



ACT|atsieb

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

REPORT FROM HEARINGS 14–16 AUGUST 2023

ELEVENTH REPORT TO THE ACT GOVERNMENT



Acknowledgement of Country

We wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who attended or contributed to the 2023 Hearings.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Full title
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACCOs	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations
ACTPS	ACT Public Service
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ALS	Aboriginal Legal Service
AMC	Alexander Maconochie Centre
ASU	Aboriginal Services Unit
CHS	Canberra Health Services
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CRG	Consumer Reference Group
CSD	Community Services Directorate
DASL	Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
FGC	Family Group Conferencing
HAC	Health Advisory Committee
JACS	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
MPC	Major Projects Canberra
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
STIBBV	Sexually Transmissible infection and Blood Borne Virus
TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services
YBFS	Year Before Full-time Schooling

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Strength in Community by Leah Brideson

The artwork featured on the cover of the 2023 Hearings Report is from a work entitled 'Strength in Community' produced by Leah Brideson for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.

Ms Brideson is a self-taught Aboriginal artist born in Canberra, and is a descendent of the Kamilaroi people from her Grandmother's country in Gunnedah, Breeza and Quirindi. She is mother to 2 young children and also works as an Indigenous Education Officer in ACT public schools, supporting students, teachers, family and community, primarily through the arts. Her pieces are a 'visual yarn', providing an opportunity for people to connect with the stories and meaning behind her work. A great deal of her artistic vision and inspiration comes from the changing landscapes in this region. 'Strength in Community' depicts the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as represented

by the 2 meeting places next to the centre circle and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as represented in the centre. The pathways represent journeys of growth of understanding and the strong relationship building of our families and community. The 4 outer circles represent the Ngunnawal, Ngarigo, Ngambri and our neighbouring countries and the knowledge they hold, share and bring to our community. The central meeting place symbolises our community working together to build strength in culture, family, identity and community. The outer design represents the local ACT landscape, the connection we have with our land, the importance of caring for country and an acknowledgement of our ancestors who continue to guide us. The painting is rich in the colours of the ACT landscape and the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

Elected Body Members present for Hearings

Pursuant to section 10A clause (5) of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body members present for these hearings were:

Name	Role	Portfolios
Tanya Keed	Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate• Canberra Health Service• Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
Paula McGrady	Deputy Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACT Health• Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate• Coalition of Peaks
Maurice Walker	Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACT Education• Community Services Directorate
Joanne Chivers	Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justice and Community Safety Directorate
Deanne Booth	Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major Projects Canberra

Message from the Chair and the Elected Body

These are the first Hearings that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body has held since the start of the pandemic in 2020. In that time the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement has reached 4 years old, almost halfway through its intended horizon. The National Agreement, signed the year after the ACT Agreement, is a third of the way through the horizon.

The August 2023 Hearings were held just weeks before the national referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice. The Elected Body is proud that the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has had a consistent voice to the assembly for 15 years. The Elected Body will host 2 sets of hearings in our term, the first hearings focussed primarily on the Priority Reform Areas of the National Agreement and Core Areas of the ACT Agreement, whilst the second hearings scheduled for April will interrogate progress against Phase 1 and 2 action plans.

Hearings are an essential part of the assurance process for the ACT Agreement, an opportunity for the Elected Body to hold the ACT Government to account for their commitments and actions against the agreements.

These Hearings were the first to be live streamed to the community. This is a very important part of our accountability to community—the ability to see their own representatives in the Elected Body holding the ACT Government and their senior executive representatives to account for their commitment and responsibilities as leaders in government.

The ACT is a small, compact jurisdiction with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of approximately 10,000 people. Each of these people have a unique cultural connection, identity and specific needs that they need to be supported and addressed by the ACT Government.

While we acknowledge that change often takes commitment and time from both parties—the recent focus on coordination and reporting of the ACT and National agreements has drawn attention away from the criticality of actually making change in what we do and how we do it.

Our recommendations for directorates are designed to accelerate implementation and outcomes for our community. We encourage directorates to:

- 1 **Know your commitments**—both the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement has specific actions and targets that need to be reached.
- 2 **Plan to do things differently**—focus energy on changing the way they do things by being clear on program intent and outcomes.
- 3 **Work together**—the nature of the agreements are that there are contributions to be made by all directorates to all outcomes. Work with purpose and across directorates to achieve outcomes.

At the end of the ACT Agreement in 2030, we need to be able to celebrate significant change in the engagement and delivery of government services for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community—and most importantly a significant improvement against all target indicators. If there are approaches that are not working in 2023—we need to rapidly innovate and change to achieve the expected outcomes and targets for 2030.

The Elected Body acknowledge and thank the ACT Government and their officers for participating in the Hearings in August 2023. This was the first Hearings that the Elected Body has had an independent secretariat function ensuring that the questions and processes are totally community driven.

I would also like to thank all the members of the Elected Body who work tirelessly to represent the needs of our community and continue to hold their own portfolios to account for their actions on both agreements.

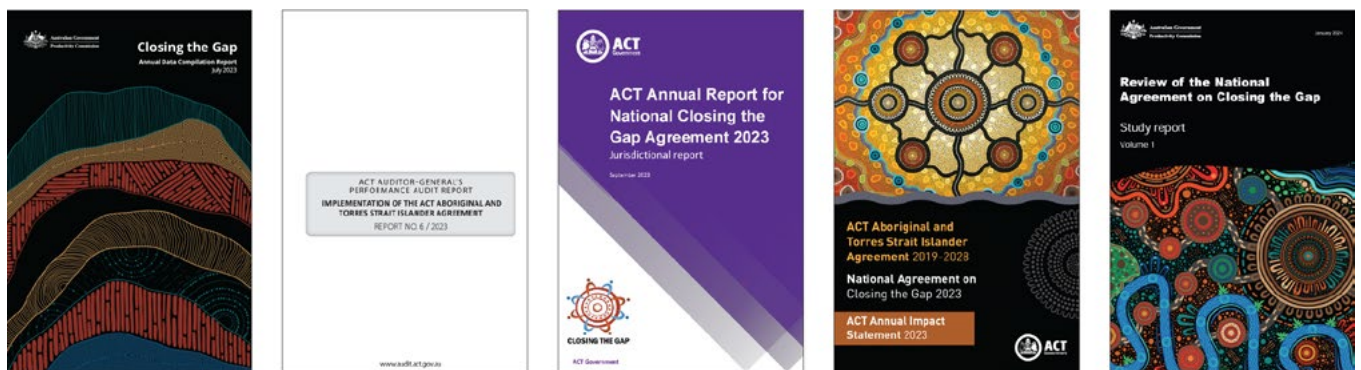
Tanya Keed

Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

Outline of this report

The 2023 Hearings came between a number of ACT and Commonwealth Government reviews and reports on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

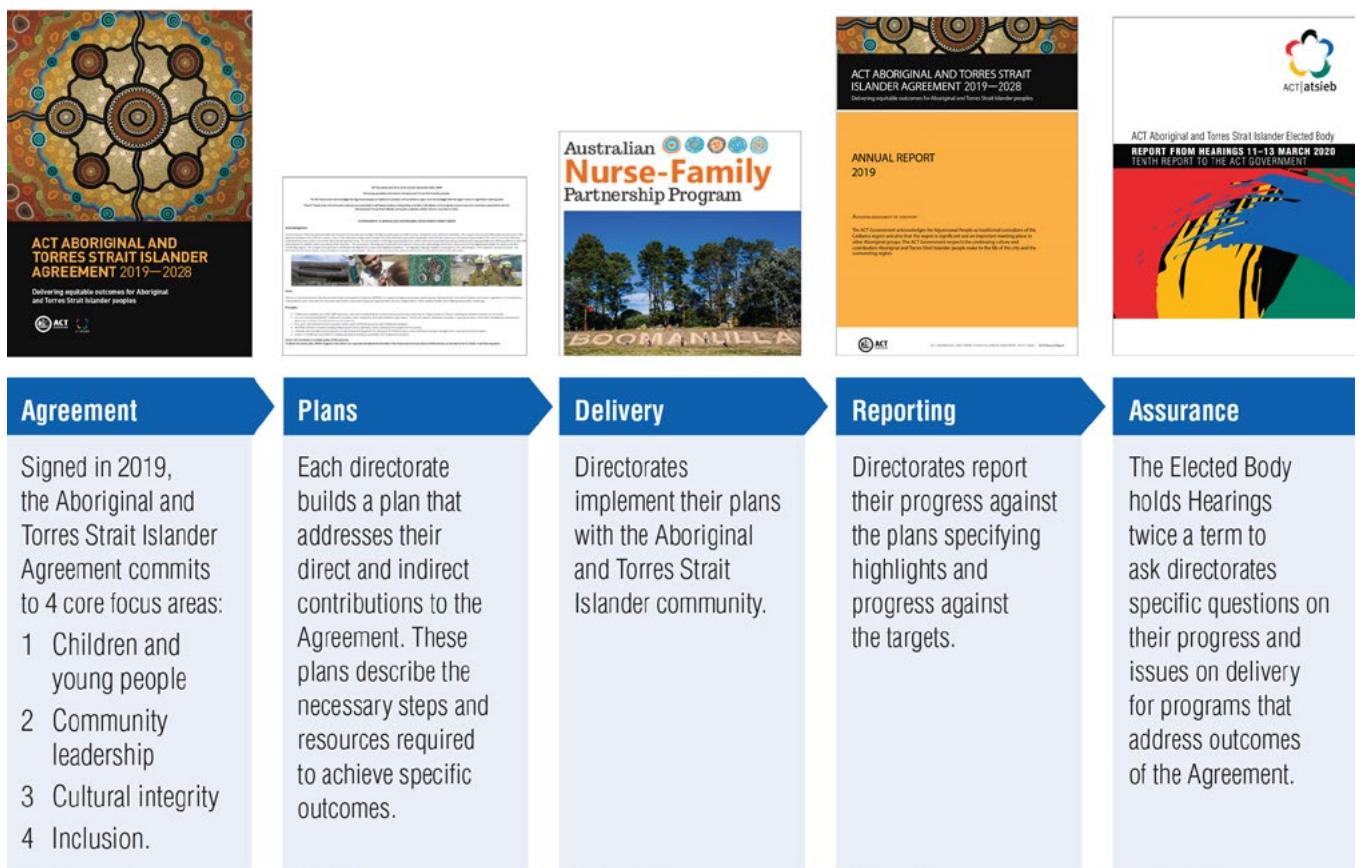
Each of the Productivity Commission Reports describes the lack of progress of all governments in embracing new and different ways of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and making progress on Closing the Gap.



2023				2024
<p>July</p> <p><i>Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report</i></p>	<p>August</p> <p><i>ACT Auditor-General Performance Audit Report Implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement</i></p> <p>August ATSIEB Hearings</p>	<p>September</p> <p><i>ACT Annual Report Closing the Gap Agreement 2023—Jurisdictional Report</i></p>	<p>September</p> <p><i>ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028 National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2023—ACT Annual Impact Statement</i></p>	<p>February</p> <p><i>Study report—Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap</i></p> <p>April ATSIEB Hearings</p>



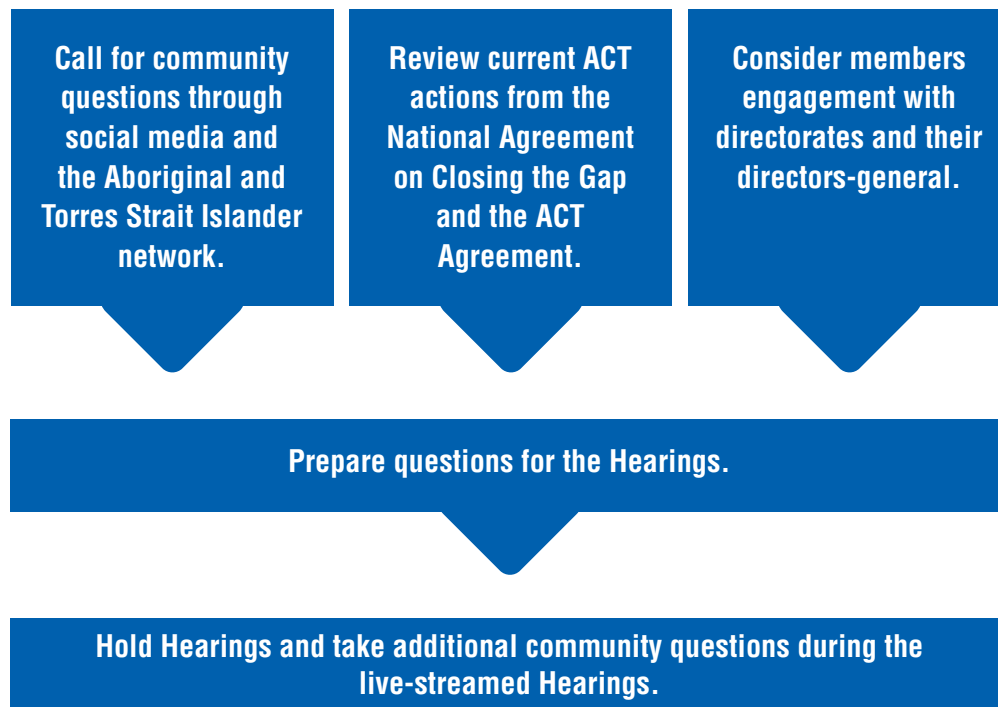
This report summarises information provided to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Hearings in August 2023. The diagram below shows how the ACT Agreement drives planning, delivery of services and programs, reporting and assurance for government service delivery.



Hearings process

The Hearings held between 14 and 16 August 2023 were the first of the 2 sets of hearings held during this term of the Elected Body (Clause 10A clause (1)). They were focused on the 4 priority reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The process to establish questions for the Hearings were as follows:



In presenting this report we have addressed the findings from the questions on the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement together as there are consistency in findings and relevance of recommendations across all directorates.

This report is structured following the key focus and commitments made in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement. The Phase 1 Action Plan results have not been considered in this report.

These Hearings did not substantially interrogate progress in implementing or the impact of the Phase 2 Action Plans and therefore are not included in this report. ACT Government directorates should assume that Phase 2 Action Plans will be the primary focus for examination at the hearings in April 2024.

Targets

The targets recognise both national Closing the Gap targets and local ACT targets. The Closing the Gap targets were not all finalised at the start of the agreement and have and will continue to be updated across the course of the 10-year agreement timeframe. We have noted any available information for the ACT in the interim. These targets are to be achieved within the 10-year period of the agreement.

An example from the report follows:

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Increase the number of contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Individual directorates are seeking to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy. ACT Housing has made significant and conscious decisions in relation to increasing the IPP number and value of contract spend. ACT Housing confirmed 2 specific high value contracts that were awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.		

For each target we:

- note whether it is Closing the Gap or ACT-specific target
- note the target as described in the Agreement
- provide commentary as to what we have heard through the Hearings
- attribute a status.

The 4 status categories are:

Icon	Status	What this means
	No data	No data is available for the period to 2023. This may be because some reporting is on a triennial cycle, or for the Census information, every 5 years.
	Positive progress	Based on the information provided by the directorates, the Elected Body is satisfied that it is likely that the target will be reached.
	In progress	Information provided by the directorates demonstrates that there has been tangible progress and the Elected Body consider it possible that the Agreement target will be reached.
	No progress	There is little to no demonstrated evidence that there has been progress against this target. The issue was not raised within the program of hearings.

A note on data

Data relating to the ACT for the targets on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap are reported by the Productivity Commission. We have found data for the ACT that is able to be tracked and compared with only a few exceptions of targets where the sample sizes are too small that they are unable to be reported.

However, the ACT Government-held data for specific ACT outcomes is difficult to access and in many circumstances is completely absent. The Impact Dashboard is perilously low in traceable data which makes it difficult to conclude anything on the progress or outcomes achieved. It is a concern that without this business intelligence that modelling, resourcing and evaluating progress against these target areas is almost impossible to do — and even more concerning is that this has not been developed or addressed in the first 5 years of this agreement.

Essential next steps

As a result of the discussions during the Hearings, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body consider that there are 5 priorities that the ACT Government needs to focus on to drive change within the delivery of government services for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The responses to these areas should stem from responses that are informed and compliant with the 4 priority reform areas.

1 Child protection

Child protection reform remains a priority of the Elected Body and the community more broadly. The lack of significant change in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children having contact, and entering, child protection is deeply concerning. Trust within the community will only rebuild when there is evidence of change in approach and outcomes. The limited examples of structural change in how the system operates is of serious concern.

We expect that the child protection system and related services will respond collaboratively to the commencement and direction of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Person Commissioner.

2 Justice

The Elected Body recommend that JACS work together with ACT Housing to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people held at Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) on remand due to lack of and/or unsuitable housing. There needs to be an opportunity to take people out of the justice system when they are on remand and not languish at the AMC.

In addition, programs of diversion need to be done through a whole-of-government approach, they must be genuinely accessible and appropriately measured to ensure they are creating diversionary pathways from the justice system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and adults from the justice system.

3 Community assets and community control

There have been positive steps to bringing Boomanulla Oval into contemporary standards and to ensure appropriate resourcing for the facilities maintenance is provided in an ongoing way. The Elected Body would particularly like to recognise the dedicated work of Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) for their extensive work on the grounds.

There has also been a recent review on the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm, and we are aware that there has been extensive research and strategy work completed.

In both circumstances, the focus now needs to be on transfer of management to the community. In the case of Boomanulla Oval, the Elected Body will hold community consultations to further explore community expectations and seek an interim management committee including a majority of suitably skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to guide management decisions at the site and that within 2 years the full operational and strategic management of the oval is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled.

It is important that we highlight the slow rate of progress on the Housing Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO) committed to in the Parliamentary agreement with an upcoming ACT election in October, we are seeking both immediate progress and a further commitment to the stand up of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Housing service(s) in the ACT.

4 Early childhood, education and health

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results are astonishingly low in our community. The ACT results are the second lowest in the country, above only the Northern Territory with a much larger and extremely rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. Across the eastern states from Queensland to Tasmania, the states are averaging 36 per cent—still almost 10 per cent higher than the ACT with a small and non-rural population.

While the Elected Body recognise the critical investment that has been made to ensure our children can access early childhood education, this is not capitalised if we do not address the developmental vulnerability of our children. The Elected Body seeks to work in a whole-of-government manner to understand and redress the influences that are impacting on our children's development, to identify what supports are required to better support children and their families.

When our children fall behind in their learning they stay behind, and the educational gap starts to widen. Gaps in children's performance levels open early, beyond 8 years old, school environments can only play a small role in reducing these differences. This will not only assist in the early year's targets, but most other socio-economic indicators are impacted by how well our children do in their early years of education.

In terms of early childhood health, both immunisations and health screening for children and young people need to be prioritised to see changes in the Closing the Gap targets relating to outcomes for children and young people.

5 Proportional funding

All ACT directorates need to review their funding arrangements to ensure that funding is proportional to the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using the services. We understand that this is planned for child protection, however, this needs to be considered for other critical areas of service delivery such as justice, housing and health. This needs to be done in a systematic not programmatic way and requires improved data, procurement and commissioning policy and processes as well as sector strengthening support to accommodate the level of transition that is going to be required. This is not about just new money but redirecting current spends to providers with experience with and accountability to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the ACT.

Priority reforms

The ACT Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap are complementary agreements. While the ACT Agreement was signed ahead of the National Agreement, it is critical that the ACT Government links their effort and funding to the expectations and outcomes of both agreements.

The Priority Reforms are essential levers in changing the way government works with communities. The Elected Body needs the ACT Government to become more attuned to the expectations of the agreements and how they complement each other.

PRIORITY REFORM 1 Formal partnership and shared decision-making

Priority Reform 1 is described very clearly in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap:

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.

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.

Output indicators

- Partnerships (new or existing) reviewed meeting the 'strong partnership elements'.
- 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.

The examples that the ACT directorates supplied as examples of partnerships, do not meet the thresholds described in the National Agreement.

These quotes from the Hearings indicate the state of partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that have been established to address key areas of the national or ACT Agreement.

- 1 "I will be honest: I do not feel as though we are doing as well in relation to building partnerships across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community more broadly." Director-General, EPSDD
- 2 "Again, there is a range of different types of partnerships. The example of working with Thirrili we would describe as a partnership. Even though they are a contracted provider, the way we have approached the consultation has been in partnership with them. So, if you are happy with that broad definition of 'partnership', we can come back with the number of quite specific areas where we have done that."
Director-General, ACT Health

3 “I am not aware of any formal partnerships that we have established.”
Director-General Canberra Health Services

Individual contracts or relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community do not constitute partnerships. Critically the capacity for shared decision-making within a formal partnership are not embodied in any of the legislative, policy or terms of reference for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committees currently operating in the ACT. Most groups are advisory bodies with some, including the Elected Body, having the capacity to hold the government to account for its actions, policies, funding and programs.

Successive consultations between government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community do not appear to be making changes, therefore the community then also disengages from future consultation opportunities. Government, on occasion, reads this as disinterest—when frustration would be a more accurate conclusion.

The disappointing results around partnership and shared decision-making are echoed by the recent Productivity Commission Review which states, “persistent barriers to progressing the Agreement’s Priority Reforms are the lack of power sharing needed for joint decision-making, and the failure of governments to acknowledge and act on the reality that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know what is best for their communities.”

The ACT Government needs to remedy where there are key areas that multiple party partnerships are required with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and community representatives more broadly.

The most obvious of issues in this regard is a non-compliant partnership would be where the government has chosen the community participants, whereas a compliant partnership would need to be with representatives that the community select to represent them (through membership to the organisation and election of board members for example).

PRIORITY REFORM 2

Building the community-controlled sector

In the ACT we have a small, dynamic and growing Aboriginal Community-Controlled sector and recognise that the ACT Government is committed to supporting the sector and establishing new organisations.

Priority Reform 2 states:

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

Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community- controlled organisations [clause 81.a.ii]

There are 4 areas in which we would advise the ACT Government to consider more joined-up practices across government in the engagement with and funding of new entities that are community-controlled. These are:

- 1 Boomanulla Oval
- 2 Housing ACCO
- 3 Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm
- 4 Child protection.

Each of these are currently pursued by individual ACT Government directorates, however, their capacity for change will be increased if they are pursued together. For example, the Housing ACCO needs to be working closely with Justice and Community Services (JaCS) if we are to actually close the gap on both incarceration and homelessness.

PRIORITY REFORM 3

Transforming government organisations

The responsibility for action and change in Priority Reform 3 is held by governments. At the ACT level, we see effort in some elements of transformation, however, there are some, particularly in the 'Identification and elimination of racism' (Clause 59a.) where both the understanding and action is not aligned.

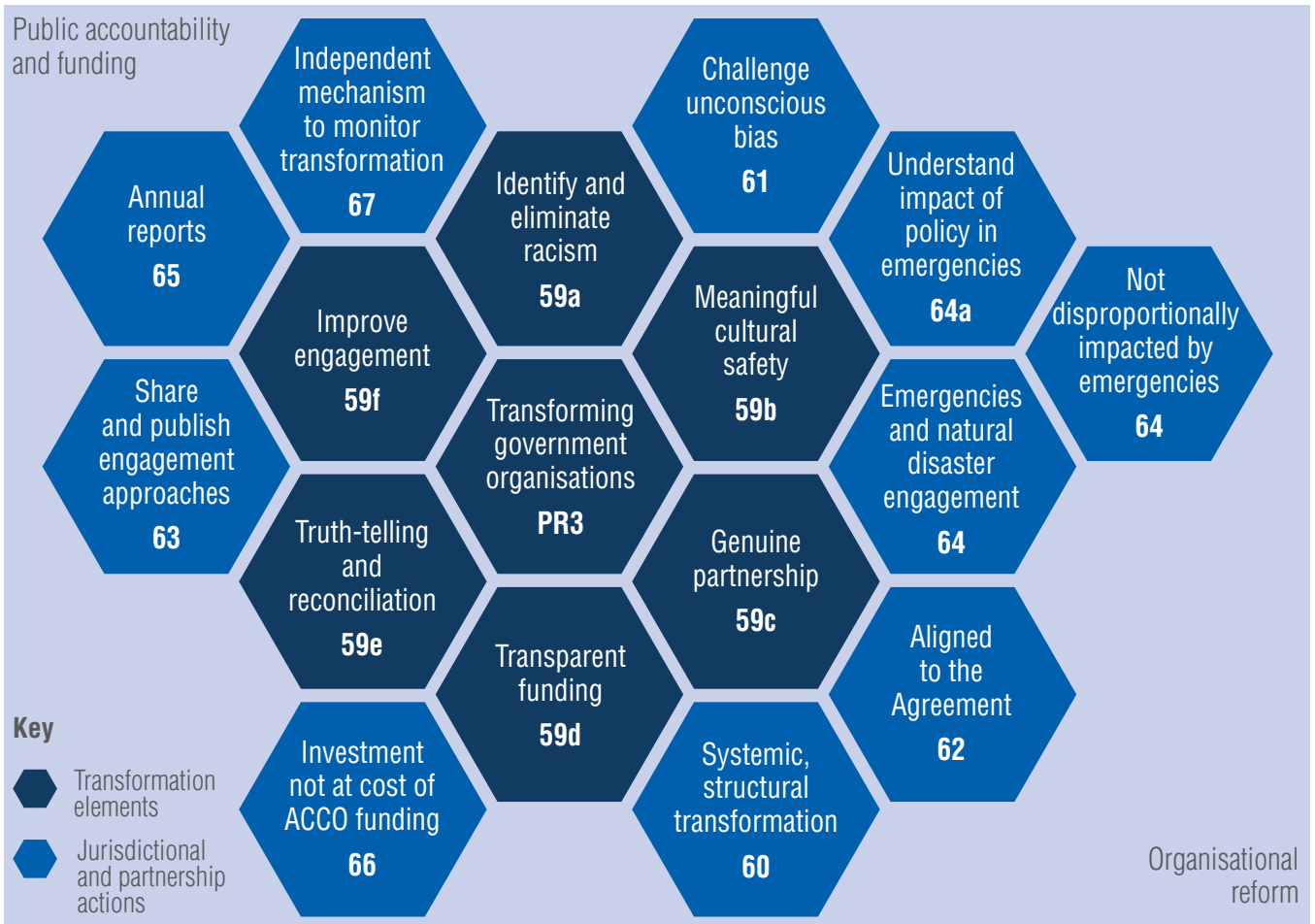
The diagram on page 13 shows the transformation elements with the jurisdictional elements of the priority reform. We need to see more commitment and action for systemic and structural transformation of the ACT Government and a willingness to improve accountability and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Systemic racism needs a systemic approach to its identification and resolution, however, we see only programmatic or individual responses being elevated through the RED Program.

The Hearings also covered the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified positions in ACT Government. The Elected Body values the role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the ACT Public Service in specific targeted roles as well as mainstream positions.

However, it is important that roles that are identified because they require specific knowledge of the community, lived experience and experience working with the community include a requirement to demonstrate ability and experience in that regard. These roles are critical and rely on more than just proof of Indigeneity but a demonstrated specialised skill set. These questions were provided to the Elected Body by community organisations who at times find some staff in identified roles lack knowledge of the local services, history, trauma and protocols and that has a detrimental impact on their ability to provide services to those who need it the most.

PRIORITY REFORM 3 TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS



The Elected Body recommends adjustments and inclusions to recruitment processes be made including panels to ensure this valuable skill set is appropriately valued and assessed. We respect that not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had the opportunity to develop the related experience working within government and community and make no suggestion that this makes them less a part of our community.

Most importantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not the cause of the issues arising from systemic racism in the design and delivery of government programs, and it is not their role as public servants to be the answer.

PRIORITY REFORM 4

Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Priority Reform 4 reads:

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.

The Elected Body would like to recognise the work that has been initiated by the ACT Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnerships team in educating multiple directorates on the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty and working to provide a pathway for the review of all health data relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Data in this context is the ability for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to access relevant data to support their decision making and establishment and operation of the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations.

It should be noted here that the seeking of data for the ACT Agreement is very difficult and places the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body at a significant disadvantage in not being able to understand or assess change or progress against the Agreement.

All directorates as a matter of urgency need to build, adjust or utilise data that provides the ability to track progress against the agreement. The Elected Body also seeks from the ACT Government a data exercise to illustrate our current trajectory against all indicators, as well as modelling on what would be required against each to actually meet the 2030 targets.

CORE FOCUS AREA: Children and young people

We welcome the recent appointment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People's Commissioner and the focus they will bring to the issues that have prevented change in the rates of children and young people being in contact with the child protection system.

Our community is also growing and there is an increased need to focus on the younger generation's connection to family, culture and country. There are widening gaps across the National Agreement targets which is deeply concerning.

Closing the Gap target	Progress	2020	2023																									
<p>CTG Outcome 3 By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full-time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95%.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the data issues for the ACT it would be good to follow this data with attendance data and progression into kindergarten. However, given the subsequent AEDC data, we are deeply concerned for the level of supports afforded these children attending YBFS.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in YBFS</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Percentage</td> <td>105.1%</td> <td>115.4%</td> <td>139.9%</td> <td>113.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Productivity Commission Closing the Gap Data Dashboard.</p>		2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage	105.1%	115.4%	139.9%	113.7%																	
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<p>CTG Outcome 4 By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all 5 domains of the AEDC to 55%.</p>	<p>There was less than 1% change in the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that were on track on 5 domains over 3 years. While there is observable change and improvement, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally vulnerable in one or 2 domains, it is still almost 20 points short of the ACT target and 30 points short of what is required to reach the National targets of 55%. New approaches are required.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2018</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2024</th> <th>2027</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>On track on 5 domains</td> <td>26.4%</td> <td>27.3%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Productivity Commission Closing the Gap Data Dashboard.</p> <p>Public reporting has changed between the 2018 and 2021 AEDC dates, so below is the data that we can observe longitudinal changes and observe some improvement.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2018</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2024</th> <th>2027</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains</td> <td>49.1%</td> <td>43.0%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains</td> <td>30.2%</td> <td>25.7%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: PHIDU Social Health Tables 2024.</p>		2018	2021	2024	2027	On track on 5 domains	26.4%	27.3%				2018	2021	2024	2027	Developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains	49.1%	43.0%			Developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains	30.2%	25.7%				
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Closing the Gap target	Progress	2020	2023
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CTG Outcome 12
 By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care by 45%.

In spite of all apparent efforts to reduce both the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in contact with the child protection system in the ACT, this is not reflected in the data.

It is bewildering that with the advice from the Our Booris, Our Way Steering Committee and the years of effort since 2018 that has been directed at reducing the number of children entering out of home care, the results for the ACT are still disappointing and dislocating for the ACT community.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care (this includes, kinship, foster and residential care) since the launch of the ACT Agreement has fluctuated significantly. The lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 do not explain the significantly higher number in 2022. More children have entered care every year since 2019.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering care

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number	21	36	28	45	27
% of total entries into care	20%	21%	22%	33%	21%

Source: Report on Government Services, Productivity Commission 2024.

For future reporting the Elected Body would like to see the data from across the child protection system to understand specific changes in notifications, intake, access to intensive family support, Family Group Conferencing and Functional Family Therapy and the breakdown between each type of order and care (kinship—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, foster, institutional).

CTG Outcome 13
 By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

The Elected Body acknowledges the renewed funding to the sector to provide specific services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, there has been no progress in actual data flowing from either the justice or community sector to understand this further.

No further progress in availability of data sets to evaluate progress and outcomes against this action.



ACT Government targets	Progress	2020	2023
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95% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are enrolled in early childhood education.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school enrolments in the ACT

Program type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ACT School	2,527	2,105	2,157	2,800	2,855
Koori Preschool	86	86	84	83	90
Both Koori and universal preschool	44	36	51	45	46



Source: Education Census Data.











ACT Government targets	Progress	2020	2023																				
Increase the level of early support responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.	<p>The range of supports is slowly changing. The current responses are provided by both mainstream and ACCOs. However, the success of these approaches is yet to be monitored and measured.</p> <p>There has been no public reporting from Our Booris, Our Way since December 2022. This lack of transparency of the changes that have been achieved in child protection is disappointing.</p>																						
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people referred to and engaged with preservation services by 2020.	Data unavailable.																						
Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people referred to and engaged with restoration services by 2020.	<p>We have been provided the results of the Uniting contracted responses:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Referrals (families)</td> <td>26</td> <td>20</td> <td>31</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement (families)</td> <td>18</td> <td>12</td> <td>20</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Restoration (children)</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There appears to be a significant difference between the number of referrals, the number of families engaged and a significant difference to the number of children able to be restored.</p>		2020	2021	2022	2023	Referrals (families)	26	20	31	12	Engagement (families)	18	12	20	9	Restoration (children)	4	1	1	1		
	2020	2021	2022	2023																			
Referrals (families)	26	20	31	12																			
Engagement (families)	18	12	20	9																			
Restoration (children)	4	1	1	1																			
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under 4 years old accessing Early Childhood Education Services.	No data.																						
Increase in the number of families engaged with formal parenting and family support services for detainees and post release.	JACS have advised that this data is not available.																						
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people provided with the opportunity to voice their views and demonstrate leadership in the broader community.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.																						
Increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people accessing early support health services.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.																						

CORE FOCUS AREA: **Community leadership**

The first period of the Agreement in Community leadership has seen positive progress against a number of targets. We are lacking however, specific actions to support senior, decision-making voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be heard in government boards and committees that needs to be actioned in the second period of the Agreement.

Closing the Gap target	Progress	2020	2023
By 2030, a 15% increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests. (CTG 15a)	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
By 2030, a 15% increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea. (CTG 15b)	Not applicable in the ACT.	N/A	N/A

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on ACT Government boards and committees.	This will be considered in the April 2024 Hearings.		
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community led solutions through partnerships, providing advice, and leadership to ACT Government.	There are no new partnerships, or independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Boards that have been established between the 2020 and 2023 Hearings.		
Increase in meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members by the ACT Government.	There are a number of co-design and co-production forums being developed in the ACT. The key here is in meaningful engagement, and this will only be able to be evaluated once action has followed the advice and direction provided during engagement.		
Establish representative Ngunnawal Traditional Custodian voice to provide direction and guidance for the 70% of the ACT managed in parks and reserves by April 2019.	The re-establishment of the Dhawura Ngunnawal committee provides advice, direction and decision-making with EPSDD. However, we are unsure as to the status of this specific target.		

CORE FOCUS AREA: Cultural integrity

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Increase the number of community based and visible events and artworks around the ACT which showcase Ngunnawal culture.	All directorates quoted their own Reconciliation Action Plans or equivalents which included engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses for consultation, advice or artwork including specific Traditional Owner input.		
Demonstrate cultural competency of ACT Government employees.	The new Cultural Transformation Branch established in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) appears to be charged with a number of requirements to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. We are awaiting the full scope of services that the Cultural Transformation Branch will undertake to understand its responsibility in the achievement of cultural competency of ACT Government employees.		
Increase the number of culturally safe spaces.	This was not raised and discussed at the Hearings.		
Demonstrate the increased usage of co-design principles in the development of government policy and reform.	The ACT Government continues to use design principles in their engagement with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. However, listening and actioning those recommendations is less clear.		
Embed the requirement for all services to be culturally appropriate and accessible.	This was not raised and discussed at the Hearings.		
Demonstrate cultural proficiency of ACT Government.	We understand that there is cultural training and exposure for ACT public service staff. We are unsure as to how that is calibrated to cultural proficiency across ACT government staff and services.		
Priority Reform 1 Feedback from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community around the meaningfulness of engagement and self-determination.	We are receiving feedback on the nature of engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT. We have raised the importance of meaningful engagement and commitment to follow through on the advice and cultural knowledge that is shared.		

CORE FOCUS AREA: Inclusion

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Reduce experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within government systems by 80% by 2028.	There is still some misconception that racism and discrimination is solved through a RED process—systemic racism presents differently through legislation and data and processes are still lacking.		
Feedback from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community around the meaningfulness of engagement and self-determination.	There are numerous co-design forums across the ACT Government, unfortunately the meaningfulness of engagement appears to be either routine or focused on a few individuals without broad community engagement or without focus on self-determination.		
Increase the number of and participation at community-based events and activities that showcase and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.	There has been an increase in the number of events that specially showcase and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. TCCS recently had a celebration of the launch of their new RAP at Boomanulla Oval.		
CTG Priority Reform 3 Demonstrated that actions have been taken to remove barriers to delivery of culturally responsive and respectful services.	Collectively, directorates have discussed the presence of systemic racism. However, efforts to identify and eliminate from the provision of government services seems less likely.		
Increase in the proportion of Canberrans who agree that the ACT is an inclusive community, and have a greater understanding of reconciliation.	Within the 'Identity and belonging' element of the ACT Wellbeing Framework there are 3 measures within the Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and recognising our Traditional Custodians. Pathway: Identity and belonging > Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture are important to Australian identity		

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Agree	83.8%	87.8%	-	85.3%
Neutral	10.1%	5.6%	-	7.9%
Disagree	6.1%	6.6%	-	6.8%

Engaging with Traditional Custodians and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures—attended an event, ceremony or activity









Attended an event, ceremony or activity:	2020	2021	2022	2023
with an Acknowledgement of Country	75.8%	76.1%	-	82.0%
with a Welcome to Country by a Traditional Custodian	59.1%	56.4%	-	59.7%
that focused on or were held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	31.9%	32.2%	-	34.7%

Between 2019 and 2023, the proportion of ACT adults who correctly named one or more of the Traditional Custodians of the ACT region rose significantly from 74.7% to 81.7%.



SIGNIFICANT
FOCUS AREA:

Connecting the community

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
<p>Priority Reform 1 Increase in strategic partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and businesses.</p>	See Priority Reform 1 information.		
<p>Priority Reform 2 Increase in support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community initiatives and businesses.</p>	See Priority Reform 2 information.		
<p>Increase in ACT Government's participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events.</p>	<p>Directorates are looking for opportunities to engage with the community—we acknowledge that the various co-design forums used by government to engage are in different stages of establishment and coordination.</p> <p>The Elected Body are seeking more transparency on the availability and uses of the 10-year, \$20 million Healing and Reconciliation Fund and also future plans for the ACT Reconciliation Day public holiday.</p>		
<p>Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and management committees.</p>	<p>The progress against this particular outcome from the 10-year Parliamentary Agreement has slowed. Clause 4.4 Support the development of sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in areas such as child and family services, justice, housing and disability. With 2024 as an election year, we are keen for expedited progress against this outcome.</p>		

SIGNIFICANT
FOCUS AREA:

Economic participation

Closing the Gap target	Progress	2020	2023						
CTG Outcome 7 By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%.	The ACT is tracking above the target on this outcome. Next update 2026 Census.								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2016</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2026</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–24 years who are in employment, education or training</td> <td>73.7%</td> <td>74.4%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2016	2021	2026	Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–24 years who are in employment, education or training	73.7%	74.4%	
	2016	2021	2026						
Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–24 years who are in employment, education or training	73.7%	74.4%							
Source: Closing the Gap Dashboard, Productivity Commission.									
CTG Outcome 8 By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 years who are employed to 62%.	Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15–64 years who are employed								
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Source: Closing the Gap Dashboard, Productivity Commission.									

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023																																																	
Increase the number of contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	Directorate QON responses show that the number of contracts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are increasing.		Limited data to consider from the Hearings.																																																	
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ACT Government target

Progress

2020

2023

Increase the value of procurements from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

The progress against the 2% of addressable spend has been disappointing across government. More work needs to be done to consider how both number and value of procurements can be increased.



Indigenous Procurement Policy progress

		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
CMTEDD	Responded (no.)*	7	9	4	4	
	Value (no.)^	24	27	51	41	
	Spend (%)#	0.16%	1.93%	0.91%	0.67%	
ACT Health	Responded (no.)*	5	2	5	4	
	Value (no.)^	9	12	31	30	
	Spend (%)#	6.8%	21%	6.8%	7%	
CHS	Responded (no.)*	15	2	3	3	
	Value (no.)^	15	7	15	11	
	Spend (%)#	0.5%	1.5%	1.49%	0.42%	
JACS	Responded (no.)*			2	5	
	Value (no.)^			25	25	
	Spend (%)#			8.48%	1.96%	
CSD	Responded (no.)*	4	0	0	2	
	Value (no.)^	25	18	25	23	
	Spend (%)#	0.41%	0.32%	0.9%	0.84%	
TCCS	Responded (no.)*	2	9	8	7	
	Value (no.)^	17	28	17	25	
	Spend (%)#	1.43%	0.85%	1.24%	0.94%	
EDU	Responded (no.)*	9	10		5	
	Value (no.)^	11	22		27	
	Spend (%)#	1.7%	7.2%		2.3%	
EPSDD	Responded (no.)*	-	1	3	6	
	Value (no.)^	-	16	22	31	
	Spend (%)#	-	1.22%	0.61%	0.41%	
MPC	Responded (no.)*	0	0	0	2	
	Value (no.)^	2	2	9	1	
	Spend (%)#	0	4.1%	1.4%	4.9%	

* No. that responded to Territory tender and quotation opportunities issued from an approved system.









^ No. that attributed a value of addressable spend.

% of addressable spend spent with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise.

Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, social enterprises and entrepreneurs supported.

Programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs, businesses and social enterprises have commenced and are bringing community entrepreneurial needs together with speciality skills for growth and development of these businesses.



ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023																																									
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed through the Employment Inclusion Program (supporting traineeships and apprenticeships).	Not discussed at the 2023 Hearings.																																											
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in senior positions across the ACT Public Service by 2021.	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who have senior positions in the ACT public services are currently unknown.</p> <p>There does appear to be an increase in the number of roles that are identified as being specifically for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to apply. However, there is less focus on the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in senior positions of influence (senior executive service roles) and that leaves some question as to how more junior employees are supported through their employment and able to raise both positive and negative issues with senior leadership.</p>																																											
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the ACT Public Service and non-government services.	<p>The ACTPS is committed to supporting and improving the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our workforce, with a target set to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment to 3% of the ACTPS workforce by 2026.</p> <p>The ACT Public Service Employment Strategy facilitates the realisation of this aim through real actions that are being implemented across the service to reach the commitment to employing 407 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 30 June 2019. Recent data demonstrates that the ACT PS has achieved this goal, as outlined in the data below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Headcount</td> <td>423</td> <td>489</td> <td>517</td> <td>551</td> <td>563</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Percentage</td> <td>1.8%</td> <td>2.0%</td> <td>2.0%</td> <td>2.0%</td> <td>2.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Target</td> <td>1.5%</td> <td>2.0%</td> <td>2.0%</td> <td>3.0%</td> <td>3.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Median salary</td> <td>\$85k</td> <td>\$81k</td> <td>\$86k</td> <td>\$89k</td> <td>\$91k</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recruitment rate</td> <td>-</td> <td>18.4%</td> <td>18.4%</td> <td>15.2%</td> <td>17.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Separation rate</td> <td>10.5%</td> <td>9.1%</td> <td>7.0%</td> <td>10.1%</td> <td>11.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: ACT State of the Service Reports 2019–23.</p> <p>There is no consolidated information published on an annual basis that tracks the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in non-government, private or community, services.</p>		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Headcount	423	489	517	551	563	Percentage	1.8%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	Target	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	3.0%	3.0%	Median salary	\$85k	\$81k	\$86k	\$89k	\$91k	Recruitment rate	-	18.4%	18.4%	15.2%	17.6%	Separation rate	10.5%	9.1%	7.0%	10.1%	11.3%	  <p>However, rates of separation need careful consideration</p>
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Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees accessing Prison to Work initiatives.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.																																											

SIGNIFICANT
FOCUS AREA:

Health and wellbeing

Access to appropriate health and wellbeing services for the community is a critical area of need.

Closing the Gap target	Progress	2020	2023
CTG Target 1 Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.	No data available for this target.		
CTG Target 2 By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91%.	In the ACT in 2020, the birthweight rate for Indigenous singleton birth babies was 87.7% which is 6.4% lower than for non-Indigenous babies (94.1%). Fluctuating Source: Closing the Gap Dashboard, Productivity Commission		
CTG Target 14 Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.	No data available for this target in the ACT. National indicators of mortality due to suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is currently at a rate of 27.1 per 100,000.		

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Strengthened support for Mental Health and Suicide prevention.	ACT has released the ACT Mental Health Strategy which complements the national strategy—The <i>National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing</i> (2017–23).		
Reduced transmission of sexually transmitted disease and bloodborne viruses and reduction in related social impacts.	ACT Sexually Transmissible Infection and Blood Borne Virus (STIBBV) Health Advisory Committee (HAC). The STIBBV HAC was established in 2019 and is comprised of engaged members of the STIBBV sector and government representatives. In 2019, the HAC worked together to develop a comprehensive multi-year workplan, guided by the collective National Strategies. The workplan identifies and prioritises actionable areas of work for STI and BBV-related matters in the ACT, particularly with respect to delivering on the Statement of Priorities and prioritising recommendations from recent surveillance and research projects.		

ACT Government target **Progress** **2020** **2023**

Increased vaccination coverage rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in at least 2 of the following 3 cohorts: 12 to ≤ 15 months; 24 to ≤ 27 months; and 60 to ≤ 63 months, relative to the baseline until a coverage rate of ≥95% is achieved.

The 12-month immunisation rate has decreased significantly.

Immunisation rate	Target	2020	2023	Status
12 months	>95.0%	97.52%	91.83%	Not on track
24 months	>95.0%	89.81%	89.95%	Not on track
60 months	>95.0%	97.93%	97.96%	On track

Source: Historical coverage data tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, Department of Health.



Continued commitment to and development of the Ngunnawal Bush Health Healing Farm including undertaking a review to inform continued improvements of governance and program development.

NBHF has recently been through a significant governance review. The Elected Body anticipate more information on the new steps being taken towards community control to be released soon.



Continued partnerships for the development of culturally appropriate rehabilitation and detox options in Canberra for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The new facility in Watson is currently under construction and will be managed by Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation, Winnunga Nimmityjah



Demonstrated enhancement of therapeutic relationship between consumers, carers and staff.

CHS commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is underpinned by the ongoing **place-based partnership** with our CRG to improve health service access, experience, and outcomes for the community.













The CRG was established in July 2020 and comprises members from the ACT and NSW who have lived experience with CHS, either as patients or carers, and representatives from CHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Services. The CRG's purpose is to:

- provide input into the design and delivery of healthcare services to ensure cultural safety
- assist in identifying barriers to accessing healthcare and work with CHS to consider solutions
- partner with CHS to improve access to health services.

The CRG is a formal mechanism which empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making authority with CHS. CRG was instrumental in the development of the Statement of Commitment and is closely involved in the development and implementation of CHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ongoing priorities and specific actions. In 2023, CRG received an ACT NAIDOC Week award for its work.

CHS maintains an ongoing focus on building partnerships with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to improve health service access, experience, and outcomes for the community. This includes partnerships with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga), Katungul Aboriginal Corporation Regional Health and Community Services, and Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation.



ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Demonstrated enhancement of experience of holistic health care.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
Demonstrated engagement with transport initiatives such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bus and active travel initiatives in line with community expectations.	There is provision for up to 90 chartered services throughout the 2023 calendar year.		 Limited data
90% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the care of the Director-General have a therapeutic assessment finalised within 16 weeks of entering out-of-home care.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
Students complex and challenging behaviours will be supported in accordance with the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy and Procedures.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees accessing Prison to Work initiatives.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		





SIGNIFICANT
FOCUS AREA:

Housing

Housing is a critical element of ensuring safety and security in our community.

Closing the Gap target	Progress	2020	2023								
CTG Outcome 9 By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88%.	Positive against the national target, however data falling slightly.										
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ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023								
Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2016</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2026</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership</td> <td>(1,397) 44.4%</td> <td>45.3%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2016	2021	2026	Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership	(1,397) 44.4%	45.3%			
		2016	2021	2026							
Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership	(1,397) 44.4%	45.3%									
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Housing Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2021.											
Decrease in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experiencing homelessness.	In 2016, there were 95 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homeless persons. Source: Census and will not be available for comparison until 2021 and generally analysed and published by the AIHW. 2021 data will need to be sourced from the ACT as the Census data does not provide data by jurisdiction.										
	Increase in culturally appropriate housing options in the ACT.	Under the ACT Housing Strategy, the ACT Government committed to working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to expand the range of culturally appropriate housing options for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The ACT Government delivered on this commitment through 3 dedicated, long-term public housing developments for older members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mura Gunya (Pathway to home) opened in Kambah in 2016 • Gundji Gindilan (Joyful home) opened in Lyons in 2020 • Ningulangu (Belonging to: home, place) opened in Dickson in 2022. These 3 properties provide 15 homes that are age and culturally appropriate for our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, allowing tenants to maintain connection to their family, community and culture. The property designs include native grasses, shrubs and trees to provides a strong connection to the local landscape, and are located close to shops, public transport and health services and community facilities. We recommend that ACT Housing commence dialog with the Elected Body to regarding the next housing project of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Source: ACT Community Services Directorate website.									



ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and management committees.	The progress to set up the Housing ACCO appears to have stalled. We welcome new commitments to work with the Elected Body to progress this outcome.		
Increase in housing and accommodation options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in contact with the justice system.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		

SIGNIFICANT FOCUS AREA:

Justice

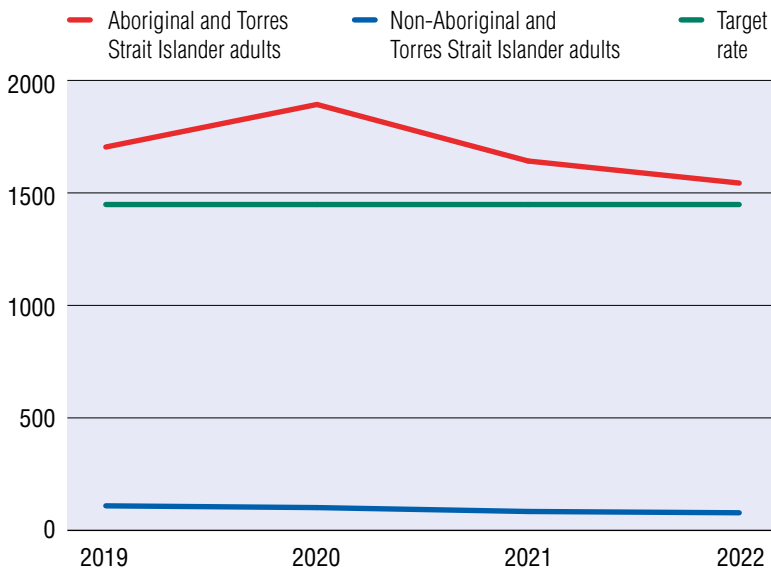
Justice continues to be a focus for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT.

Closing the Gap target **Progress** **2020** **2023**

CTG Outcome 10

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15%.

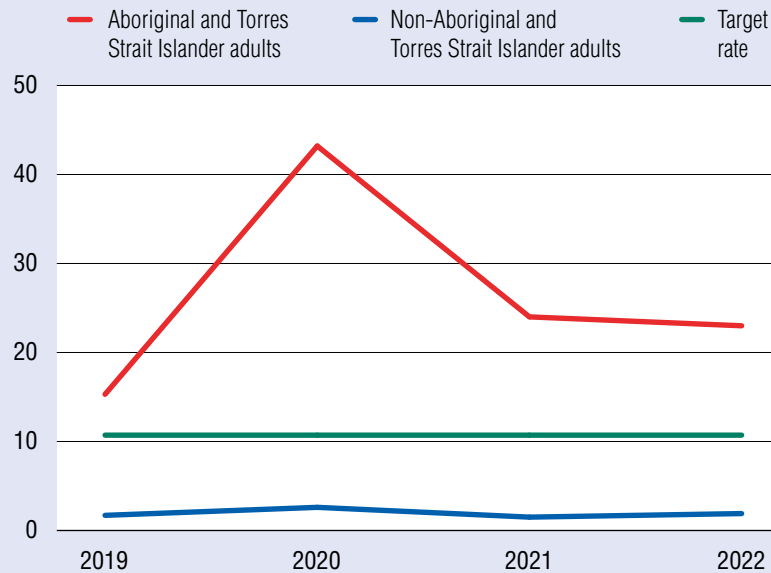
Rate of incarceration — adults (per 100,000)



CTG Outcome 11

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30%.

Rate of incarceration — young people aged 10–17 years (per 10,000)









ACT Government target **Progress** **2020** **2023**



Increase in on Country participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This will be considered in the 2024 Hearings.



ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
<p>Increase in the number of families engaged with formal parenting and family support services for detainees and post-release.</p>	<p>As per the response to question 5.4 data on how many families have been engaged with parenting and family support services and related matters for detainees is not readily available due to the ad hoc nature of the support. Determining this would require a manual inspection of individual detainee records. The Family Engagement Program, Mothers Family and Culture Program, and Strong Fathers Program refer to individualised support and referrals provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees by the ASU, on an as-needed basis at the Cultural Hub (a culturally safe space operating in the AMC Education area) and Visits Centre.</p> <p>Regarding Case Conferences, the ASU supports detainees to participate in Family Group Conferencing (FGC), which is run through CSD and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to make decisions regarding their children in a culturally safe way. FGC is voluntary and arranged by a neutral Aboriginal facilitator on request.</p> <p>Data on how many detainees have been supported with parenting related matters, or the number of detainees who have regular contact with their children if they are in the out of home care system is not readily available. Due to the ad hoc nature of the support, determining this would require a manual inspection of individual detainee records.</p> <p>Since January 2023, there have been 2 detainees referred to FGC.</p>		 Limited data
<p>Youth justice case plans completed within 6 weeks.</p>	<p>This will be considered in the 2024 Hearings.</p>		
<p>At least 25% of all eligible 18–25 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be referred to Restorative Justice by ACT Policing as a diversion from the formal criminal justice system.</p>	<p>Current diversion programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs of Dependence legislation: JACS worked with the ACT Health and ACT Policing in relation to the <i>Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Act 2022</i>, which extends the Simple Cannabis Offence Notice Scheme to include: heroin, cocaine, amphetamine and methylamphetamine. The legislation came into effect on 28 October 2023 and provides that persons found in possession of small amounts of drugs may first be referred to a health-focussed drug diversion session. Diversion away from the criminal justice system for personal use possession offences is supported by the <i>ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022–26</i> and the <i>Australian National Drug Strategy 2017–26</i>. • Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List: JACS work with ACT Health, Canberra Health Services and CSD to deliver the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL). The DASL deals with offences that relate to serious drug and alcohol use. DASL provides an alternative to full-time imprisonment, which aims to address the underlying drivers of offending. Funding was provided in the 2023–24 ACT budget to expand the DASL from 35 participants to 42. 		

Target continues on the following page

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
<p>At least 25% of all eligible 18–25 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be referred to Restorative Justice by ACT Policing as a diversion from the formal criminal justice system (continued).</p>	<p>New programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yurwan Ghuda (Ngunnawal for ‘Strong Child/ren’): The program aims to reduce offending rates of at-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth by connecting them with culture and country to address underlying factors and provide better pathways outside of the justice system. The program will achieve this by taking participants out once a week over a 3-month period with respected Elders and community leaders to learn about Aboriginal land management, local sacred sites, traditional trade routes, bush medicine and tucker, art, music and storytelling, embedded with educational components. Yurwan Ghuda is aimed at young people aged 10–14 who are identified as being at risk of engaging with the criminal justice system, and will support the upcoming changes to Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility legislation. Yurwan Ghuda is a collaboration between CSD, JACS, Education Directorate and EPSDD. It is delivered by local First Nations community members and Elders. ● Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility: JACS is working collaboratively with CSD to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility and implement alternate therapeutic pathways for children and young people who engage in harmful behaviour, including establishment of a Therapeutic Support Panel. The Justice (Age of Criminal Responsibility) Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 implements a Parliamentary and Governing Agreement of the 10th Legislation Assembly and will raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12 year of age upon commencement and then to 14 years of age, with 4 exceptions, by 1 July 2025. ● ACT Policing divert offenders through the Police and Court Drug Diversion Service programs led by Canberra Health Services. In addition to diverting people from court, the programs also provide pre-sentence and sentencing diversion options for people arrested for alcohol and other drug related offences in the ACT. The Police and Court Drug Diversion Service provides alcohol and other drug assessments following referral by ACT Policing services, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth Alcohol Diversion—referral and treatment for young people aged under 18 years who have committed any offence under the <i>Liquor Act 2010</i>. ● Adult Alcohol Diversion—voluntary referrals for adults who require assistance in relation to alcohol substance abuse. ● Illicit Drug Diversion—diverts individuals who have been apprehended by police for possession of small amounts of illicit drugs (or legal drugs used illicitly) and provides assessment, education and/or treatment, with compliance resulting no conviction recorded on their criminal record. <p>For people referred to the Service in lieu of prosecution, entry to and participation in the program is voluntary, however refusal to enter or withdrawal from the program limits police action to criminal caution or prosecution.</p> <p>For youth offenders, ACT Policing has the option to refer them to the Canberra Police and Community Youth Club Project 180 (P180) Program. The P180 Program is a 20-week intensive support program targeted at young people aged 13–17 years who are engaged in the youth justice system. Another diversion program available to ACT Policing is to the Restorative Justice Unit for Restorative Justice Conferences between the offender and victim. This work is supported by a First Nations Convenor and First Nations Guidance Partner.</p>		





Target continues on the following page

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023																				
At least 25% of all eligible 18–25 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be referred to Restorative Justice by ACT Policing as a diversion from the formal criminal justice system (continued).	<p>These programs are available to all offenders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. A diversion program specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders is the Front-Up Program, which provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with an outstanding warrant(s) or have breached bail or a community-based sentence to present to Court and negotiate on their behalf to have the matter resolved, where possible, without a period of custody. Each fortnight, ACT Policing provides a list of persons for whom a First Instance Warrant is in existence. The ALS will then contact and attempt to negotiate with the person subject to the warrant to co-attend Court to resolve the outstanding matter, thereby diverting the person from police custody.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Program</th> <th>Participants 2022–23 FY</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yarrabi Bamirr — Yeddung Mura</td> <td>9 families 2 families on waiting list</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yarrabi Bamirr — Clybucca Dreaming</td> <td>4 families</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yarrabi Bamirr — Winnunga Nimmityjah</td> <td>4 new families, 6 families exited, 7 families continued</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Empowerment Yarning Circles — Yeddung Mura</td> <td>148 individuals (54 new referrals)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Throughcare – Yeddung Mura</td> <td>90 individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transitional Accommodation Program — Yeddung Mura</td> <td>6 individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Galambany Circle Sentencing Court Support — Yeddung Mura</td> <td>72 individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ngurrambai Bail Support — ALS</td> <td>120 clients, 96 bail plans</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Front Up — ALS</td> <td>37 individuals</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Program	Participants 2022–23 FY	Yarrabi Bamirr — Yeddung Mura	9 families 2 families on waiting list	Yarrabi Bamirr — Clybucca Dreaming	4 families	Yarrabi Bamirr — Winnunga Nimmityjah	4 new families, 6 families exited, 7 families continued	Empowerment Yarning Circles — Yeddung Mura	148 individuals (54 new referrals)	Throughcare – Yeddung Mura	90 individuals	Transitional Accommodation Program — Yeddung Mura	6 individuals	Galambany Circle Sentencing Court Support — Yeddung Mura	72 individuals	Ngurrambai Bail Support — ALS	120 clients, 96 bail plans	Front Up — ALS	37 individuals		
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Increase access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled targeted early support and prevention services for victims, perpetrators and families.

There are no plans to increase the current options in place. Instead, enhancements are being considered for current programs. For example, JACS is currently exploring with Canberra Police Community Youth Club the enhancement of their P180 Program. JACS will work with ACT Policing along with Community Services and Education directorates on this work. This program is available to all youth offenders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders.

JACS' First Nations Justice Branch is also undertaking a Commissioning process for all currently funded programs. Commissioning is a new way of designing, funding, and delivering a fit for purpose human services system within the ACT. It is a methodology that uses open, continuous communication to design and refine programs with those who deliver and use them. The commissioning process will engage local First Nations people with lived experience as well as local ACCOs. Listening Reports will be generated from these discussions and used to support further funding where community and government have agreed it will be most effective. It is proposed that the Justice Caucus will be the primary representative body to partner with JACS in progressing the commissioning program over the next 2 years, with additional involvement from people with lived experience and subject matter experts as the Justice Caucus and JACS determine will assist their discussions.

ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
Increase services provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations for targeted early support and prevention.	The recent funding made available for the establishment of the new ACCO is welcomed.		
Increase the coordination of health care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees in Alexander Maconochie Centre.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		

SIGNIFICANT
FOCUS AREA:

Life-long learning

Training, learning and education opportunities are essential for engagement in employment.

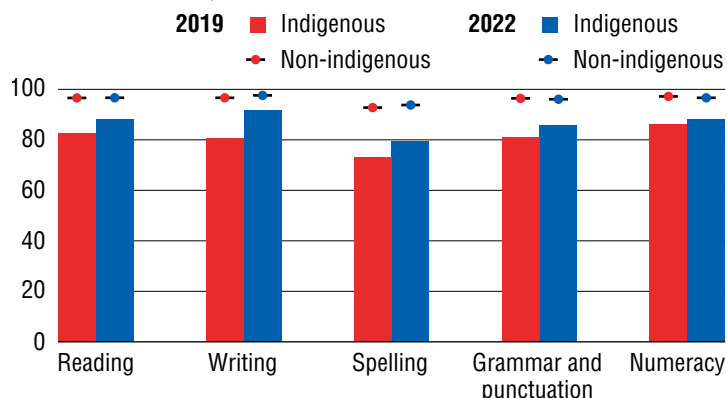
Closing the Gap target **Progress** **2020** **2023**

Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the top 2 bands of National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) reading and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9 by an average of 6 percentage points by 2028.

Indicator

At or above NAPLAN minimum standards in reading, writing and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

ACT NAPLAN Year 3, at or above minimum national standards



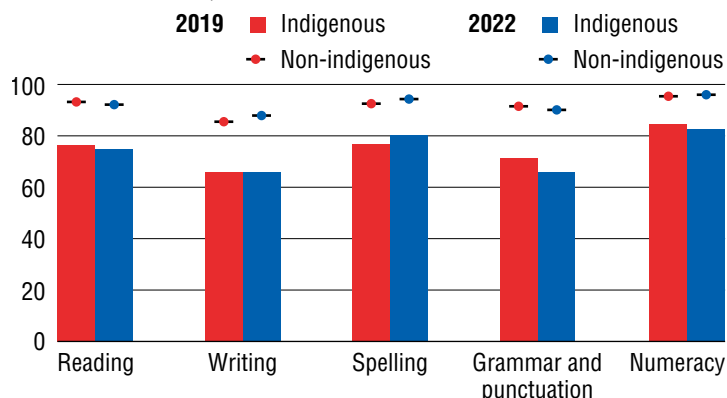
In the 2020, Hearings Report we cited data from 2018. From 2023 ACARA has reset the NAPLAN measurement scale and time series. This means it is difficult to compare NAPLAN achievement prior to 2022 to that from 2023 onwards. Therefore, we have used 2019 and 2022 data, noting that there was no NAPLAN in 2020 due to the pandemic.

From the graph below, we see that in year 3, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are improving their results at or above the national average and also closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In year 9, however, there are different and more concerning trends.

- Between 2019 and 2022, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 9 students achieving at or above the national minimum standards has decreased in 4 of the 5 NAPLAN domains. The only exception is spelling.
- The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving the national minimum standards in year 9 is significantly less than in year 3.
- The gap in year 9 is also profound and widening with the grammar and numeracy domain stretching to a 24% gap between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 9 group.

ACT NAPLAN Year 9, at or above minimum national standards



Closing the Gap target **Progress** **2020** **2023**

CTG Outcome 5
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 20–24 years) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.

There has been a 5% increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification in the ACT. However, there is still a 13.9% gap between ACT performance and the target on this outcome. The next Census update is 2026.



	2016	2021	2026
Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (aged 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification	77.4%	82.1%	
Gap	18.6%	13.9%	

Source: Closing the Gap, Productivity Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2016.

CTG Outcome 6
By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.

There has been a small positive change in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification, however, national targets have not yet been reached.



Positive progress, however still 5% shy of the national target.

	2016	2021	2026
Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above)	62.1%	64.7%	
Gap	7.9%	5.3%	

Source: Closing the Gap, Productivity Commission.

ACT Government target **Progress** **2020** **2023**

Increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people achieving an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (year 12) or equivalent qualification.










- There were 110 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in year 7 in ACT public schools, and 50 students enrolled in year 7 in ACT non-government schools in 2017.
- In the 2022 calendar year, 117 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were awarded ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC).
- 89 SSCs were awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attended ACT public colleges.
- 28 SSCs were awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attended non-government schools.
- The 117 SSC recipients represented 67% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students of the students who commenced year 12 in 2022.
- The directorate conducts an annual Post School Destination Survey however response rates are not sufficient to disaggregate the data by First Nations status with confidence.



Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed through the employment inclusion program (supporting traineeships and apprenticeships).

To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.



ACT Government target	Progress	2020	2023
All teachers in ACT public schools have access to cultural integrity/cultural competency professional learning by 2021.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
90% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the care of the Director-General have a cultural care plan that incorporates learning about their family, culture and community as an essential component of their learning.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
Demonstrate cultural competency and proficiency of ACT Government employees.	To be discussed in the April 2024 Hearings.		
Increase in the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT Public Service.	The Cultural Transformation Branch will review the existing ACTPS Recruitment Policy and Guidelines and establish best practice policy and guidance to support directorates and agencies in attracting, recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff. This will include identifying and embedding measures to address the concerns raised by the Elected Body that some staff are not recognised, accepted or connected to our local community. It will also look at monitoring of compliance.		
Increase rates of ACT Government employee participation in cultural competency training.	Each directorate has been designing mandatory cultural competency modules		

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