

CLOSING THE GAP

Northern Territory Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs

19 September 2025, Communique

The Northern Territory Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs (NTECAA) met in Darwin (Garamilla) on 19 September 2025, co-chaired by the Hon Steve Edginton MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and MS Thersa Roe, Chairperson of the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT). Members acknowledged the contributions of Dr John Paterson as the retiring co-chair and were given a warm Welcome to Country by Mr. James Parfitt.

The NTECAA continued its in-focus discussion on justice and wellbeing, which included a presentation from Deputy Police Commissioner, Travis Wurst, on the efforts of the NT Police Force to build its Aboriginal workforce and address racism within its agency. Members stressed the importance of approaches that are grounded in community-led solutions. Deputy Commissioner Wurst outlined the progress of the NT Police Force Anti-Racism Strategy highlighting their need to rebuild trust with Aboriginal communities. Members welcomed this work while emphasising that meaningful consultation and accountability must underpin this reform.

Attention then turned to the development of the NT Government's Aboriginal Affairs Framework. The NT Government presented a draft framework on a page detailing that the Framework seeks to bring together the NT Government's three policy pillars with commitments in Closing the Gap. Members acknowledged the intent of the framework but raised concerns about ensuring stronger visual alignment with the National Agreement and the need for deeper engagement with Aboriginal Organisations was critical in progressing the framework.

The NTECAA also considered final priorities and framing of the NT's third Closing the Gap implementation plan. Members agreed that the plan must be strategic and targeted, embedding the Priority Reforms as a central priority. The NT Partnership Working Group will continue to develop the draft plan ahead of the next NTECAA meeting in November.

In other business, members noted progress against the NTECAA actions register, received an update on Joint Council's progress to respond to the Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Review, and discussed matters related to the progress of the NT Remote Aboriginal Investment agreement.

The NTECAA reaffirmed its commitment to working in partnership to deliver practical outcomes under Closing the Gap.

The NTECAA will next meet in November in Wurrumiyanga.

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NTECAA Attendance

NAME	REPRESENTING
The Hon Steve Edgington MLA (Co-Chair)	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, NT Government
Theresa Roe (Co-Chair)	APO NT (North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency)
Ms Naomi Anstess	APO NT (NT Indigenous Business Network)
Ms Leeanne Caton	APO NT (Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory)
Mr Yuseph Deen	APO NT (Northern Land Council)
Ms Bridgette Bellenger	National Indigenous Australians Agency
Ms Mary Watson	CEO, Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
Mr Tom Leeming	NT Government
Mr Brent Warren (Proxy)	NT Government (DCEO, Housing, Local Government and Community Development)
Ms Tess Snowdon	AMSANT
Mr Brenton Toy	APO NT (Tiwi Land Council)
Ms Shaneen Tilmouth	NT Government (Senior Executive Director, Chief Minister and Cabinet)
Mr Travis Wurst	Acting Deputy Commissioner, NT Police Force



Australian Government



**Aboriginal Peak
Organisations**
NORTHERN TERRITORY

