

QUEENSLAND
CLOSING THE GAP
REPORT CARD 2019

Department of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships



Queensland
Government



Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors—our First Australians—give strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

We recognise it is our collective efforts and responsibility as individuals, communities and governments to ensure equality, recognition and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across all aspects of society and everyday life.

We offer a genuine commitment to fearlessly represent, advocate for and promote the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders with unwavering determination, passion and persistence.

As we reflect on the past and give hope for the future, we walk together on our shared journey to reconciliation where all Queenslanders are equal.

Purpose of the Report Card

It is essential that we track progress, identify and build on strengths and success stories, and inform areas of focus to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The Queensland Closing the Gap Report Card supports this through ongoing and regular reporting as well as providing a source of data to inform a partnership approach and co-design work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities. Significant steps were taken in 2019 that demonstrate the Queensland Government's commitment to reframing its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, an important step towards achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This includes the historic Path to Treaty and the Local Thriving Communities reforms. The Closing the Gap Report represents one of the measures to track progress of this reframed relationship over time, ensuring accountability and monitoring actions to close the gap.

This Report Card uses the latest available data as at 1 April 2020 to measure the progress of the current Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap targets. Additional data is provided on other priority areas raised during recent community consultations. Consistent with the 2018 report, the 2019 data highlights that two targets, Year 12 attainment and early childhood education, are on track.

Four of the existing targets expired in 2018, namely: halving the gap in mortality rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under five; closing the gap in student attendance; halving the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in reading, writing and numeracy; and halving the gap in employment.

The 2019 Report Card continues to report on progress for these four targets to highlight that, while the targets were not achieved, some progress is being made. Further, in addition to reducing child mortality, improving school attendance, reading, writing and numeracy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain key focus areas and are expected to be included in the refreshed targets.



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Message from the Minister

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities in Queensland should have the opportunity to thrive.

Closing the Gap is a nationwide effort with all governments accountable for driving change in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In Queensland, we continue to see improvements in education with more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled during the vital early years, but there is much more to do.

Together we can achieve more to close the gap across other priority areas including life expectancy, literacy and numeracy, child mortality and employment.

Meaningful, community-led solutions are key to creating real and sustainable change across Queensland, from remote townships and regional hubs, to major cities and the state capital.

The Queensland Government is reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through a new way of working together to deliver better, whole-of-life outcomes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, families and communities are at the heart of this approach to create positive change at local, regional and statewide levels, working towards a Path to Treaty and Local Thriving Communities.

Principles of self-determination, community leadership and respect for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions and knowledge will guide our path forward.

The Queensland Closing the Gap Report Card is an indicator for tracking progress to close the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Importantly, it also incorporates the aspirations of Queensland's First Nations peoples about what is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders now and moving into the future.

All jurisdictions are working together with the national Coalition of Peaks to refresh the Closing the Gap agenda and develop a new national agreement on Closing the Gap.

In addition to facts and figures, the priorities, needs and aspirations of communities must be front and centre of any agenda.

The Honourable Craig Crawford MP

Minister for Fire and Emergency Service

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships



Introduction

The Closing the Gap campaign was launched by non-government agencies in 2007 following a National Indigenous Health Equality Campaign in 2006. This rights-based awareness campaign gave rise to a National Close the Gap Day, inspiring cross-government action. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) pledged to close key gaps in December 2007, and in March 2008 government and non-government delegates signed a statement of intent.

The National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), approved by COAG in 2008, sets out the Closing the Gap targets. COAG recognised that overcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage would require a long-term, intergenerational commitment and a progressive realisation of improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Targets

This is the eleventh year of the Closing the Gap initiative. Four of the seven Closing the Gap targets – child mortality, reading, writing and numeracy, employment outcomes, and school attendance – expired in 2018.

In Queensland, two of the seven COAG Closing the Gap targets outlined in Table 1 are on track: early childhood education and Year 12 attainment or equivalent. There has been mixed achievement for reading, writing and numeracy. Enhanced efforts across the Queensland Government have also resulted in improved outcomes in other areas, though not sufficient to close the gap.

Much of the data included in this report are drawn from nationally collated datasets. Due to the nature of these datasets, there is often a time lag associated with release of this data, in some cases, over 12 months. Where possible, data for 2018 have been reported.¹

¹ As data release dates are specific to the dataset in question and spread throughout the year, it is likely that between collation and publication of this report, for some measures, new data may be published.

For some indicators, data for 2018 is not yet available. For example, mortality rate data is collected on a 5 year rolling average, with 2014-2018 being the most recent reporting period. The most up-to-date data for indicators collected through the Commonwealth Census is from 2016.

Table 1: Closing the Gap COAG Targets

Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031	NOT ON TRACK
Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade by 2018	NOT ACHIEVED
95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025	ON TRACK
Halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy achievements within a decade by 2018	MIXED ACHIEVEMENT
Halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020	ON TRACK
Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade by 2018	NOT ACHIEVED
Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years by 2018	NOT ACHIEVED

While Queensland has not been able to report that all targets have been achieved, there have been improvements across four of the indicators, namely child mortality rates, early childhood education, reading, writing and numeracy and Year 12 attainment. These are outlined in the following pages.



Part A: Current Closing the Gap targets

Health

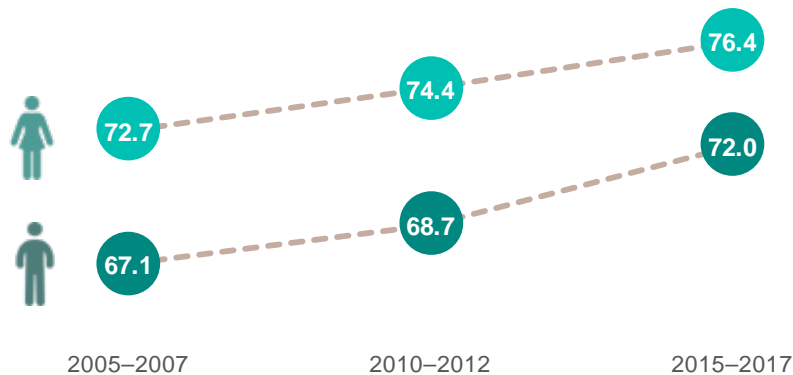
Life expectancy

*Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031 – **NOT ON TRACK***

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders continue to have the highest life expectancy nationally, compared with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and also experienced the greatest improvement nationally in life expectancy in recent years:

- Life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males has improved by 3.3 years, from 68.7 years in 2010–2012 to 72.0 years in 2015–2017 (Figure 1);
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females life expectancy has improved by two years, from 74.4 years in 2010–2012 to 76.4 years in 2015–2017 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy, Queensland



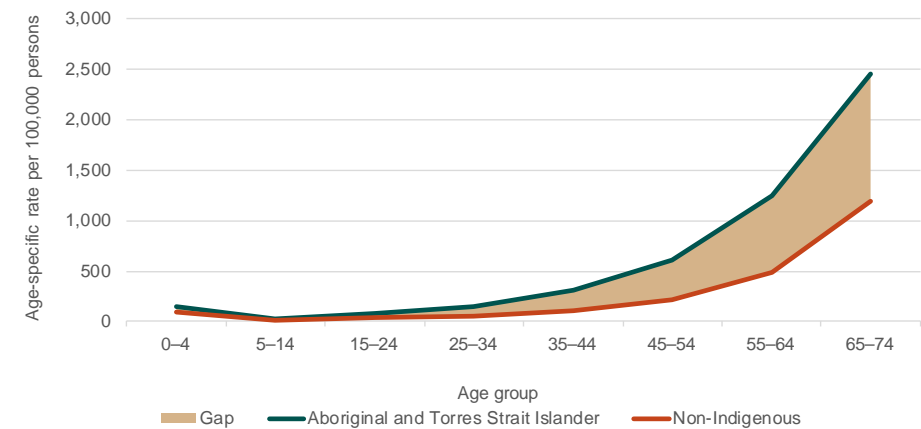
Source: ABS 3302.0.55.003, Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, various editions

Age specific mortality

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders continue to be more likely to die at younger ages than non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

In 2014–2018, the average annual gap in age-specific death rates increased for older cohorts (Figure 2). This data also highlights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders aged 35–44 years and 45–54 years are 2.9 times more likely to die than non-Indigenous Queenslanders in those age groups.

Figure 2: Age-specific mortality rates, Queensland, 2014–2018



Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia, 2018



Preventable hospitalisations

Potentially preventable hospitalisations are those that could have been prevented through the provision of timely and effective primary health care. They include a selection of vaccine preventable, acute and chronic conditions.

Potentially preventable hospitalisations increased in 2017–2018 – to 83.9 per 1,000 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and 32.2 per 1,000 for other Queenslanders² (Figure 3).

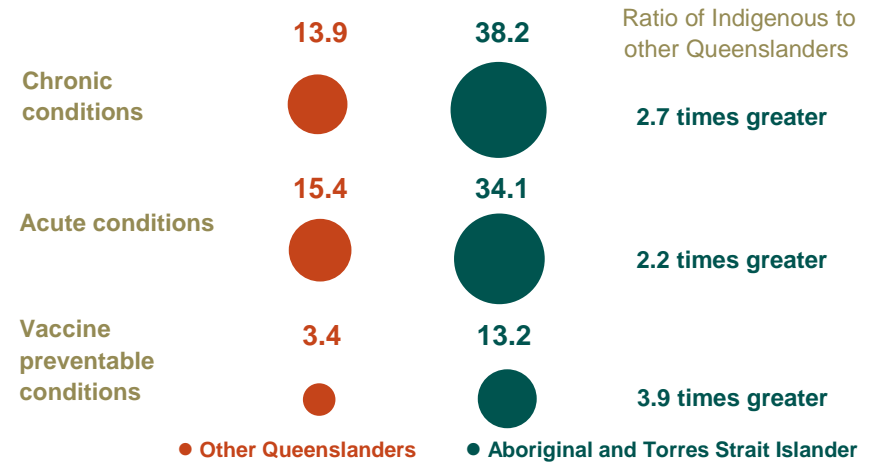
Figure 3: Preventable admissions (age-standardised rate per 1,000), Queensland – overall admissions



Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services, 2020

Over the six-year period to 2017–18, the admission rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples increased faster than that of other Queenslanders. As a result, the gap has increased from 38.7 per 1,000 in 2011–12 to 51.7 per 1,000 in 2017–18. For both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other peoples, admission rates for vaccine preventable conditions were much lower than for acute or chronic conditions (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Preventable admissions (age-standardised rate per 1,000) Queensland 2017–18 – by condition



Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services, 2018

² In this report, 'other' people, Queenslanders, Australians etc. refers to people who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and those for whom Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status was unknown or not specified.



Case Study: Wide Bay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advisory Council

As part of their Closing the Gap Health Plan, the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service (WBHHS) established a WBHHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advisory Council. The purpose of the Health Advisory Council is to form effective and collaborative partnerships with representatives of the Traditional Custodians of the Wide Bay region including members who represent clan nations and communities within Bundaberg, Fraser Coast and North Burnett regions. The WBHHS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advisory Council provides the leading direction, advocacy and expert counsel to WBHHS on health service planning and activities to close the health gap experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The partnership has been built through respect, mutuality, open conversations and valuing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council's members' knowledge and experiences.

Through the partnership, WBHHS is working to address the systemic barriers to health equity experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. WBHHS is collaborating to ensure implementation of their Closing the Gap Health Plan is meaningful, based on lived experience and enhances service provision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

The Health Advisory Council is currently discussing processes required to commission artwork that is valued and recognized by local clans and representatives of the First Nations.

Child mortality

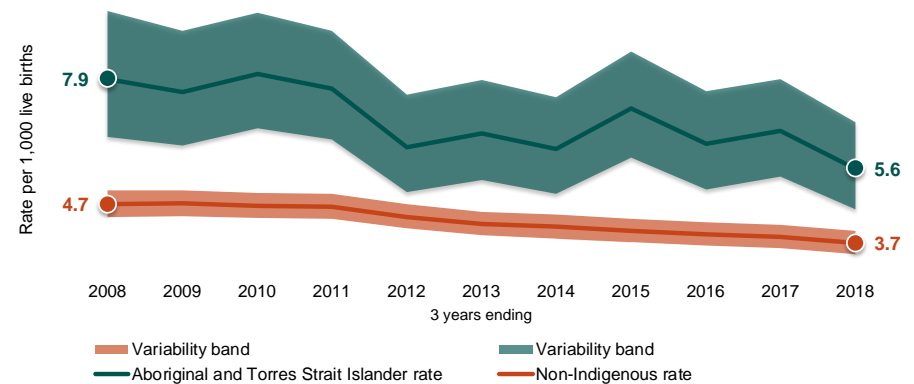
*Halve the gap in mortality rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under five within a decade by 2018 – **NOT ACHIEVED***

Infant mortality

At least 80 per cent of all child deaths (0–4 years) occur in infancy, with most of these occurring in the first 28 days of life.

Infant mortality rates have slowly been declining over many years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 1.5 times more likely to die in infancy than non-Indigenous children in the three years 2016–2018, down from 1.7 in the previous 3-year period (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Infant mortality rate (3-year rolling average), Queensland



Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia, various editions



Child mortality

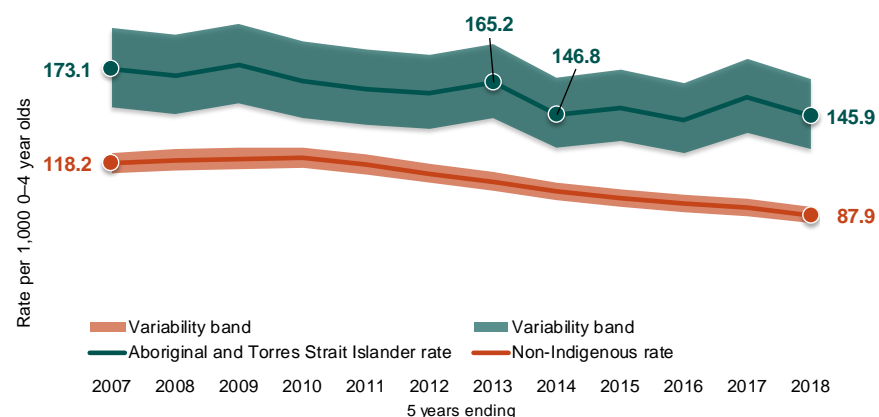
Mortality rates for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have shown long term improvements, however, in recent years there has been little change in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rate (Figure 6). The gap in rates increased from 45.2 deaths per 100,000 in 2010-2014 to 58.0 deaths per 100,000 in 2014-18 (Table 2).

Table 2: Child mortality rates, Queensland 2014–2018

	Queensland		Australia ^(a)	
	Count	Rate per 100,000	Count	Rate per 100,000
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	198	145.9	603	145.6
Non-Indigenous	1,276	87.9	3,672	71.5
Rate ratio	1.7 times more		2.0 times more	

(a) New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory combined.
Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia 2018

Figure 6: Child mortality rate, Queensland



Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia, various editions

Antenatal attendance

Health outcomes and risks for mothers and young children are routinely measured by a number of indicators including antenatal visits, immunisation at specific ages and smoking during pregnancy.

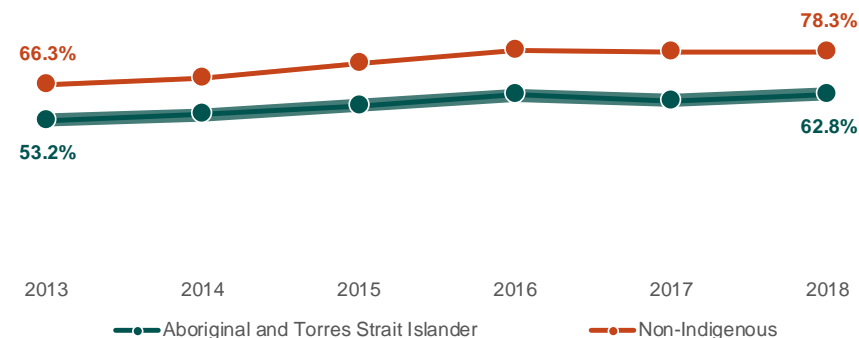
Clinical practice guidelines recommend that women present for antenatal care within the first ten weeks of pregnancy, and depending on need, attend a schedule of ten visits for the first pregnancy and seven for subsequent uncomplicated pregnancies.

Over the six years to 2018 antenatal attendance rates in the first trimester have increased significantly for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

The gap in attendance rates persists, as antenatal attendance rates in the first trimester have increased for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women over the six years to 2018.

In Queensland, major cities had the widest gap in rates, a gap of 16.7 percentage points in 2018. This compares to a gap of 6.0 percentage points in very remote areas. Over the last six years, the largest improvement for first trimester antenatal visits was seen in major cities, increasing from 46.2 per cent in 2013 to 66.5 per cent in 2018 (Figure 7).

Figure 7: First antenatal visit in 1st trimester, 2013–2018, Queensland





At least five antenatal visits

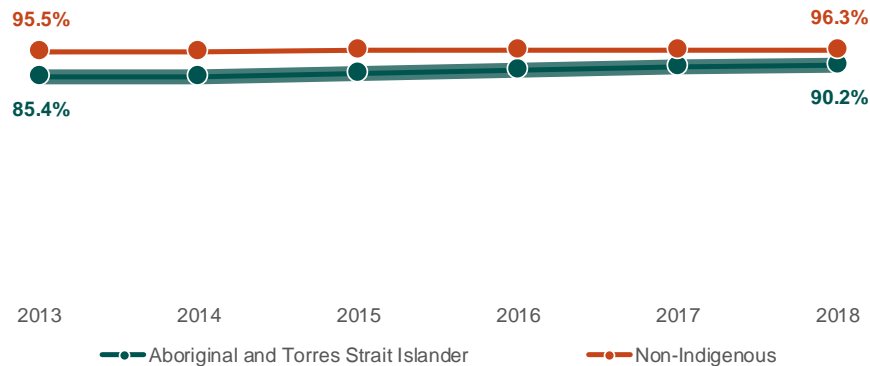
In 2018, 90.2 per cent of pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attended at least five antenatal visits during their pregnancy, 6.1 percentage points lower than the rate for non-Indigenous women (96.3 per cent).

Over the five years to 2018, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attending at least five antenatal visits increased by 4.8 percentage points. Statewide, the gap in attendance rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous women decreased from 10.1% in 2013 to 6.1% in 2018 (Figure 8).

Statewide, the gap in antenatal attendance rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous women decreased to 6.1 percentage points in 2018.

In very remote areas in Queensland, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attending at least five antenatal visits in 2018 was equivalent to the non-Indigenous rate.

Figure 8 : At least five antenatal visits, 2013–2018, Queensland



Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data, extracted January 2020

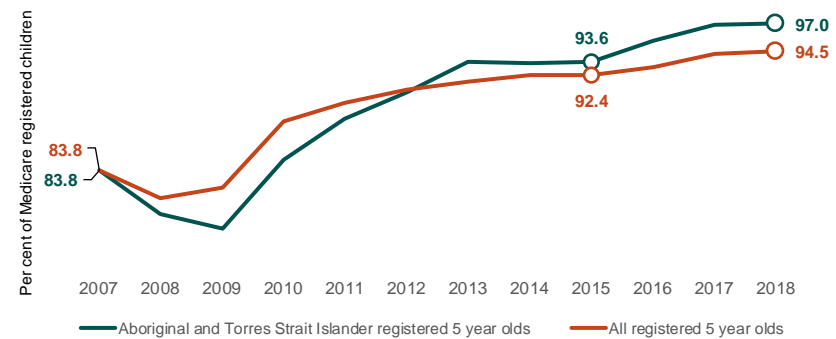
3 From quarter ending 31 December 2014, meningococcal C (given at 12 months), and dose 2 measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and dose 1 varicella (given as MMRV at 18 months) was included in the definition of fully immunised for the 24<27-month cohort. In March 2017:

Immunisation

While not an existing Closing the Gap target, the rate of immunisation plays a significant role in positive health outcomes for children. Immunisation rates have **increased over time**.

In 2018, 97.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five-year olds were fully immunised compared with 94.5% for all five-year olds (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Immunisation rates, five-year-olds (60<63 months), Queensland



Source: Australian Immunisation Register, Department of Health, extracted November 2019

Fully immunised at two years

The immunisation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander two year olds was 88.7 per cent in 2018, compared with 91.5 per cent for all children – a gap of 2.8 percentage points. Immunisation rates for this age group are still recovering after declining in 2015 due to a change in the scope of immunisations included in the definition of ‘fully immunised’.³

Prior to the 2015 change, immunisation rates were **relatively stable** and above 90 per cent with almost no difference between rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children. At September 2019, immunisation rates

diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis dose 4 (previously dose 3 was measured) was included in the definition of fully immunised for the 24 to 27 month cohort. The coverage rate dropped in both of these cases, because the criteria to be assessed as fully immunised includes more vaccines. The



had increased slightly to 89.4 per cent and 91.9 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander two year olds and non-Indigenous two year olds respectively.

Smoking during pregnancy

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Burden of Disease and Injury Study attributes smoking during pregnancy as a major risk factor for low birth weight. This study found that in 2011, 28 per cent of low birth weight burden was attributable to smoking during pregnancy.

Maternal smoking rates are declining, however, around 1 in 2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in remote and very remote areas smoked during pregnancy.

In 2018, more than 4 in every 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (42.5 per cent) smoked at any time while pregnant compared with less than 1 in 10 non-Indigenous women (8.9 per cent) (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Maternal smoking, Queensland⁴



Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data, extracted January 2020

more vaccines included in the assessment, the higher the likelihood of reduced coverage rates. This usually resolves over time as the changes become more routine.

⁴ Includes all mothers where smoking status was recorded. Maternal smoking describes mothers who smoked at any time during pregnancy. Data include all mothers delivering babies with a birthweight of at least 400 grams OR at 20 weeks gestation or more. 2018 data are preliminary and subject to change.

Low birth weight

Low birth weight babies are those weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth. Data presented here describe live born, singleton babies only.⁵ Multiple births are excluded. Data are reported by maternal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

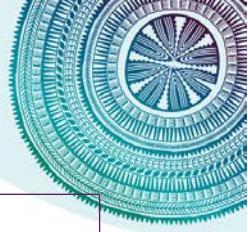
Of the 4,023 babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in 2018, 9.6 per cent were born with low birth weight. This was close to twice the rate of babies born with low birth weight to non-Indigenous women in 2018 (4.9 per cent).

The proportion of low birth weight babies has changed little over the five years to 2018, with **no significant decline evident**.

In all remoteness regions babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were more likely to be born with low birth weight than babies born to non-Indigenous women (Figure 11).⁶

⁵ Singleton: one that is single, especially: child or animal born as a single birth, especially in contrast to one that is part of a multiple birth.

⁶ Rates in 2018 were not statistically different in very remote Queensland.



Six in ten (60.2 per cent) low birth weight babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in 2018 were also born preterm (earlier than 37 weeks gestation).

After excluding preterm births from these analyses, low birth weight rates fell to 4.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous babies respectively.

Addressing child and maternal health is essential in order to close the child mortality gap. While there have been improvements in many metrics there is still significant work to be done to achieve parity.

Figure 11: Low birth weight by remoteness (%), Queensland, 2018



Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data, extracted December 2019

Case Study: Maternity Quality Improvement in Darling Downs

The Quality Improvement Payment (QIP) provides incentive funding to Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) across the state in an effort to improve smoking cessation by 20 weeks gestation and to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women receiving early and ongoing antenatal care during their pregnancy. The QIP began in 2018-19 and has been extended to 2020-21, providing an overall investment of \$15 million.

HHSs are using the additional investment to improve maternal and child health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and babies. Darling Downs HHS is working in collaboration with four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations located within Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network (PHN) to deliver an integrated model of maternity care across the region.

The Bridging Antenatal Care, Indigenous Babies and Smoking Cessation (BAIBS) project combined efforts to produce joint resources to support women and their families. This project has also resulted in improved client referral pathways between providers. To date, the BAIBS project has resulted in Darling Downs HHS meeting their set antenatal target as well as making good progress towards meeting the smoking cessation target.

Darling Downs HHS is also working with private GP practices in the Kingaroy and Goondiwindi communities to provide cultural and social supports during antenatal, birthing and postnatal care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.



The Queensland Government continues to pursue positive health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through:

- My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026
- Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2017–2026
- Immunisation Strategy 2017–2022
- Making Tracks towards closing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033
- Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2016–2021
- Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019
- Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Strategy 2016–2021
- Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023
- Every life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2029
- Indigenous Community Sport and Recreation Program
- Torres Strait Community Sport and Recreation Program

Education

Early childhood education

*95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 – **ON TRACK***

Every person has the right to access high-quality education. This provides opportunities for positive health, education and employment outcomes for all people and for future generations.

Early childhood

Early childhood education builds a strong foundation for a child's social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. It provides a focus towards positive outcomes and future lifetime opportunities to thrive in society.

Queensland is **on track** to achieve the Closing the Gap target of 95 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.

In 2018, 4,619 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling in Queensland, equating to an enrolment rate of 86.7 per cent, compared with 90.4 per cent of non-Indigenous children (Table 3).

On track
Progress: **86.7%** enrolled

Since the original release of this data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) discovered a technical issue in their processing of the 2018 data, which may also affect historical data. The Queensland's 2020 Closing the Gap Report will advise of any data updates.



Table 3: Children enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling, 2018^(a)

	Queensland ^(b)		Australia ^(c)	
	Count	%	Count	%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	4,619	86.7	16,389	86.4
Non-Indigenous	53,789	90.4	280,544	91.3
Gap		3.8 percentage points		4.9 percentage points

(a) Includes preschools and preschool programs within other settings.

(b) Queensland YBFS cohort includes children born 1 Jul 2013–30 Jun 2014.

(c) Not stated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status has been apportioned between the two Indigenous status categories.

Source: ABS 4240.0 Preschool Education Australia, 2018.

Further, 4,516 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled for 600 hours per year or more (or 84.7 per cent of the population). This was only **2.8 percentage points lower** than the rate for non-Indigenous children.

There was also a **high attendance rate** with 83.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschoolers enrolled for 600 hours attending for 600 hours or more in 2018.

Case Study: Foundations for Success

The Foundations for Success Learning Guideline and multimedia website encourage enrolment and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early childhood education.

First published in 2008 and revised in 2013 to align with *Belonging, Being and Becoming* (Australia's first National Early Years Learning Framework), the Learning Guideline supports educators to implement a program that connects with families and communities and builds on the cultural knowledge, strengths and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Since 2016 the Foundations for Success multimedia website, developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education experts and educators, provides a widely accessible professional development resource that supports educators to deliver high quality learning programs. It contains good practice stories of early childhood pedagogy and practice using culturally and linguistically appropriate approaches, and celebrates the diversity and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities across Queensland. The website is a valued resource with 10,979 new users in the last 12 months and has had a positive impact on early childhood education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student (4 and 5 year olds) enrolments in a Queensland kindergarten program increased by 15 per cent from 5,099, in 2018 to 5,866 in 2019.

(Source: Preschool Education Australia 2019, ABS).

Find out more at: www.foundationsforsuccess.qld.edu.au/.



Literacy and numeracy

Halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy achievements within a decade by 2018 – MIXED ACHIEVEMENT

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students have participated in annual NAPLAN assessments since 2008. Achievement in four areas that are essential to progress through school and life are assessed– reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

For 2018, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have made **strong progress** with the gap halving in reading for Year 3, and almost halving in reading and numeracy for Year 5 as well as Year 9 numeracy.

Table 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, NAPLAN reading, Queensland

Year level	2008 % at or above NMS	Variation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander levels 2008 to 2018	2018 % at or above NMS	2018 gap % points	Significant increase 2008 to 2018	Significant increase 2017 to 2018
Year 3	66.2		87.1	10.0	Yes	No change
Year 5	62.9		81.8	14.6	Yes	No change
Year 7	74.8		81.0	14.3	Yes	No change
Year 9	70.0		76.2	17.3	No change	No change

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018. Data extracted over time from <http://reports.acara.edu.au/>

Table 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, NAPLAN numeracy, Queensland

Year level	2008 % at or above NMS	Variation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander levels 2008 to 2018	2018 % at or above NMS	2018 gap % points	Significant increase 2008 to 2018	Significant increase 2017 to 2018
Year 3	75.5		84.9	12.1	Yes	No change
Year 5	69.5		84.8	12.3	Yes	No change
Year 7	81.8		85.5	11.0	No change	No change
Year 9	73.2		85.1	11.1	Yes	No change

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2018. Data extracted over time from <http://reports.acara.edu.au/>

Year 3 reading and numeracy

Year 3 reading – gap reduced from 22.5 percentage points in 2008 to 10.0 percentage points in 2018.

Since 2008, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students scoring at or above the National Minimum Standards (NMS) in reading has reduced **by more than half** – from 22.5 points to 10.0 points (Table 4).

The gap has more than halved

Year 3 reading achieved:

87.1% at or above NMS

In 2018, around 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students achieved at or above the reading NMS in 2018.

Notably, steady gains have been made in the upper bands over time, with the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **Year 3 students scoring in the top two bands** more than doubling over time from 8.2 per cent in 2008 to 21.8 per cent in 2018. In contrast, the proportion of non-Indigenous students in the top 2 bands grew 1.9 times (from 28.2 per cent in 2008 to 54.3 per cent in 2018).



Year 3 numeracy – gap reduced from 17.8 percentage points in 2008 to 12.1 percentage points in 2018.

In 2018, 84.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students **scored at or above the NMS in numeracy**, up from 75.5 per cent in 2008 (Table 5).

More than 8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students achieved at or above the numeracy NMS in 2018.

While the Year 3 numeracy gap was not halved by 2018, **gains have been made in the upper bands** over time. Around 1 in 10 (10.3 per cent) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students **scored in the top two bands** in 2018, up from fewer than 1 in 20 (4.7 per cent) in 2008.

The gap has reduced
Progress:
84.9% at or above NMS

Year 5 reading

In 2018, 81.8 per cent of Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were at or above the NMS, with the gap continuing to narrow from 25.9 percentage points in 2008 to 14.6 percentage points in 2018.

The proportion of **Year 5 students in the top 2 bands has also increased** from 5.4 per cent in 2008 to 12.2 per cent in 2018.

Year 7 reading and numeracy

The Year 7 reading gap has decreased slightly over time. In 2018, the gap was 14.3 percentage points, a decrease from 2017 (17.1 percentage points), and 2008 (19.5 percentage points).

Apart from a peak of 87.6 per cent in 2015, the proportion of Year 7 students at or above the NMS in numeracy has **changed little over time**, at 85.5 per cent in 2018 from 81.8 per cent in 2008 (Table 5).

Year 9 reading and numeracy

The Year 9 reading gap has decreased a little over time, from 22.0 percentage points in 2008 to 17.3 percentage points in 2018.

Year 9 numeracy – gap reduced from 20.6 percentage points in 2008 to 11.1 percentage points in 2018

Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numeracy outcomes have improved significantly since 2008, with 85.1 per cent of Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are scoring at or above the NMS in 2018, reducing the gap from 20.6 percentage points in 2008 to 11.1 percentage points in 2018.

More than 8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 9 students achieved at or above the numeracy NMS in 2018.

NAPLAN outcomes by remoteness

The gap in outcomes was greatest in remote and very remote areas in both reading and numeracy. This was generally a result of the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the NMS decreasing with increasing remoteness.

In 2018 for reading, the smallest gaps and higher outcomes were seen among Year 3 students in Major Cities and Inner Regional areas.



Case Study: Improving school attendance, engagement and outcomes in Mossman

Results from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) have improved significantly at Mossman State School; from being some of the lowest in the state in 2008 to achieving and exceeding national and state Mean Scale Scores. Over the same period, attendance, behaviour and academic achievement have improved. The Principal attributes this to a research driven improvement agenda since 2009, which focuses on appropriate pedagogical approaches, curriculum alignment, behaviour change processes, community engagement and parental involvement. The school has also worked collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members to develop a program that engages students and provides a sense of belonging to creating a safe, supportive school environment. “Our school believes that ‘everyone has a story to tell, everyone wants to tell their story and, more importantly, everyone wants their story heard...[we] identified that Indigenous students and parents needed a forum for their own story to be told and for them to be recognised as the experts in their story..”

The community, with the support of the school and the region, developed a Language Advisory Group to oversee the development of language resources and continues to meet monthly at the school. The Kuku Yalanji Language Advisory Group (KYLAG) and school have signed a languages agreement, guaranteeing continued support for the language program. The school works closely with the KYLAG and Indigenous Elders to develop culturally appropriate language resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.

“Since the implementation of the Kuku Yalanji language program, our school has experienced increased enrolments, improved attendance, improved academic achievement, improved student, parent and community engagement, improved behaviour, improved cultural understanding, increased staff collective efficacy and a greatly improved reputation within the community. The fabric of our school has changed and our community now sees the school as ‘our school’.” – Principal, Mossman State School.

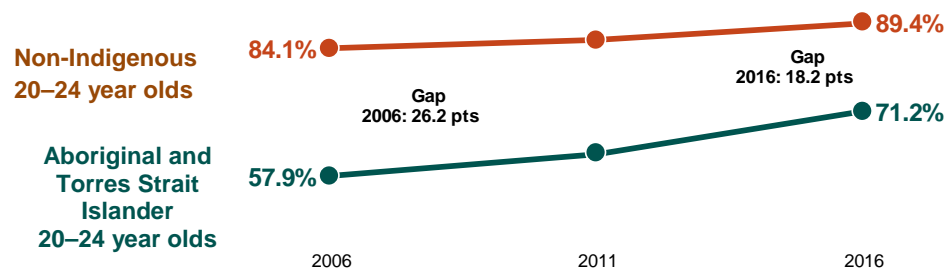
Year 12 attainment or equivalent

Halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020 – ON TRACK

This target area demonstrates **very positive trends**. Greater employment opportunities, self-confidence, and more participation in community life are more likely when Year 12 attainment or equivalent is achieved.

At least 7 in 10 (71.2 per cent) 20–24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders had attained Year 12 or equivalent by 2016 (Figure 12). This is a gain of 13.3 percentage points since 2006, around half of the 2006 gap of 26.2 percentage points.

Figure 12: 20 to 24 year olds with at least a Year 12 or equivalent^(a), Queensland—Census results



(a) Equivalent includes AQF Certificate II and above.
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016

However, while the 2006 **gap has halved**, attainment rates among non-Indigenous 20–24 year olds have also increased over time, meaning that the gap in 2016 remains unchanged at 18.2 percentage points.

The target is on track to halve the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020.

The primary data source for this target is the Census of Population and Housing. The most recent available data to measure actual progress is from the 2016



Census. New data for this target will not be available until after the 2021 Census however supplementary data can be used to provide a broader examination of outcomes that relate to this target.

Supplementary data from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) show an increase in Year 12 or equivalent from 52.9 per cent in 2008 to 65.7 per cent in 2018-2019 among 20-24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Case Study: Closing the Year 12 certification gap in the Metropolitan Region

The Metropolitan Region more than closed the gap in Year 12 certification in 2015, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students outperforming their non-Indigenous peers (99.6 per cent compared with 97.9 per cent respectively) in attaining the QCE and QCIA. The certification gap in Metropolitan Region has remained closed ever since, achieving 100 per cent Certification for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2016, 2017 and 2018. While not reaching 100 per cent again in 2019, this region achieved 99.5 per cent for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students.

Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student in Years 11 and 12 attending a Queensland state school in the Metropolitan region is profiled by regional officers in partnership with the schools in which they attend. An individual plan is created for every student regardless of what pathway they may be undertaking. A regional response team meets regularly to monitor the academic performance and tracking of each student. Students and their families are supported to remain engaged in school and successfully complete Year 12.

Each term, an educational 'health check' with schools to case manage every student – ensuring that schools are accountable for the students enrolled at their school. Individual case management includes: school visits, home visits and one-on-one support to complete necessary assessment. On call support is available seven days a week to individual students as required to ensure there is sufficient wrap-around support for each student's health and wellbeing.

Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA)

Queensland's senior school qualifications are the QCE and QCIA, awarded to eligible students usually at the end of Year 12:

- The QCE recognises broad learning options and offers flexibility in what, where and when learning occurs. Students also need to demonstrate competency in literacy and numeracy skills to be awarded a QCE;
- The QCIA recognises the achievements of students who are on individualised learning programs. The certificate is an official record that students have completed at least 12 years of education and provides students with a summary of their skills and knowledge that they can present to employers and training providers.

Queensland's gap in Year 12 attainment when measured by QCE and QCIA attainment is almost closed.

In 2019, the first cohort of prep-year students graduated from Year 12, meaning that 37,082 Queensland students completed Year 12, including 1,950 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Of these students:

- 88.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were awarded a QCE, compared with 94.8 per cent of other students;
- A further 5.0 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were awarded a QCIA, along with 1.8 per cent of other students.

Queensland's gap in Year 12 attainment when measured by QCE and QCIA attainment is **almost closed**. There was a 6.1 percentage point gap in QCE attainment in 2019 down from 19.5 percentage point in 2012. Once QCIA attainment is also considered in overall 2019 outcomes, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other students **narrows to 2.9 percentage points**.

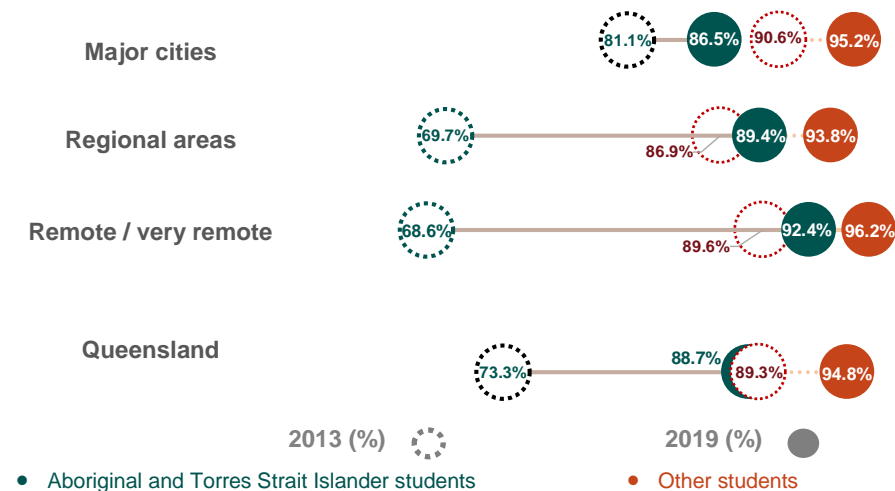
The greatest gains in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander QCE attainment have occurred for students in remote and regional areas.



The greatest gains in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student QCE attainment have occurred in remote and regional areas, with attainment rates now similar to, or slightly higher than those in major cities.

In 2019, 92.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a postal address in remote and very remote areas of Queensland were awarded a QCE, up from 68.6 per cent in 2013 — the biggest shift across the three remoteness area categories (Figure 13).

Figure 13: QCE attainment by remoteness^(a), Queensland



(a) QCE attainment is measured as a proportion of graduating year 12 students. These data represent students with a Queensland mailing address.

Primary data source: Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, unpublished data. Analysis by Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Case Study: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF) is an independent, not-for-profit trust managed by The Public Trustee of Queensland and operated through a small Secretariat.

Over the past 11 years, QATSIF has supported over 8,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete Years 11 and 12 and gain their QCE.

In 2020, QATSIF will be supporting a record 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across 305 Queensland State, Catholic and Independent schools, including 1,657 new Round 11 students.

For three of the past four years, QCAA's (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Highest Achievement by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Student in Queensland award has been won by QATSIF students from Education Queensland schools. In 2019, QATSIF alumni won many awards including:

- First Nations Law Student of the Year
- Indigenous Student Mooting Champion
- 3 x Queensland Music Awards
- Channel 7 Young Indigenous Achiever Award
- Queensland Vocational Education Indigenous Student of the Year
- Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy Exceptional Indigenous Student of the Year.

In 2019, 98.0 per cent of QATSIF students completed Year 12 and gained a QCE compared with 89.4 per cent of non-Indigenous students and 71.2 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2020, 92.0 per cent of QATSIF graduates entered work or further study in the two months following school, compared with a Queensland average for all students of 86.1 per cent.

School attendance

Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years by 2018 – NOT ACHIEVED

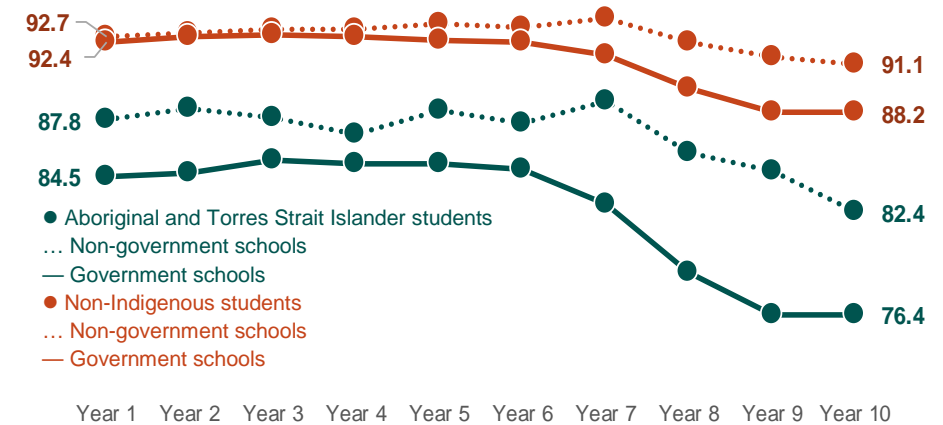
Overall attendance

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rate was 83.5 per cent for all Year 1 to 10 students in 2019; 8.4 percentage points lower than the equivalent non-Indigenous rate (91.9 per cent).

The target to close the gap by the end of 2018 was not met. In 2019:

- the attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary students was 85.3 per cent compared with 92.7 per cent for non-Indigenous students—a gap of 7.4 percentage points;
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary student attendance rate was 10.3 percentage points lower than the non-Indigenous rate (80.2 per cent compared with 90.5 per cent);
- attendance rates were higher in non-government schools in each year level for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students;
- rates also declined from Year 7 to Year 10 in each group with the gap reaching 11.8 percentage points for students in Year 10 in government schools (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Student attendance by year level and sector, Queensland 2019



Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection, 2019

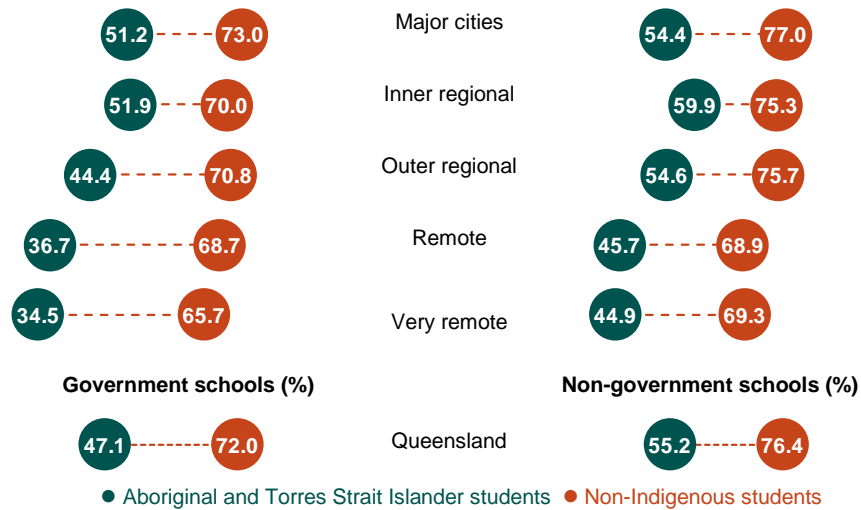
Attending 90 per cent or more days

In state schools, 47.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended 9 or more in 10 school days in 2019, compared with 72.0 per cent of non-Indigenous students (Figure 15).

Rates varied considerably by remoteness and school sector with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote area state schools having the lowest proportion of students attending at least 9 in 10 school days (34.5 per cent).



Figure 15: Years 1 to 10 student attendance (90% or more days) by remoteness area, Queensland 2019



Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection, 2019

The Queensland Government is increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 12 attainment through:

- Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation – increasing educational choices and life opportunities for Year 12 students
- Every student succeeding: State School Strategy 2018–2023
- Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities

The Queensland Government understands the importance of education and giving all children a great start through:

- Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: An action plan for Queensland
- Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation
- Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities
- Every Student Succeeding: State Schools Strategy 2019–2023



Employment

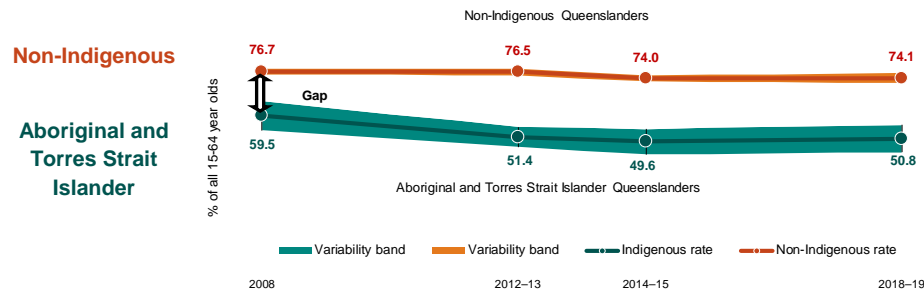
Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade by 2018 – NOT ACHIEVED

Employment facilitates confidence and self-esteem. Access to employment opportunities provides a strong foundation to enhance life skills; it can benefit overall health and wellbeing and help shape a prosperous future.

Employed people are those who worked at least one hour in the week before the Census. These data refer to 15–64 year olds only.

Employment levels remain largely unchanged since 2012-13 for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland and Australia-wide. In 2018–19 half (50.8 per cent) of working age (15–64 years) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were employed. This compared with almost three-quarters (74.1 per cent) of non-Indigenous working age Queenslanders, is a gap of 23.3 percentage points (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Employment to population rate (15–64 year olds)^(a), Queensland



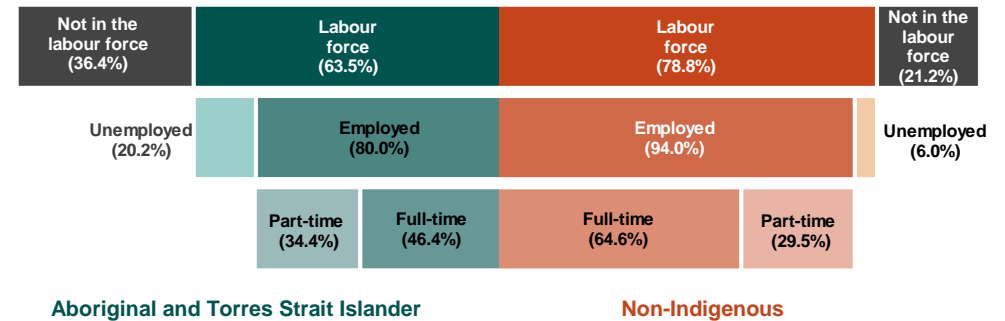
(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%.

Source: ABS 4715.0, 4714.0 and 4727.0. Data for non-Indigenous people are from the 2018 Survey of Education and Work (ABS 6227.0).

Full-time and part-time work

Measured as a proportion of the labour force, 46.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons were in full-time work in 2018–19, compared with 64.6 per cent of non-Indigenous persons (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Labour force (15–64 year olds)^{(a)(b)}, Queensland, 2018-19



(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%.
 (b) Employment rates are shown as a proportion of the labour force rather than the population ratio.

Source: ABS 4715.0, 4714.0 and 4727.0. Data for non-Indigenous people are from the 2018 Survey of Education and Work (ABS 6227.0).

Labour force participation

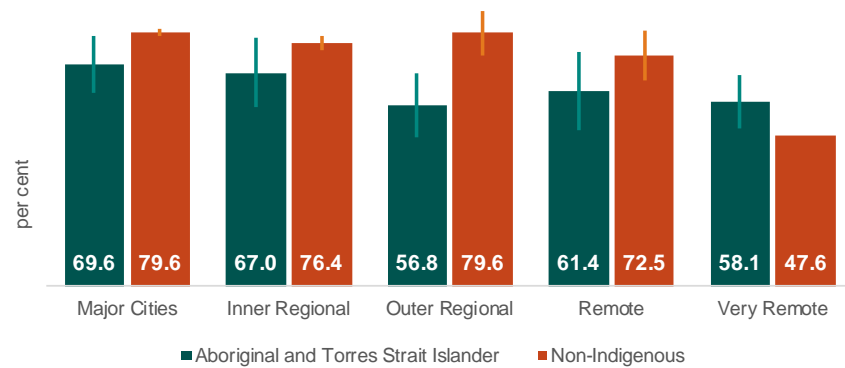
The labour force includes people who are either ‘employed’, or ‘unemployed and actively looking for work’.

Just over 3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (63.5 per cent) were in the labour force in 2018–19 compared with almost 4 in 5 non-Indigenous persons (78.8 per cent).

While there were variations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples labour force participation rates across Queensland’s remoteness areas in 2018–19, due to the wide variability bands around these estimates, no statistical differences were evident between regions (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Participation rate by remoteness^{(a)(b)} (15–64 year olds), Queensland, 2018-19



(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%.
 (b) Caution should be applied when using estimates with a high error margin.
 Source: ABS 4715.0, 4714.0 and 4727.0. Data for non-Indigenous people are from the 2018 Survey of Education and Work (ABS 6227.0).

Case Study: Minjerribah Futures

Minjerribah Futures is a \$24.75 million investment by the Queensland Government to assist the economic transition of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) from its traditional reliance on sand mining to a sustainable future as a globally recognised eco and cultural tourism destination, supported by expanded research and education activities.

As a high-expectations partnership between the state and the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, the strategy is delivering a raft of projects to support Traditional Owner employment, economic development and growth, education and training opportunities and strengthening arts and culture.

Projects to be delivered before the end of 2021 include: construction of a Minjerribah cultural centre, Quandamooka Arts Museum and Performance Institute; new business development and support for Quandamooka enterprises through the Indigenous Business Development Fund; delivery and expansion of Minjerribah Ganaba, an education exchange for training, small business, education and research; growing and promoting the annual celebration of culture, the Quandamooka Festival; expanding the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program; upgrades to Minjerribah camping sites at Adams Beach and Bradbury’s Beach across the island; Quandamooka place markers (public art works) at three key locations in the island’s three town centres; and Australia’s first Traditional Owner operated whale watching boat tours.



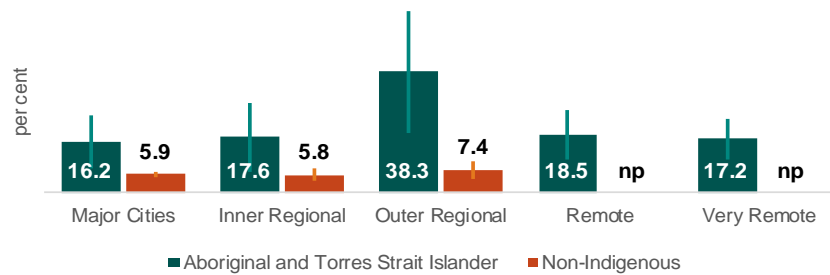
Unemployment

Unemployed people are those not in work, but who actively looked for work in the four weeks before the Census and could start work if they got a job.

Measured as a proportion of the labour force, unemployment in 2018–19 was higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders (20.2 per cent) than non-Indigenous Queenslanders (6.0 per cent).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in outer regional areas had a higher unemployment rates in 2018–19 at 38.3 per cent. However, this estimate should be viewed with caution as it has a high level of uncertainty⁷ (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Unemployment by remoteness^{(a)(b)}, Queensland, 2018–19



(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%.

(b) Caution should be applied when using estimates with a high error margin.

Source: ABS 4715.0, 4714.0 and 4727.0. Data for non-Indigenous people are from the 2018 Survey of Education and Work (ABS 6227.0).

⁷ This data is collected through sample surveys, and subject to both sampling and non-sampling error. The smaller a population is in proportion to the total population, the higher the associated errors. Further disaggregation of data for small populations produces even higher errors proportionately. Where counts are small, as is the case for very remote areas, and data are

Case Study: Youth and Family Support: Bethania to Beaudesert Recreational Trail

As part of *Skilling Queenslanders for Work*, the Queensland Government provided \$1 million to Youth and Family Support (YFS) to deliver three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Work Skills Traineeship projects in Beaudesert. The main objective of the project was to ensure all participants gained a Certificate 1 in Conservation and Land Management to enhance their employment prospects post completion.

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Partnerships (DATSIP) supported YFS to build-in formalised support for this initiative with a local Aboriginal non-government organisation and key Aboriginal Elders and mentors. Accountability was established by Elders and key local Aboriginal leaders by yarning through traditional value sets like respect for place and country. Awareness of engaging in employability initiatives was raised. In a variation to usual arrangements, a senior respected member of the community was employed to support and mentor the young people as part of the project.

A unique approach to engaging with participants through involvement of key Aboriginal Elders, leaders, and mentors and other community groups, coupled with a shared common goal amongst all involved, resulted in 90.0 per cent of participants completing the Certificate 1 and transitioning into employment on completion of the project.

further disaggregated (into labour force categories), the resulting estimates may have a high degree of uncertainty associated with them and should be used with caution.



The Queensland Government is pursuing employment and economic development outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through:

- Skilling Queenslanders for Work
- The Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP) – a whole-of-government framework to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business access to Queensland Government procurement market to be 3 per cent of addressable spend by 2022
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016–2026 – increase in workforce participation across Queensland Health to meet the state-wide target of three per cent by December 2022
- Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–2020
- Moving Ahead: a strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy 2016–2022
- The Youth Employment Program – an employment support program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are finishing high school and looking for work or considering further education
- Advancing Indigenous Business
- Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs (the Skills Strategy)
- Back to Work program
- Indigenous Community Sport and Recreation Program
- Torres Strait Community Sport and Recreation Program.
- Advance Queensland Advanced Manufacturing 10–Year Roadmap and Action Plan

Part B: other priority areas

In addition to the existing Closing the Gap targets, the Report Card documents a range of data on significant priority outcome areas as identified in the community consultations held as part of the refresh agenda. Many of these priority areas were explored as part of the refresh for consideration on additional target areas to be agreed to nationally. Part B documents these areas and existing data and initiatives related to them in Queensland.

Closing the Gap Refresh

In February 2018, COAG agreed that federal and state governments would review the targets and refresh the Closing the Gap agenda, consulting with and working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, signed by the Premier by exchange of letters, was launched on 30 July 2020 by the Prime Minister, Minister Wyatt and Ms Pat Turner, lead convener of the Coalition of Peaks. The new and updated targets will be outlined in Queensland's 2020 Closing the Gap Report Card.

Special Gathering

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, including six from Queensland, met in Canberra in February 2018 for a 'Special Gathering' prior to COAG to discuss future priorities with First Ministers. A Special Gathering Statement was released highlighting that existing targets should be retained and reviewed, and outlining areas of highest importance for setting additional future targets as part of the refresh: families, children and youth; housing; justice, including youth justice; health; economic development; culture and language; education; healing; and eliminating racism and systemic discrimination. This statement also demonstrated commitment to a new approach, guided by the principles of empowerment and self-determination.

Joint Council on Closing the Gap

Work undertaken by the Special Gathering fed into the work of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. Subsequently, at COAG's December 2018 meeting, federal and state governments committed to ensuring that the finalisation of targets and



implementation of the Closing the Gap framework would occur through a genuine, formal partnership between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and Indigenous Australians through their representatives. This formal partnership is based on mutual respect between parties and an acceptance that direct engagement and negotiation is the preferred pathway to productive and effective outcomes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must play an integral part in the making of the decisions that affect their lives — this is critical to closing the gap.

In 2019, this formal partnership saw the development of the Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement, which Queensland has signed. A key component of this formal partnership is the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, which draws together Ministers from each jurisdiction with 12 Coalition of Peak members to drive the partnership agreement.

On 23 August 2019 the Joint Council on Closing the Gap agreed in principle that the key reform priorities areas for the development of a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap would be:

1. develop and strengthen structures to ensure the full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in shared decision making at the national level;
2. build the formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services sector;
3. ensure all mainstream government agencies and institutions undertake systemic and structural transformation to contribute to Closing the Gap.

On 23 January 2020 a fourth priority area for the Closing the Gap refresh was agreed to and announced by the Prime Minister as ‘the development of local data’.

Commonwealth Government Closing the Gap Refresh consultations in 2019

The Coalition of Peaks, made up of nearly 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies representing community-controlled organisations that deliver important services to their communities, led national engagements to decide on a new national agreement on Closing the Gap.

Meetings were held with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations in every state and territory to talk about what was needed to improve their lives and to provide input to the new agreement.

Over 2,300 people attended nearly 70 face-to-face meetings in capital cities, regional towns and remote communities from September to December 2019, with an online survey conducted at the same time resulting in nearly 1,700 responses.

There was significant support for the key reform priorities proposed for the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap: develop and strengthen structures to ensure full involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in shared decision making at the national, state, local or regional level; build the formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services sector; ensure all mainstream government agencies and institutions undertake systemic and structural transformation to close the gap; and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control of, and access to, local data to enable informed decisions, drive development and accelerate outcomes.

At the engagements, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people supported the priority areas (such as health, education, housing, justice, children and families, and economic development) for which targets have been developed. The feedback on the targets themselves, including the wording, outcomes, measures and focus, often called for changes.



Queensland Government Closing the Gap Refresh consultations

During November 2019, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) supported the Coalition of Peaks by helping to organise consultations across Queensland and promoting the online survey on its website.

Over 260 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community members, mainstream service providers and representatives of community-controlled organisations attended the Queensland sessions at Thursday Island (25 attendees), Townsville (50), Rockhampton (55), Cairns (40), Mount Isa (24) and Ipswich (60). Meeting notes were provided to the Coalition of Peaks for inclusion in their Engagement Report.

Ms Pat Turner, CEO of National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and Co-Chair of the Joint Council, chaired the Ipswich meeting. Other meetings were also chaired by members of the Coalition of Peaks and all communities and chairs expressed appreciation for the involvement of local facilitators at each location. The outcomes from the Queensland consultations closely reflect the national feedback detailed in the Coalition of Peaks Community Engagement Snapshot.

The following priorities were identified during Queensland's consultations:

- support and build capacity in the Aboriginal Community-Controlled sector through targeted funding, training opportunities, improved coordination and collaboration, data sharing and holistic service design;
- cultural competency and capability for service providers;
- training and succession opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- revision of funding assessments and processes for local services and programs;
- holistic, community and family centered approaches;
- enabling grassroots voices and community representation;
- transparency, accountability and genuine relationships with government.

Community members agreed that adequate investment in training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to build leadership capacity for effective governance will be essential to close the gap in life outcomes. Unanimously, participants spoke to the importance of embedding cultural values in all governance arrangements and program design. Participants also recommended that governance structures should be non-hierarchical and include greater involvement of local community organisations.

Full involvement in shared decision-making was considered essential to understanding the communities' concerns and priorities, and developing partnerships that are culturally legitimate and accountable.

Communities raised concerns that current frameworks for investment and delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are culturally inappropriate and are not delivering successful outcomes. This feedback is aligned with the findings of the 2017 Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) *inquiry into service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*.



Community members determined a number of opportunities to improve the delivery of services to their communities and outcomes for Closing the Gap. These suggestions included:

- targeted funding rounds to grow the community-controlled sector;
- improving collaboration and coordination between mainstream services and community-controlled organisations;
- improving data sharing to increase transparency and accountability;
- creating opportunities for training, development and succession for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within their communities; and
- increasing the representation of community voices on boards and decision-making structures.

Participants noted that there were many additional indicators important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander welfare which fall outside the scope of current Closing the Gap targets and the targets proposed by COAG in December 2018. Many participants advocated for more holistic targets that were centred on culture, to encourage wraparound support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

One unique issue raised at the Thursday Island consultation was the importance of recognising the culture of Torres Strait Islander peoples as separate and distinct from Aboriginal culture and people. This needs to be reflected in Queensland's consideration of state-wide targets and input at the national level.

Overarching principles

The principles of self-determination, healing, eliminating racism and systemic discrimination were strongly supported by Queensland's Closing the Gap consultation participants to focus each priority and target. The Queensland Government recognises the importance of all these principles at all levels and across all aspects of the Closing the Gap agenda moving forward, and promotes and supports self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Released in 2018, the Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) reaffirms Queensland's commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, organisations and across government to refocus efforts to close the gap.

The Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework provides a strategic vision for agencies to provide efficient, effective and responsive services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples by ensuring their perspectives are inherent in core business across all agencies. This is underpinned by five principles:

- valuing culture;
- leadership and accountability;
- building cultural capability to improve economic participation
- engagement with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses;
- culturally responsive systems and services.

As an overarching objective, the Queensland Government is committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to reframe the relationship as part of the response to Recommendation 7 of the Queensland Reparations Taskforce Report – Reconciling Past Injustice.

This approach is underpinned by 'doing with' Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and not 'to' and builds on a range of initiatives as described below.



The Queensland Government is committed to building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through:

- Queensland Reparations Taskforce Report – Reconciling Past Injustice
- Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce
- The Hope and Healing Framework
- Path to Treaty
- Local Thriving Communities Reform agenda
- Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037
- Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021 (RAP)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Service Plan 2017–2020
- Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework
- Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2015–2020
- Queensland’s Framework for Action: Reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence
- Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Strategy 2016–2021
- Queensland: an age-friendly community – Strategic direction statement and Action plan
- Partnering for the future: advancing Queensland’s community services industry 2017–2025
- Queensland Financial Inclusion Plan
- Making Tracks towards closing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033
- Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027: a 10-year framework driving key reforms and targeted investment across the entire housing continuum
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023
- Queensland’s Framework for Action – Reshaping our Approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence
- Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: An action plan for Queensland

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities

The Closing the Gap priorities raised during consultations throughout Queensland also have strong alignment with *Our Future State – Advancing Queensland’s Priorities*. Our Future State represents the Government’s priorities for the community, and includes: create jobs in a strong economy; give all our children a great start; keep Queenslanders healthy; keep communities safe; protect the Great Barrier Reef; and be a responsive government.

The Government is committed to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as these priorities and their associated targets are addressed, ensuring their particular views and needs are incorporated.

Other significant priority areas

Child protection

Children living in out-of-home care (30 June snapshot)

Child protection data captures the provision of care outside the family home for children who are in need of protection or who require a safe placement while their protection and safety needs are assessed. In accordance with nationally agreed reporting definitions, data for out-of-home care refers to children placed with kin, other home-based carers or residential care services.

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0–17-year-olds) living in out-of-home care in Queensland has increased from 35.4 per 1,000 in 2013 to 43.0 per 1,000 in 2019. While the non-Indigenous rate also increased over this period (4.9 per 1,000 in 2013 to 5.2 per 1,000 in 2019), the gap has widened from 30.5 per 1,000 children to 37.8 per 1,000 children (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Out-of-home care (rate per 1,000 children) Queensland, at 30 June each year



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Non-Indigenous children

At 30 June 2019, 4,119 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were living in out-of-home care in Queensland, up from 3,195 children in 2013. This amounts to 42.7 per cent of the children in out-of-home care in Queensland at 30 June 2019 (Table 6).

Table 6: Children in out-of-home care, Queensland, at 30 June each year

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	3,195	3,336	3,503	3,609	3,767	3,815	4,119
Non-Indigenous children	4,941	4,849	4,912	5,045	5,153	5,259	5,528

Source: OOH data: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table OHC.1, 2019, Gap derived from published rates

The Queensland Government is committed to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child safety system. *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037* (Our Way) and its associated action plans

commits the Queensland Government and Family Matters Queensland to working in partnership with communities and key stakeholders to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system by 2037, and to closing the gap in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The Queensland First Children and Families Board has been established to provide strategic leadership and oversight of the implementation of the Our Way strategy and action plans, and to hold government and partners accountable to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Board brings together eight eminent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Queensland who possess a vast range of expertise and strong cultural perspectives. The Chair of Family Matters Queensland and the Directors-General of the Departments of Child Safety, Youth and Women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships hold perpetual membership.

The first action plan, Changing Tracks 2017—2019, has established strong foundations for transformational change across the child protection system through a new legislative framework that:

- promotes the safe care and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with their families, community and culture;
- supports the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination;
- enables family-led decision making;
- embeds the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle across the child protection system;
- provides a greater emphasis on culture as a protective factor and the need for ongoing connection to family, community and culture;
- enables the Chief Executive to delegate functions or powers under the *Child Protection Act 1999* to the CEO of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity.

In addition to the above, the Queensland Government has rolled out 33 community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing



Services to make it easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access the right child and family support services at the right time.

The Family Participation Program has also been established to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to lead decision making about their children in a child protection context.

The implementation of the next action plan, Changing Tracks 2020–2022, will continue the Our Way journey towards a Queensland where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe, loved and cared for in family, community and culture.

Future key priorities going forward will include growing investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled child and family services, embedding the child protection legislative amendments in policy and practice across the child protection system, developing and implementing the Queensland Healing Strategy to address the effects of inter-generational trauma, violence, and abuse experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The Wellbeing Outcomes Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland, which defines wellbeing and how it will be measured for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, has been co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, and will inform government investment and decision making.

Children placed with kin

A person who is related to the child or a member of the child's community who is considered a close family friend, who has been approved by the department to provide the child with family-based care, is considered to be a kinship carer. Kinship carers are approved for a specific child.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with a kinship or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer has been **relatively stable over time**, despite the large increase in children in care.

Just over half (55.1 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were placed with a kinship or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer as at 30 June 2019.

Children subject to substantiated notifications during the year

Substantiated notifications are the outcome of an investigation and assessment where it is assessed that the child or young person has experienced significant harm and/or there is unacceptable risk of harm and there is no parent able and willing to protect the child.

In 2018–19, 2,325 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were subject to substantiated notifications in Queensland, up from 2,194 children in 2017–18. In comparison, the number of non-Indigenous children subject to substantiated notifications changed very little over the same period.

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a substantiation in Queensland has been increasing since 2016, reaching 24.3 per 1,000 children in 2018–19.

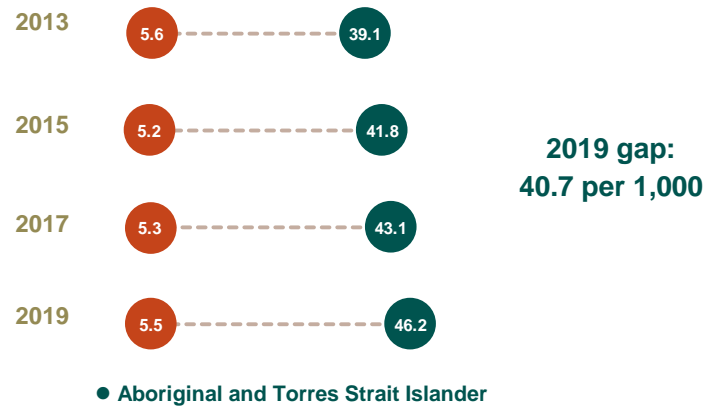
Children subject to child protection orders (30 June snapshot)

A child protection order is made by the Childrens Court under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, when a child is considered in need of protection.

Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to child protection orders in Queensland increased incrementally every year from 2013 to 2019 (from 39.1 per 1,000 to 46.2 per 1,000), while rates for non-Indigenous children remained relatively stable (5.6 per 1,000 in 2013 to 5.5 per 1,000 in 2019) (Figure 21).



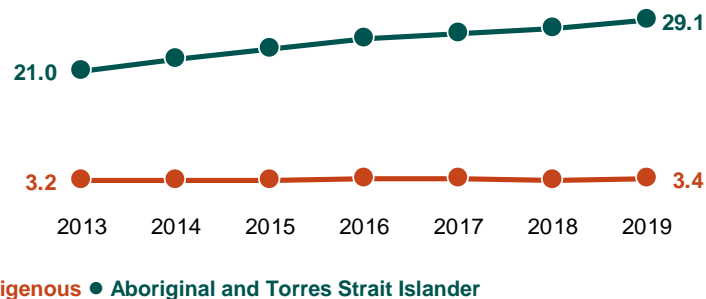
Figure 21: Children subject to child protection orders, at 30 June each year (rate per 1,000 children)



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table CPO.1, 2019

Child protection orders can be short-term or long-term. Under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, long-term guardianship of the child can be granted until the child's 18th birthday. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to long-term child protection orders increased every year, from 2013 to 2019 (Figure 22).

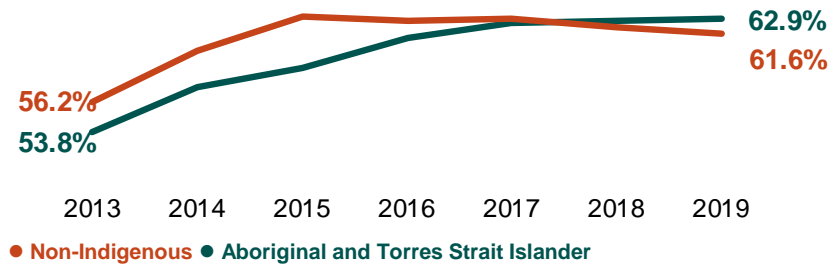
Figure 22: Children subject to long-term child protection orders (rate per 1,000 children), Queensland, at 30 June each year



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table LT.1, 2019

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children subject to child protection orders that were long-term at June 2019, was similar to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Children subject to long-term child protection orders as a proportion of all children subject to child protection orders, at 30 June each year



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table LT.1, 2019



Family violence

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders experience disproportionately high levels of violence, including domestic and family violence. This was highlighted in the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* report which emphasizes the importance of having a service delivery network which wraps around families and offers holistic support.

In May 2019, the Queensland Government released *Queensland's Framework for Action – Reshaping our Approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence* to better respond to the complex issues related to family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This framework was developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

In September 2019, the *Third Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026* was released. The Third Action Plan builds on the significant work of the domestic and family violence reform program to date. It also recognises the strengths and cultural wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and embeds cultural perspectives and protective factors into existing and future actions to respond to domestic and family violence. Some of the signature actions of the Third Action Plan include:

- improving equity in access to services for Queenslanders most vulnerable to domestic and family violence;
- implementing an enhanced housing response for individuals experiencing domestic and family violence;
- implementing Queensland's Framework for Action – *Reshaping our Approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence*.

In October 2019, *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence* was released. The Framework aims to address sexual violence against people of all genders and backgrounds and all types of sexual violence, including sexual assault and rape, youth sexual violence and abuse, child sexual abuse and intimate partners sexual violence.

The *Prevent. Support. Believe.* Framework recognises the disproportionate experience by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of sexual violence and seeks to address this through the priority areas of Prevention, Support and Healing, and Accountability and Justice. The Framework will be supported by an Action Plan to be released in 2020. In 2018-19, 12.7 per cent of all reported victims of sexual assault in Queensland were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2018–19, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were three times more likely to be a victim of an offence against the person than non-Indigenous Queenslanders. The gap was somewhat greater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females alone, where the victimisation rate, 2,644 per 100,000, was 4.3 times that of non-Indigenous females (615 per 100,000).

Family violence contributed to a far greater proportion of reported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims than non-Indigenous victims. Across all reported victims of offences against the person in 2018–19, where the relationship between the offender and victims was recorded:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims were more likely to be in a family relationship with the offender (57.7 per cent) compared with non-Indigenous victims (28.8 per cent);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims were twice as likely as non-Indigenous victims to be offended against by a partner/ex-partner (31.4 per cent compared with 15.5 per cent).

When looking at female victims alone:

- 64.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims were offended against by a family member compared with 42.9 per cent of non-Indigenous victims.



Case Study: Coen Women's Support Centre

The Coen Women's Support Centre Project is a prime example of a co-designed place based model developed by local women, for local women and children, using local knowledge, expertise and understanding of the local context. Local women identified the need for a safe place for women at risk of domestic violence, consulted locally about the design of the centre, and worked collaboratively with government to make this new service a reality in Coen.

An initial discussion held with local women in November 2015 evolved quickly to enable the idea of a shelter to become a reality. Through inter-department co-operation and collaboration supporting the aspirations of the Coen Women's Alliance, the centre is now available to support women and children escaping domestic and family violence, and also provides a venue for social well-being activities.

Since opening officially in March 2018, the Coen's Women's Support Centre has become the hub for women and children of the community to come together for a range of social activities and personal development workshops. The service model allows flexibility to meet the evolving needs of local women, with programs for women and children being developed through on-going engagement and participation of the women in decision making.

Mums, Grandmas, Aunties and sisters and their children all participate in the weekly Women's Group; and bingo has recently been introduced on Wednesday nights, with household items and small appliances awarded as prizes. Government Champion Greg Leach, Commissioner for Emergency and Fire Services presented a "bag of goodies" to the Coen Women's Group during a recent visit to the Women's Centre.

Coen women know they have a place for them to go if at risk of domestic and family violence, but more importantly, a place they can be safe, a place where they can have fun, and a place where they can share their stories and their culture.

The Queensland Government is working to ensure the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are safe, healthy and resilient through:

- Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037
- Queensland's Framework for Action: Reshaping our Approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026
- Third Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2019–2020 to 2021–2022
- Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence
- Framework for Place-based Approaches



Housing

Every Queenslander has a fundamental right to a safe and secure home. The Queensland Government is investing in social and affordable housing across Queensland, including in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Ensuring adequate housing is essential to address overcrowding, population growth and employment and education outcomes to stimulate local economies.

Safe, appropriate and sustainable housing underpins the achievement of a range of social and economic wellbeing outcomes, including health, community safety, education and employment.

Given the Federal Government has made no provision for remote housing in Queensland following the expiration of the National Partnership on Remote Housing, the Queensland Government announced a \$40 million interim remote housing program in 2018. The Queensland Government has continued to seek new funding from the Federal Government, and in May 2019, the Federal Coalition committed to provide a total of \$105 million for remote housing in Queensland. At the time of writing this offer was yet to be finalised.

On 14 June 2019, the Queensland Government launched the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023*. The Action Plan outlines how government, communities and the housing sector will work together to create better housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Key features of the Action Plan are a place-based approach to develop local housing plans with communities and a person-centred approach to provide culturally-responsive services and housing support to respond to individual needs, wherever people are along the housing continuum.

Home ownership

This indicator is reported through the Commonwealth Census, with the most recent data collected in 2016. As noted in the 2018 and 2019 Snapshot reports, around 33.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households either owned their own homes or were paying a mortgage in 2016, up from 31.9 per cent

in 2006. Notably over the same period, the proportion of non-Indigenous households owning or their home or with a mortgage decreased from 66.5 per cent to 63.5 per cent (Figure 24).

Across Queensland remoteness areas in 2016, the home ownership gap was greatest in very remote areas, where home ownership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dwellings was 12.8 per cent compared with 57.1 per cent non-Indigenous household dwellings.

The Queensland Government is undertaking cross-agency activities in very remote areas, geared towards removing barriers to home ownership and enabling the construction of new housing.

Figure 24: Owned or mortgaged dwellings, Queensland



Source: ABS Census of population and housing, 2006, 2011, 2016



Overcrowding

Overcrowding has been defined as dwellings needing one or more extra bedrooms to house the number of people in the household based on their age, sex and relationships.

In 2018–19, 9.2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were overcrowded, requiring at least one extra bedroom compared with 2.4 per cent of non-Indigenous households reported for 2017–18.⁸

Homelessness

A definition for homelessness has been developed by the ABS for application to Australia’s general population. However, the ABS note that using this definition to estimate homelessness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is likely to result in under enumeration of data, and there are likely to be additional aspects not currently adequately captured from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives.

While Census data is likely to underestimate homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, rates are still many times those of non-Indigenous persons.

As reported in Queensland's 2018 Closing the Gap Report, homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders was estimated to be 23.9 per 1,000 persons in 2016, compared with only 3.5 per 1,000 among non-Indigenous persons (Figure 25).

The most prevalent type of accommodation accounting for homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland in 2016 was people living in severely crowded houses (64.3 per cent). This was followed by supported accommodation for the homeless as the next most prevalent type accounting for 13.2 per cent.

Figure 25: Homelessness^(a), rate per 1,000 persons, Queensland



(a) Includes people sleeping out, living in improvised dwellings, boarding houses, temporary accommodation and severely crowded houses.

Source: ABS 2049.0, Census of population and housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016

The Queensland Government continues to pursue home ownership opportunities and sustainable housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through:

- Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027: a 10-year framework driving key reforms and targeted investment across the entire housing continuum
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023
- Master Planning in Discrete Communities

⁸ Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households is sourced from the 2018-19 NATSIHS. The most recent comparable non-Indigenous survey estimates were drawn from data collected by the ABS in the 2017-18 National Health Survey.



Justice

Adult imprisonment

The imprisonment rate continues to increase for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and other Queenslanders, generally trending upwards over the period 2012 to 2019 (Figure 26). Compared with one year prior, age-standardised rates as at 30 June 2019:

- increased by 5.4 per cent to 1,824.6 per 100,000 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- decreased by 2.9 per cent to 170.1 per 100,000 for other Queenslanders .

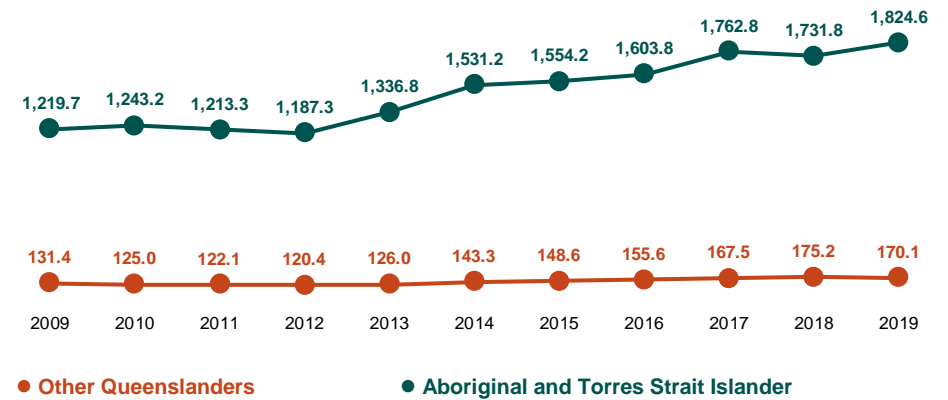
After adjusting for age differences, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Queensland were 10.7 times more likely to be imprisoned than other adults. Nationally, this figure was 12.1.

Notably, for 2019, 1 in 3 adult prisoners (32.8 per cent) were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples comprising 3.6 per cent of Queensland's adult population.

In 2019, similar to previous years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were more likely than other adults to be imprisoned for acts intended to cause injury as their most serious offence (33.5 per cent compared with 18.4 per cent).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners were younger on average than other Queensland prisoners, with a median age of 31 years compared with 35 years.

Figure 26: Adult imprisonment (age standardised rate per 100,000) Queensland, at 30 June each year



Source: ABS 4517.0 Prisoners in Australia (various)



Case Study: Murri Court

Murri Court is a bail-based specialist court program which provides an opportunity for members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (including Elders and victims) to participate in a court process.

The Murri Court aims to deliver a culturally appropriate court process that improves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants' engagement with, and understanding of, the court process. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants (adults and children) on bail may be eligible to be referred to the Murri Court if they intend to plead guilty.

Elders or Respected Persons from the community are in the courtroom to guide and encourage defendants, and help Magistrates understand more about defendants' personal and cultural circumstances.

Participants can be referred to treatment and support services, as well as taking part in cultural activities including, yarning circles and Men's and Women's groups.

Stakeholders participating in Murri Court are encouraged to speak in "plain English" rather than legal jargon, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and local artwork are displayed in the courtrooms.

In achieving its objectives, the Murri Court will help to improve the appropriateness of the criminal justice system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' confidence in the criminal justice system, and thus reduce over-representation.

In 2018-19, the Queensland Government provided additional funding to introduce a Murri Court at Ipswich. With the launch of Murri Court in Ipswich in June 2019, there are currently 15 Murri Courts operating in Queensland.

Murri Courts operate at Maroochydore, Brisbane, Caboolture, Cairns, Cherbourg, Cleveland, Ipswich, Mackay, Mount Isa, Richlands, Rockhampton, St George, Toowoomba, Townsville and Wynnum.

In 2018-19, Murri Courts received 426 referrals into the program which resulted in 587 participants on the program (including 171 participants who commenced in the previous financial year) and 395 finalisations.

Youth justice (10–17 years)

Supervised youth justice orders include detention, community service, intensive supervision, probation, conditional release, restorative justice and graffiti removal. Where a young person is admitted to multiple orders in a reference year, they are counted once only for the distinct youth rate.

Three per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were admitted to supervised youth justice orders in 2018–19, with 1,239 distinct young people admitted to 2,555 orders.

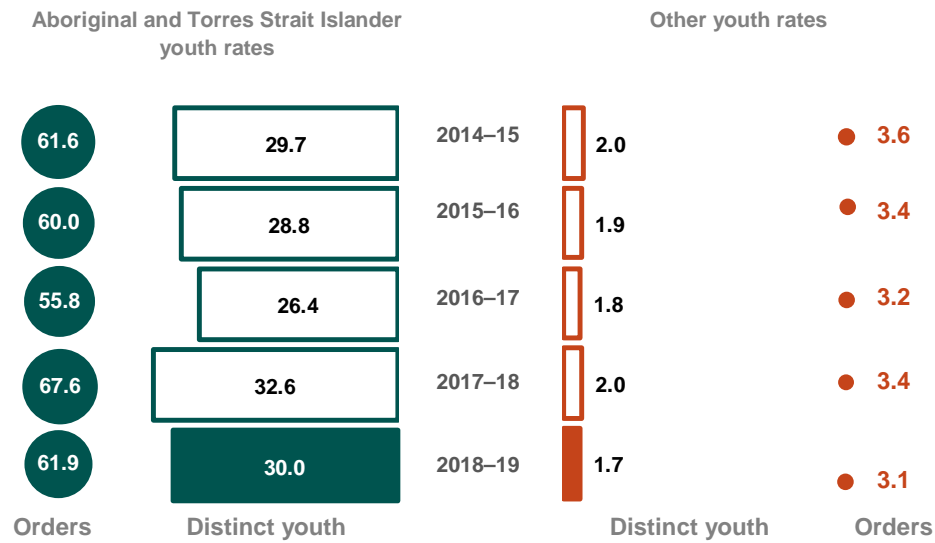
The overall rate of supervised orders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (10–17 years) in 2018–19 was 61.9 per 1,000 (Figure 27). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth admitted to supervised orders were, on average, younger than other youth with 27.3 per cent aged under 15 years at the time of sentencing in 2018–19 (compared with 14.6 per cent for other youth).

Across all offenders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were more likely to receive a detention order than other youth (10.5 per cent compared with 6.3 per cent) and less likely to receive a probation order (45.2 per cent compared with 55.3 per cent).

On 11 December 2018, the government released Queensland's first Youth Justice Strategy *Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023*, which provides a whole-of-government road map for preventing and responding to youth crime in Queensland. The Strategy is key to achieving the Queensland Government's Our Future State target of reducing rates of youth reoffending by 5 per cent by 2020–21.



Figure 27: Supervised youth justice orders (rate per 1,000 10–16 year olds), Queensland



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, unpublished data

Case Study: Transition to Success

Transition to Success (T2S) supports young people who are involved in or at risk of contact with the youth justice system to re-engage with education and training. Young people complete nationally recognised certificates and are supported to develop the behaviours, life skills and confidence needed to find and keep employment and re-engage with the community. The program is delivered by youth justice staff in partnership with registered training providers, employers and community organisations. T2S has helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people like Samuel⁹ to turn their lives around.

Seeing the success of T2S in his Far North community, Samuel asked if he could participate in the next program. He quickly proved himself to be a role model for the other young people. After his first program, Samuel was accepted into the T2S Leadership Camp and travelled to Brisbane to develop his leadership skills and meet other motivated young T2S graduates. Inspired by the confidence he gained from his achievements at the Leadership Camp, Samuel applied to a trade school out of community to further his education and vocational opportunities. Samuel said his future career was motivated by a carpentry project he did with T2S. “I looked at [what I made] and thought, I did that myself,” he says. “I built it with my own two hands, I loved it”. He is continuing to engage in T2S, inspiring other young people in community to make better choices, until he travels to begin school.

⁹ Names changed to protect identity.



The Queensland Government is addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in the adult justice and youth justice system through:

- Community Justice Groups, including funding to enhance Community Justice Groups and Community Legal Centres
- Queensland's Murri Courts
- Delivering Culturally appropriate programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners to support rehabilitation and reduce the risk of recidivism
- Establishing the Youth Justice First Nations Action Board
- *Working Together Changing the Story 2019-2023*– a whole-of-government road map for preventing and responding to youth crime in Queensland
- Youth Justice Strategy Action Plan 2019-2021
- Establishment of the new Department of Youth Justice, including a Youth Justice cultural unit working to embed cultural perspectives, knowledge, participation and capability across the youth justice system
- Delivery of justice-related activities, including support for victims and offenders within the criminal justice system through court submission and referrals to support services, and increase cultural understanding within courts and the wider criminal justice system
- Criminal Justice System Reform Framework
- Implementation of the Queensland Parole System Review
- Cherbourg Justice Reinvestment Project
- Mt Isa Transitional Hub
- Townsville Stronger Communities initiative, including the High-Risk Youth Court, After Hours Youth Diversion Services and Cultural Mentoring

Entrepreneurship (economic development)

Improving employment and business outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remains a priority for the Queensland Government. This benefits business owners, families, communities and the state's economy.

Moving Ahead Strategy 2016–2022, a whole-of-government initiative, aims to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through training, skilling, work, business development and growth. There are five priority areas: Build a more skilled and diverse workforce; Focus on youth and plan for the future success; Build our partnership with industry; Increase entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation; and Overcome barriers and realise opportunities to completion. **Progress on the strategy's 27 actions has been tracking well** with five completed and continued progress on all others.

The Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy was developed under the Moving Ahead strategy. It provides a whole-of-government framework to increase Queensland Government spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to **three per cent of addressable spend by 2022**. Under this policy, programs such as Enterprise Queensland Indigenous Programs support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to develop and grow. Progress towards this target is underway.

The Queensland Government seeks to leverage employment and supply chain outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Strategic Partnership Agreements with industry. DATSIP continued to build on strong relationships with Queensland's peak industry bodies, businesses and sporting organisations in 2019 to jointly focus on improved opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development is working with DATSIP and the Department of Environment and Science to deliver the Queensland Ecotourism Trails program. A key objective of this program is to secure long term job and business opportunities for the Traditional Owners of the land of which the Ecotourism Trail traverses. On the Sunshine Coast, the Kabi Kabi People, the private sector and the State collaborated together on the Cooloola Great Walk Ecotourism Trail. This collaborative model is founded on social, environmental and economic outcomes.



Case Studies: Aboriginal corporations going from strength to strength

The Myuma Group

The Myuma Group of corporations is owned and managed by the Indjalandji-Dhidhanu traditional owners of the upper Georgina River basin. With its headquarters in Camooweal, in far-western Queensland, the Myuma Group is an example of collaborative partnerships creating great opportunities for the local community.

With a broad range of programs, the ingenuity and agility of the Myuma Group has delivered results across a variety of sectors, with its pre-vocational training for the resources sector, civil construction and associated works and cultural heritage services - all considered to be industry-leading. Myuma helps those not in the workforce to become competitive through training, mentoring and culturally safe practices.

As it approaches its 20th anniversary, the Myuma Group is rightly held as a working model of what can be achieved when big business (like BHP Billiton, Xstrata and CopperChem) work in partnership with local community leaders.

Waanyi Prescribed Body Corporate

Waanyi Prescribed Corporate Body is showing us all how a small entity can be a powerhouse of change in their local community. The Waanyi people's joint venture arrangement provides a case study on successful negotiations between Native Title landholders and resource industry leaders.

In what Waanyi Chair Alec Doomadgee described as a "landmark agreement" for Traditional Owner groups, Century Zinc, a subsidiary of Downer EDI, brokered an historic cultural management deal which recognises the significant value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.

This recognition comes in the form of a contract, running for the life of the mine, to provide mining services within East Fault Block and South Block Resources immediately adjacent to the Century Open Pit Mine in Queensland.

Works will include waste removal, equipment maintenance, drilling services and mine management, with the contract details also committing to some of the strongest training and employment targets ever seen in the Australian resource sector.

The Queensland Government intends to create jobs in a strong economy through:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016–2026
- Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP)
- Moving Ahead: a strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy 2016–2022
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group



Land and waters

The Queensland Government is proud that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have continuing rights and responsibilities as the first peoples of Queensland, including traditional ownership and connection to land and waters. The Queensland Government continues to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to care for land and sea country, engage future generations and provide jobs and training.

Conservation and employment outcomes are delivered **to benefit over 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** through the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers program. This highly successful initiative supports some of the most environmentally sensitive parts of our state.

Through the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution program, the Queensland Government is changing the tenure of identified properties to Aboriginal freehold land and jointly managed national parks. The tenure changes allow Traditional Owners to return to their country and pursue employment and business opportunities in national park management, grazing, forestry, natural resource management and tourism.

Through the Water Plan (Cape York) 2019, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Cape York area can achieve their water related economic and social aspirations. The Water Plan identifies a significant volume of unallocated water to be shared between the native title holders or tenure holders under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* or the *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991*.

Traditional owners will decide how the water will be used, with the rights to water staying with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders for future generations. The water can be managed for cultural and spiritual purposes or the water can be used by the traditional owners or leased to other parties (e.g. for mining or irrigation projects) upon negotiation and agreement. In the case of leasing to other parties, traditional owners now decide the projects that can happen on country and the economic and social benefits that flow to their communities through the lease terms and conditions.

Case Study: Indigenous land and sea rangers

The Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program is an enduring partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the Queensland Government to care for the extraordinary biodiversity and cultural values on country across Queensland. The program, first established in 2007, has now grown to an annual \$12 million investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ranger teams in 24 of Queensland's regional and remote communities, providing long-term jobs for over 100 men and women.

The ranger program provides important conservation services, including threatened species monitoring, pest control and cultural burns, based on priorities identified by Traditional Owners, local communities and the Queensland Government. The program also delivers a range of important social and well-being benefits for communities.

Ranger groups are active in engaging elders and young people in caring for country activities – including through on-country cultural camps and local partnerships with schools to deliver class-room activities and excursions. Rangers model the importance of leadership, learning and cultural connection through this engagement. A 2015 evaluation of the program confirmed that it is contributing to improved employment, wellbeing and school engagement outcomes in the communities in which ranger groups are located.

Ranger groups share their knowledge, skills and experience at annual Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Workshop where they hear stories of success, develop partnerships and acknowledge long-serving rangers as the elders of their sector.

Land and Sea ranger groups have been successfully operating for over 12 years due to the dedicated efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander host organisations who, between them, contribute governance and management of their programs. The success of the program is also due to the dedicated work of the many men and women who work as rangers in often challenging conditions to help keep country healthy and communities connected.



The Queensland Government continues to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to care for land and sea country, provide jobs and training and engage future generations through:

- Queensland's Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program
- Queensland's Climate Change Response: Queensland Climate Transition Strategy and Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan supported by the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program: Five-year investment plan 2017–2018 to 2021–2022
- Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution program
- Land Restoration Fund

Social inclusion and disability

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience higher rates of disability, but in some instances do not engage with services in the disability service sector.

It is not known precisely what proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are eligible for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support. The data, however, show that NDIS participant numbers are increasing cumulatively over time with 5,211 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in Queensland at 31 December 2019 – up from 2,787 participants at 31 December 2018. Over the past six quarters to December 2019, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented between 8.2 per cent and 8.5 per cent of all plan approval participants in Queensland. At 31 December 2019, 8.5 per cent of Queensland NDIS participants were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, compared with 6.1 per cent nationally.

Queensland's commitment to the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* and complement the implementation of the NDIS in Queensland will assist in breaking down barriers to the participation of people with disability in community life and improving access to the services that people need.

The Queensland Government is committed to addressing the **under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child safety system with NDIS plans and disability support.**

This will be achieved by working with families, communities and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to identify and refer more Aboriginal and Torres Strait children and young people requiring disability support to the NDIA. There is also a commitment to improving data collection and reporting in relation to disability.

In 2019, the Queensland Government negotiated a **\$20 million investment** with the Commonwealth Government to increase Queensland's NDIS participant numbers. Initiatives include an outreach strategy, led by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, to assist people living in regional, rural and remote parts of the state, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to access the NDIS.



The NDIS is also creating longer-term business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based organisations as a result of the implementation of the scheme, including increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in delivering disability services to NDIS clients.

The rates of disability experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are important across all Closing the Gap targets. Consideration should be given to how data, services or strategies focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability might be captured in the refreshed targets for the new National Agreement.

The Queensland Government is committed to an all-inclusive, all abilities Queensland through:

- All Abilities Queensland: Opportunities For All – State Disability Plan 2017–2020
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Service Plan 2018–2021
- Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2015–2020
- Specific protection against discrimination for all Queenslanders under section 15 of the *Human Rights Act 2019*

Culture and language

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. These Acts require land users to take all responsible and practicable measures to ensure their activity does not harm cultural heritage.

Land users can access **DATSIP's award-winning cultural heritage database** through an online portal, to ascertain whether any cultural heritage sites and places have been previously recorded on the database. As at 21 January 2020 there were **405 Cultural Heritage Management Plans** registered on this database (there were 372 as at 30 June 2018). This efficient search process enables land users to meet their duty of care obligations established by the Cultural Heritage Acts.

DATSIP is undertaking a review of the Cultural Heritage Acts including: commencing the review with the release of a consultation paper on 23 May 2019 and inviting public submissions to the review by 26 July 2019; holding public consultation sessions in Rockhampton, Mackay, Roma, Bundaberg, Cairns and Thursday Island in June 2019, and in Mount Isa, Townsville and Brisbane in July 2019. Options developed from this are currently being further consulted on with key stakeholders.

In May 2018, the Queensland Government launched the Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021 which identified that DATSIP and the Department of Education would co-design a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Community consultation was undertaken in 2018–2019 with Language Forums hosted by the Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee in Rockhampton, Roma, Brisbane and Cairns.

Queensland has more than one hundred unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages which are all in danger of being lost without support to maintain, record and grow the number of language speakers.

The Queensland Government worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop the Languages Policy and is continuing to work now on a supporting action plan to complement the policy. The action plan will capture

current government activities and provide opportunities for new initiatives to build on the work being done and to promote the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as part of Queensland's rich cultural heritage.

In 2019, in recognition of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, the Queensland Government introduced an **Indigenous Languages Grants Program that delivered support for 31 languages projects** across the state.

The Queensland Government continues to appreciate and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language through:

- Roll out of language programs in state schools under the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages
- State Library of Queensland – Indigenous Knowledge Centres
- Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) initiative to build sustainable and ethical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts industries
- First 5 Forever – a family literacy program aimed at creating stronger language and literacy environments for 0–5 year old children
- The roll out of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Short Course Syllabus and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies General Senior Syllabus for students in the senior phase of learning
- Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework
- The Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) in consultation with its Indigenous Advisory Panel, will present exhibitions to promote the art of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, deliver QAGOMA touring programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and develop educational programs which support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy
- Requiring public entities under the *Human Rights Act 2019* to consider the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when taking actions and making decisions

Moving forward

This report evidences that much still needs to be done in a number of Closing the Gap priority areas.

Despite some progress, there continues to be significant disparity between outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. It is clear that more needs to be done to improve wellbeing and life outcomes for Queensland's First Nations people by building on their strengths and embracing their strong cultural knowledge to develop solutions.

Partnerships with a range of agencies, such as the Queensland Government Statistician's Office — our partners in preparing this report — are an important means for undertaking analysis, identifying successes, and improving outcomes.

It is understood that during the past decade the most profound progress has been in those areas where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have led design and implementation processes from the beginning.

That is why, during NAIDOC Week in July 2019, the former Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships launched the Queensland Government's *Tracks to Treaty – Reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders*. Two key elements of the *Tracks to Treaty* strategic reform are the Path to Treaty and the Local Thriving Communities reform.

As part of the *Tracks to Treaty* initiative, the Statement of Commitment was signed to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and the Queensland Government. This reframed relationship acknowledges, embraces and celebrates the humanity of Queensland's First Nations.

Tracks to Treaty represents an opportunity to come together as Queenslanders to start a journey towards a future that is more just, more equal and more respectful for First Nations Queenslanders.



The Queensland Government's commitment to a reframed relationship does not diminish in any way the commitment and responsibilities to Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage.

Improved social, economic and cultural outcomes need more than just better service delivery, they need to be founded on a better relationship.

Local Thriving Communities (LTC) is a significant, long-term reform that will result in a different way of government working with communities to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It responds to the recommendations of the QPC *inquiry into service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*, which advocated for changes in the service delivery system reforms to support thriving remote and discrete communities.

LTC works to improve outcomes through enhanced local decision-making so that each community has a strong voice in decisions. This approach is based on mutual respect, high expectations relationships and applying a collaborative approach to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities a greater voice in shaping their future. LTC has a focus on local solutions for long standing issues.

Path to Treaty builds on the progress made to date, including the 2010 amendment to the preamble to the Queensland Constitution to honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. In 2019, the Queensland Government commenced a conversation for statewide agreement-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Path to Treaty ensures the voices of all Queenslanders are heard in the treaty conversation and benefits all by promoting reconciliation and shared pride in culture and heritage.

State-wide consultation on a Path to Treaty was undertaken from September to December 2019 by the Treaty Working Group. Recommendations on next steps based on the consultation were recently provided to the Queensland Government by an Eminent Panel of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Additional key actions consistent with this reform agenda include:

- the *Human Rights Act 2019* which in addition to protecting a number of fundamental human rights, including the specific cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, acknowledges (in its preamble) the importance of the right to self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders;
- launch of the Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021;
- commitment to the legal recognition of traditional Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices;
- establishment of the Queensland First Children and Families Board;
- establishment of the Local Thriving Communities Joint Coordinating Committee;
- commitment to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on various boards and committees;
- appointment of the First Nations Advisor for Housing.

The Queensland Government will continue to build upon mechanisms not just to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in decision making but to ensure self-determination is at the heart of efforts guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

DATSIP's Policy Leaders Forum (PLF) is also a key body established to enable the Queensland Government to work collaboratively and in partnership with highly regarded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, Elders, policy and program experts, academics and community members; and to share information, expand expertise and influence outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The PLF provides a process to inform the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy with member's expertise across health, justice, education, training, housing and child protection.



Advocacy will also continue for changes in the service delivery system reforms to support these targets through the Local Thriving Communities reform.

In conclusion, a refreshed Closing the Gap agenda will provide a key mechanism, as part of the reframed relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the Queensland Government, and will deliver improvements by monitoring outcomes and developing solid targets and measures for priorities of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reframing the relationship and self-determination are essential elements to building a genuine and long lasting partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples that sees individuals and communities move from surviving to thriving.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Data Sources and Data Availability

ABS 2049.0 Census of Population and Housing, estimating homelessness, 2016.

ABS 2071.0 Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016.

ABS 3302.0 Deaths, Australia, various editions.

ABS 3302.0.55.003, Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, various editions.

ABS 4220.0 Schools, Australia, 2019.

ABS 4240.0 Preschool education, Australia, 2018.

ABS 4517.0 Prisoners in Australia, 2019.

ACARA, National assessment program – literacy and numeracy, 2018.

ACARA, National student attendance data collection, 2019.

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table CPO.1, Table LT.1, Table OHC.1, 2019.

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, unpublished data (youth justice).

Department of Health, *Immunisation Coverage Data Tables: Current coverage data tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children*, Department of Health, 2019.

Productivity Commission, Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, National Agreement Performance Information (various years): National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA).

Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services (various years).

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, unpublished data (QCE and QCIA).

Queensland Health, *The burden of disease and injury in Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2017 (reference year 2011) Main report*, Queensland Health, Brisbane, 2017.

Queensland Health, *Closing the gap performance report 2017*, Brisbane, April 2018.

Queensland Health, Perinatal data collection, unpublished data.



Appendix 2: List of Acronyms

AATSIHS	Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey	QCAA	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
BAIBS	Bridging Antenatal Care, Indigenous Babies and Smoking Cessation	QGSO	Queensland Government Statistician's Office
BIA	Backing Indigenous Arts	QIP	Quality Improvement Payment
COAG	Council of Australian Governments	QIPP	Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	QPC	Queensland Productivity Commission
KYLAG	Kuku Yalanji Language Advisory Group	RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
HHSs	Hospital and Health Services	T2S	Transition to Success
LTC	Local Thriving Communities	WBHHS	Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy	YFS	Youth and Family Support
NATSIHS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey		
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey		
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency		
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme		
NIRA	National Indigenous Reform Agreement		
NMS	National Minimum Standard		
PHN	Primary Health Network		
PLF	Policy Leaders Forum		
QAGOMA	Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art		
QATSIF	Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation		
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education		
QCIA	Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement		