagement approaches that give effect to the transformation elements on engagements outlined in the agreement.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government will ensure transparency around its approaches by:

- a. Reporting annually against the transformation elements under clause 59 of the National Agreement.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

Annually

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

b. Establishing transparent partnership arrangements through the NT Executive Council.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NT Executive Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
TBC	CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA3.5 Commit to engaging with Aboriginal Territorians before, during and after emergencies such as natural disasters and pandemics to ensure that

- a. Decisions take account of the impact on Aboriginal Territorians; and
- b. Aboriginal Territorians are not disproportionately affected and can recover as quickly as other Territorians from social and economic impacts.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government will, in consultation with Aboriginal community representatives, improve engagement with Aboriginal Territorians before, during and after emergencies:

- a. Through the newly established Northern Territory Police, Fire Emergency Service (NTPFES) Community Resilience and Engagement Command, improve the way the NTPFES engages with Aboriginal Territorians, and put policies in place related to engagement around emergencies.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
Command established late 2020, policies to address this to be developed by July 2022	NTPFES and CM&C

b. Through CM&C, improve engagement with Aboriginal representatives during the recovery phase.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG and APO NT
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
TBC	CM&C

c. Establish roles for local Aboriginal representation on Local Emergency Committees.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
TBC	CM&C

d. Establish a similar arrangement to the Regional and Remote Taskforce that was stood up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

TBC

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA3.6 Include in our annual reports information on how we are undertaking and meeting the transformational elements.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government will work with APO NT through the Council to ensure evaluation and reporting on the Cultural Responsiveness Framework and actions outlined above are included in annual reporting processes

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

Annually

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and APO NT

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA3.7 Ensuring the investment in mainstream institutions and agencies does not come at the expense of investment in Aboriginal community-controlled services.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT agrees to work to ensure Aboriginal community-controlled organisations are supported wherever possible, consistent with Priority Reform Two and APO NT partnership principles, and will not invest in mainstream agencies at their expense.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

Ongoing

PARTIES

NTG and APO NT

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and APO NT

PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA3.1 By 2023, Government Parties agree to each identify, develop or strengthen an independent mechanism, or mechanisms, that will support, monitor, and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. To increase accountability, the NT Government commits to:

- a. Identifying through the NT CTG Partnership Working Group a range of options for an independent mechanism for consideration by the Council.

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	The Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
By 2023 (Options paper to be developed by July 2021).	CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA3.2 In 2025, the Parties to the Agreement will meet and consider progress on Priority Reform Three and make additional partnership actions if needed and the Agreement will be updated accordingly.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. The NT Government will:

- a. Work with APO NT to consider progress and whether further actions are required

RESOURCES	PARTIES
\$TBD	NTG, APO NT and the Council
TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2025	CM&C

PRIORITY REFORM

Shared access to data and information at a regional level

EXCERPT FROM THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

PRIORITY REFORM FOUR

Outcome - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 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.

INDICATORS

- Number of formal data sharing partnerships established between government agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/organisations
- Number of comprehensive regional data profiles created
- Number of government initiatives established to make data more accessible and usable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations
- Number of government agencies working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to build expertise in data collection and analysis



DISAGGREGATION

- By jurisdiction
- Closing the Gap outcome areas

DATA DEVELOPMENT

- **Outcome indicator:** Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting they have access to, the ability to use, and custodianship of, data that will assist in the planning and delivery of services in their communities.

Why is this important?

Shared access to location specific data and information will support Aboriginal communities and organisations to support the achievement of the first three priority reforms through: participating as equal partners with government, driving their own development and measuring the transformation of government organisations.

Actions to support Priority Reform Four

JURISDICTIONAL ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA4.1 Share the available, disaggregated regional data and information with Aboriginal organisations on Closing the Gap, subject to privacy requirements.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. Engage Aboriginal media to inform the public on information and data relating to Closing the Gap, and how to access it.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

End of 2021

PARTIES

APO NT and NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA4.2 Establish partnerships between Aboriginal Territorians and government agencies to improve collection, access.

NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMITMENT

1. Develop a Regional Data Portal and Economic Growth Plans to enable Aboriginal organisations and communities better access to disaggregated data and a supported approach to increasing Aboriginal economic development.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

Regional data portals by end 2021 and regional economic growth plans by quarter 4, 2021.

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA4.3 Make our data more transparent by telling Aboriginal Territorians what data they have and how it can be accessed.

1. Develop additional options to also share social and cultural regional data

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

TBC

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C and DCDD

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA4.4 Build the capacity of Aboriginal organisations and communities to collect and use data.

1. Develop a digital inclusion strategy to:

- a. Increase awareness of data available and how to access it
- b. Improve how data is presented to make it more accessible to Aboriginal communities and organisations
- c. Build the capacity for Aboriginal communities and organisations to use and collect their own data
- d. Work with the Commonwealth to develop a strategy to increase investment in communications infrastructure.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

TBC

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

DCDD

2. Establish a data sharing agreement between ORIC, NT Government and APO NT/AGMP to have access to information about ACCOs and NT Associations to better inform timely provision of support.

RESOURCES:

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME:

TBC

PARTIES:

APO NT and ORIC

LEAD AGENCY:

APO NT

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

JA4.5 Include in our annual reports information on action taken to improve access to data and information by Aboriginal people and organisations.

1. The Northern Territory will report annually on information under Priority Reform Four and target 17 in the National Agreement, as well as measures related to digital infrastructure and inclusion under focus area five in the Aboriginal Affairs Strategy.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

Annual Report to be finalised in August each year (to be tabled in NT Parliament soon after).

PARTIES

NTG

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS

NATIONAL AGREEMENT COMMITMENT

PA4.1 By 2023, the Parties will establish data projects in up to six locations across Australia to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to access and use location specific data on the Closing the Gap outcome areas.

1. The NT Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group will work together to identify and nominate a site for consideration in the next tranche of projects.

RESOURCES

\$TBD

TIMEFRAME

By November 2021

PARTIES

The Council

LEAD AGENCY

CM&C

Communication and Engagement Approach

The Northern Territory will align communications and engagement about Closing the Gap to Clause 133 of National Agreement and its ongoing Joint Communication Strategy agreed by Joint Council. The following actions, which have been taken from the strategy, will be adapted to the Northern Territory context, and included in annual reporting. Annual reporting will include information on the use of Aboriginal organisations, particularly community-controlled (Clause 118d). Once finalised, Closing the Gap logos and branding will be incorporated in communications materials for the following actions.

Communication medium	Action	Timeframe	Responsibility
Media	The Aboriginal media sector in the NT will be engaged to deliver information about Closing the Gap. This will inform Aboriginal Territorians about the data available to them, particularly through Closing the Gap reports and the Productivity Commission dashboard. The Aboriginal Interpreter Service will be involved in ensuring content is as accessible as possible to a wide variety of NT language groups.	End of December 2021	APO NT and CM&C
Face-to-face engagements / Events	A joint NT Closing the Gap Roadshow will be planned for maximising opportunities with other events, such as the annual Aboriginal Leadership and Governance Forum. The aim of the roadshow will be to increase awareness of the National Agreement, the NT Implementation Plan, and to share information on data related to the agreement and how to access it. The Roadshow will be put together consistent with Clause 59f of the National Agreement.	End of December 2021	APO NT and CM&C
Social Media	APO NT to share information through their social media channels on the above information and encourage members to on-share to their networks.	Ongoing	APO NT
Websites	The NT Implementation Plan will be published on the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, LGANT and APO NT websites, as well as links to the Closing the Gap website and Productivity Commission dashboard. The NT Government will work with the Aboriginal Interpreter Service to make the site more culturally appropriate and accessible to Aboriginal Territorians.	August 2021	CM&C, APO NT, LGANT and PC
Government	The NT Government will share information on Closing the Gap and shared responsibilities across all government agencies.	As soon as possible	CM&C

In line with the Agreement Principles, the National Agreement will be publicly acknowledged when actions are taken to implement the Agreement's outcomes. The Council will develop further strategies to build awareness and support from non-Aboriginal Australians.

Socio-Economic Targets

The Northern Territory faces a much greater challenge in Closing the Gap than all other jurisdictions, and there must be a greater effort by all parties, but particularly government, to address the inequity between life outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Territorians.

All parties to the National Agreement have agreed 17 socio-economic targets for parties to work towards closing the inequity in outcomes and are designed to be met at the national level recognising that starting points, past trends and local circumstances differ so jurisdictional outcomes may vary.

Two further targets are yet to be agreed.

Measuring progress against the socio-economic targets

Against each national socio-economic target, the Productivity Commission will develop a baseline for the Northern Territory of which progress against the baseline will be measured annually.

The parties to this implementation plan will work in partnership through this first phase of the Implementation Plan to develop NT modelling of the trajectories for each target alongside the anticipated year when parity will be achieved. Where possible the parties will engage with data experts including the Productivity Commission and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare throughout this process to ensure a rigorous methodology is applied.

The parties are already committed through the National Agreement to establish a data development plan by July 2022, which will prioritise the 140 plus data development actions identified under each target and priority reform to support the measurement of progress over the life of the National Agreement.

Delivering new initiatives against the socio-economic target areas

This first Implementation Plan has necessarily focussed on giving immediate effect to the Priority Reform Areas at the heart of the National Agreement as these will underpin progress against the socio economic targets.

Over the next 6 to 12 months following the release of the Implementation Plan, the NT Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group will work to identify two or three specific priority initiatives against each target that can be agreed upon by the Council.

Appendix 1: Linkages with related initiatives

The NT Government is working to ensure that actions relating to Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory are aligned and do not duplicate effort but also identify and develop new initiatives. Key initiatives relating to Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory are outlined below, noting this is not an exhaustive list.

Everyone Together Aboriginal Affairs Strategy

The Northern Territory's Aboriginal Affairs Strategy captures key pieces of work, and measures the challenges, progress and improvements across 10 focus areas. This strategy will be reviewed to bring it in line with the National Agreement.

Aboriginal Justice Agreement

Agreed in principle by the NT Government, the AJA is a partnership between NT Government, Aboriginal Territorians and aligned Aboriginal organisations. It outlines how the NT Government and Aboriginal Territorians will work together to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people.

10 Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory

Yet to be finalised, the strategy will drive the achievement of improved safety, health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families living in the Northern Territory, and reduce inequities in these outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Territorians.

Indigenous Education Strategy 2015–2024

The strategy focuses efforts of schools to deliver clear and effective programs that are proven to make a difference for Indigenous students. The strategy drives policy and programs in the areas that will make the most difference for Indigenous students do that they achieve education outcomes equal to or better than other students across Australia.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028

The Framework represents the Northern Territory Government's ten year strategy to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence. It builds on the achievements of the Northern Territory Government's previous domestic and family violence strategy – Safety is Everyone's Right. The Framework reflects our combined efforts, knowledge and ideas to reduce violence and work together to achieve safer homes, communities, workplaces and schools.

Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy

The objective of the strategy is to increase and encourage Aboriginal employment, participation and capability at all levels of the NT Public Service, as well as aiming to enhance professional development and career opportunities for Aboriginal employees, to enable them to determine their own employment and career paths.

Building our Communities Together – Town Camps Reform Framework 2019–2024

The framework's vision is to support the development of sustainable models for town camps which emphasise local decision making, connections to family, culture and country, while recognising the fundamental importance of safe and suitable housing to the social and economic development of Aboriginal Territorians.

Aboriginal Land and Sea Action Plan

The plan, relating primarily to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993*, aims to ensure that land and sea ownership delivers on the economic and social aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians.

Local Decision Making Policy Framework

Local Decision Making facilitates a new working relationship between Aboriginal communities and government agencies to support community aspirations and self-determination.

Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy

The strategy aims to improve the way the NT Government coordinates its services and engages with remote Aboriginal community members.

Joint actions or outcomes will be further outlined in the two, five-year Implementation Plans.

Appendix 2: APO NT Partnership Principles for Organisations working with Aboriginal organisations and communities in the NT

The APO NT Partnership Principles are designed to guide the development of a partnership-centred approach for non-Aboriginal organisations engaging in the delivery of services or development initiatives in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Development of these Principles is underpinned by the strong aspiration of Aboriginal community controlled peak organisations in the Northern Territory to work with and secure the support of non-Aboriginal organisations towards the essential goal of strengthening and rebuilding an Aboriginal controlled development and service sector in the Northern Territory. Central to this is putting Aboriginal people back in the driver's seat.

These Principles embody the spirit and substance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They have been developed through an understanding that a fundamental shift is required in policy approaches towards Aboriginal communities from a narrow service delivery focus to one based on a development approach. It is understood that to be effective, these Principles require a corresponding commitment from government to provide an enabling environment to properly support and resource action under the Principles.

In supporting the APO NT Partnership Principles, non-Aboriginal non-government organisations (NGOs) agree to undertake to:

- 1.** Consider their own capacity: Non-Aboriginal organisations shall objectively assess whether they have the capacity (either in service delivery or development practice) to deliver effective and sustainable outcomes in the Northern Territory context.
- 2.** Recognise existing capacity: Non-Aboriginal organisations will recognise the existing capacity and particular strengths of Aboriginal NGOs and identify how they can contribute to further developing this capacity.
- 3.** Research existing options: Non-Aboriginal organisations shall thoroughly research existing Aboriginal service providers and development agencies before applying for service delivery contracts or prior to considering community development projects.[1]
- 4.** Seek partnerships: Where there is an Aboriginal NGO willing and able to provide a service or development activity, non-Aboriginal organisations shall not directly compete with the Aboriginal service provider, but will seek, where appropriate, to develop a partnership in accord with these principles.

5. Approach to partnership: Non-Aboriginal organisations will be guided by the priorities of the Aboriginal NGO in developing a partnership. Partnerships will be based on building and strengthening, rather than displacing, Aboriginal organisational capacity and control. Processes for developing partnerships will need to recognise the inherent power imbalance between large non-Aboriginal organisations and small Aboriginal organisations, and will need to allow sufficient time for partnership development.
6. Recognise, support and promote existing development practice: Non-Aboriginal organisations acknowledge that many Aboriginal organisations already have robust and effective development practices embedded in a cultural framework, although some of this may be implicit and undocumented. Non-Aboriginal organisations agree to recognise and support these practices, including through partnership arrangements.
7. Work together with Aboriginal people to create strong and viable Aboriginal organisations:

Non-Aboriginal organisations recognise Aboriginal organisations and communities as lead agents in creating sustainable governance and leadership in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, and agree to work within structures and processes that provide Aboriginal decision-making control. This may require formal delegation of power and the dedication of self-generated resources to assist with this process.
8. Ensure Aboriginal control, not just consultation: Non-Aboriginal organisations agree that Aboriginal organisations need to be in the 'driver's seat' and have control of development initiatives, services and programs delivered to their communities. This should include having input to decisions regarding resource allocations and staffing.
9. Develop a clear exit strategy: Where the desired outcome is for local Aboriginal organisations to deliver services or provide a development role, non-Aboriginal organisations will develop a mutually agreed, transparent exit strategy in consultation with their partners. Contracts with government should incorporate a succession plan and long term planning for local Aboriginal organisations to deliver services, with appropriate resourcing included.
10. Ensure robust evaluation and accountability: Non-Aboriginal organisations will develop a robust accountability framework and evaluation process together with partner Aboriginal organisations and communities.
11. Cultural competency and appropriate development practice: Aboriginal organisations and non-Aboriginal organisations will seek to work together to share learnings and establish effective development practice and cultural competency standards for development projects and service delivery initiatives.

APO NT should be contacted for advice where there appears to be no relevant Aboriginal organisation/s providing services or undertaking development work.

Contact us

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