



National Agreement on  
Closing the Gap  
**Queensland's 2022  
Implementation Plan**

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# 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.*

*On behalf of the Queensland Government, 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.*

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## STATEMENT ON USE OF TERMS

We recognise that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples each have their own unique languages, beliefs, cultural practices, traditions and diversity within each culture.

This document includes a range of collective terms to reference and reflect the unique identity of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The primary term that has been used is Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with other terms used including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and First Nations people/s.

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## Message from the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

The Palaszczuk Government is pleased to be releasing Queensland's 2022 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (the 2022 Implementation Plan) which outlines the Queensland Government's collective efforts to close the gap in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The 2022 Implementation Plan continues to document how the Queensland Government is addressing the Priority Reforms and socio-economic targets in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It also reflects a strengthened focus on the Priority Reforms, building on the foundations and learnings from the inaugural Implementation Plan.

It demonstrates a maturing of approaches towards genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and service providers; and reflects the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. For example, from the more than \$3 million allocated in the 2022-23 Budget to deliver National Agreement on Closing the Gap outcomes, a new place-based partnership is taking shape in the remote community of Doomadgee, which will see the community leading the reform process in service areas such as housing, health and employment.

The Implementation Plan is another significant step along the journey towards self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, guided by co-design, co-development with shared decision-making to drive policy and program development.

This Implementation Plan seeks to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations are at the table and have a voice in decision-making, as we journey together to address historical and ongoing economic and social injustices, and achieve self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### **The Honourable Craig Crawford MP**

***Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships***



## Message from the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition

In accordance with the Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government, the Government have committed to building a transformative relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This new way of working together, acknowledges that in order to Close the Gap, delivering real change and real outcomes is dependent upon genuine partnership, self-determination, shared decision-making and increased investment into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.

We know that outcomes for our peoples and communities will be better with a genuine partnership with government, sharing in decision-making, and a having a voice in the design, development and delivery of policies, programs and services that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement), the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition (QATSIC), through partnership with the Queensland Government aim to deliver the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan for 2022 (the Implementation Plan).

Whilst QATSIC had limited input into the development of the first Implementation Plan and deliverables, we recognise the Queensland Governments commitment to working differently in the future to close the gap in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To support this renewed effort, we look forward to the development of a formal partnership agreement that will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are equal partners in developing, designing and delivering the strategies that will result in changed lives for our children, families and communities.

As a result, we look forward to taking a lead role in shaping and refining the commitments within the Implementation Plan over the coming year, and reviewing and developing further iterations, in line with the already established strategies and programs, for the duration of the National Agreement.

There is much work to be done to close the gap. We welcome a partnership with the Queensland Government now and into the future as we continue to build a genuine relationship founded on deep respect and a commitment to changing policies, processes, practises and increased investment to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities are supported to thrive.

### Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition:

**Mr Cleveland Fagan**  
*CEO, Queensland  
Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander Health  
Council*

**Ms Wynetta Dewis**  
*CEO, Queensland  
Indigenous Family  
Violence Legal Service*

**Mr Shane Duffy**  
*CEO, Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
Legal Service (Qld) Ltd*

**Mr Garth Morgan**  
*CEO, Queensland  
Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander Child  
Protection Peak*

## Purpose of this Implementation Plan

The purpose of this and the 2021 Implementation Plan is to guide Queensland's implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement). The Implementation Plan is part of the Queensland Government's commitment to reframe the relationship and improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Since the National Agreement was signed in July 2020, the Queensland Government has focussed on building and strengthening relationships with the Queensland's peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and establishing the decision-making architecture necessary to implement the Agreement. This includes a codesign and partnership approach with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

Key to the success of the implementation of the National Agreement in Queensland is the partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition (QATSIC). QATSIC co-chairs the Queensland Closing the Gap Partnership Committee, which also has senior representatives from Queensland Government agencies.

The Queensland Government has provided funding of \$2.43 million over four years to QATSIC for engagement in the implementation of the National Agreement. Current QATSIC members are.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Queensland) Ltd (ATSILS)
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICCP) Ltd
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services (QIFVLS).

As agreed to in the National Agreement, Queensland's Implementation Plan is updated annually to document additional initiatives to address the Priority Reforms and socio-economic Targets. Updated versions will be provided to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap (the Joint Council), then published online.



## Structure of this Implementation Plan

The 2022 Implementation Plan includes a greater focus on the establishment of partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners to drive implementation of the Priority Reforms. Additionally, there is a greater focus on the interrelatedness of the socioeconomic Targets, and they have been grouped together to provide a more holistic and strength-based approach.

Queensland's 2022 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan is in two parts. This document provides examples of initiatives that contribute to the four Priority Reforms under the National Agreement, and a summary of effort to address the socio-economic Targets. The companion Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment provides further details of government initiatives by agency that contribute to the implementation of the National Agreement.

## Working in partnership

Throughout the last year, since the release of Queensland's 2021 Implementation Plan, there have been a number of initiatives in the National Agreement that have been progressed both at the national level and in Queensland. These initiatives demonstrate the principles of a partnership approach with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and the local community.

### Sector strengthening plans

Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap commits Parties (individual jurisdictions and national Coalition of Peaks) to identify sectors for joint national strengthening efforts every three years through Sector Strengthening Plans. The initial sectors cover early childhood care and development, health, housing and disability. These plans have now been developed and provide a national framework for Parties to the National Agreement to deliver on a joined-up approach to sector-specific actions.

The Plans must include the strong community-controlled sector elements outlined in the National Agreement:

- sustained capacity building and investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations;
- dedicated and identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce (that complements a range of other professions and expertise) with wage parity;
- strong governance and policy development influencing capability supported by a Peak Body; and
- a dedicated, reliable and consistent funding model.

The Plans have been developed by dedicated Sector Strengthening Plan Working Groups. Jurisdictions, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, may prioritise different actions at different times, depending on the requirements of the sector in a particular jurisdiction.

### Place Based Partnership with Doomadgee

Clause 39 of the National Agreement requires that Joint Council consider the locations for six new place-based partnerships within 12 months of commencement of the Agreement. In agreement with the community, Doomadgee will be Queensland's first place-based partnership under the National Agreement. These place-

based partnerships have a focus on Priority Reform One of the National Agreement where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

Additionally, the aim of the place based partnerships is to:

- drive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led outcomes on Closing the Gap;
- enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, communities and organisations to negotiate and implement agreements with governments to implement all Priority Reforms and policy specific and place-based strategies to support Closing the Gap;
- support additional community-led development initiatives; and
- bring together all government parties, together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities to the collective task of Closing the Gap.

The Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships received funding of \$0.563 million through the 2022-23 Budget to implement the place-based partnership in Doomadgee.

### Justice Policy Partnership

Under Clause 38 of the National Agreement, Parties have committed to establishing five policy partnerships by the end of 2022. The Justice Policy Partnership was accelerated and established in late 2021. The key focus of the Justice Policy Partnership is to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and young people in adult corrections and in youth detention and on meeting the two targets in the National Agreement:

- Target 10: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.
- Target 11: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.

Led by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in Queensland, the Justice Policy Partnership Executive Governance Group, supported by a Cross-Agency Working Group, has been established to support the Queensland Justice Policy Partnership representative and to ensure a whole-of-government and partnership approach to achieving the Closing the Gap justice targets. The Governance Group, co-chaired by the CEO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, also includes Senior Executive representatives from across Government that acknowledges that solutions to incarceration rates lie across the service system and cannot be isolated to the criminal justice sector. Pro-social connections such as education, employment and training, appropriate housing and community belonging are central to disrupting poverty and increasing social capital. A broad and effective public service system, along with an engaged partnership with the community, non-government organisations (particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations) and individuals, is the means to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' over-representation and to achieve the Closing the Gap targets.

In 2022, policy partnerships covering social and emotional wellbeing (mental health), housing, early childhood care and development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages will also be established.

## Broader Queensland Government reforms and alignment with Closing the Gap

In accordance with the Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government, the government is fully committed to building a reframed relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples that acknowledges, embraces and celebrates the humanity of First Nations peoples.

The overarching outcomes sought from this reframed relationship are to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to build on strengths and to support thriving communities and self-determination. The focus will be on building partnerships directed to negotiated solutions to complex problems and which support shared outcomes.

Many of these significant reforms strongly align with the National Agreement.

### Path to Treaty

On 16 August 2022, the Premier and Minister for the Olympics formally launched the Treaty Advancement Committee's report and Queensland Government response and confirmed the next steps in the Path to Treaty. These next steps include establishing two key structures in legislation – a First Nations Treaty Institute and a Truth Telling and Healing Inquiry.

An Independent Interim Body (IIB), comprising ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders as well as non-Indigenous representatives, also commenced in August 2022. The IIB will be in place for the next 12 to 18 months and will co-design the legislation to establish the First Nations Treaty Institute and Truth Telling and Healing Inquiry, together with the Path to Treaty Office. The IIB will first also lead local truth telling initiatives including with public libraries, museums, archives and art galleries to promote a shared understanding of our States full history and the contemporary issues that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' wellbeing.

The Path to Treaty's approach has consistently emphasised the importance of co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through the work of the former Eminent Panel and Treaty Working Group, the former Treaty Advancement Committee, and the current Independent Interim Body. Working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop the Path to Treaty, with the ultimate aim to achieve a Treaty or treaties, is consistent with the National Agreement's aims to achieve self-determination and improvements to the wellbeing and lives of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Local Thriving Communities

The **Local Thriving Communities (LTC) Action Plan 2022-2024** is guiding Queensland Government reform to transition to shared decision-making, shared accountability, and shared commitment with Local Decision Making Bodies (LDMBs). Further, LTC's five priority areas for action have strong alignment to those in the National Agreement to Closing the Gap:

1. Investment Mapping (*Shared access to data and Information at the regional level*)
2. Data Sharing and monitoring and evaluation (*Shared access to data and Information at the regional level*)
3. Standing up LDMBs (*Formal partnerships and shared decision making*)
4. Whole-of-Government Capacity building (*Transforming Government Organisations*)
5. Mapping existing legislative and procurement frameworks (*Transforming Government Organisations; Building the Community Controlled Sector*)

As communities progress their local decision-making models and determine how LTC can best work for them, Queensland Government agencies are concurrently undertaking actions to create the enabling environment for effective engagement and support for the success of LDMBs in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes improving their capacity to engage in culturally appropriate co-design and to ensure procurement and commissioning processes provide for the delivery of culturally safe, quality services that meet community needs and aspirations.

In addition, LTC includes activity that provides for more effective sharing of information to inform local leaders in their decision-making capacity. This includes commitments to provide community investment profiles aligned to community priorities, as determined by LDMBs, to equip local leaders with the capacity to make informed decisions in partnership with government about investment in services in their community.

Queensland Government agencies are working with LDMBs as they are established to understand and provide for local data needs. For example, the Queensland Police Service has met with interim LDMBs established in Aurukun, Mapoon and Napranum and is providing local data as needed to inform community-led solutions to locally identified policing service issues. More broadly, a StatShot report prepared by the Queensland Government Statisticians Office for each remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been provided to local leaders, with direct engagement available with the Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO) to discuss local trends, confirm interpretation and cross-reference with data that might not be included in current StatShot reporting. The LTC Action Plan 2022-2024 includes a long-term commitment to create a data sharing mechanism that will compliment related data sharing projects being progressed – such as those within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - so that LDMBs have direct access to data to inform local decision-making.

LTC implementation is providing for local, cultural authority to be enhanced, investment and other data to be shared, procurement improvements, to inform what and how services are delivered within community. Thus, LTC is establishing the mechanisms for shared decision-making to inform how best to achieve wellbeing and economic outcomes in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

### **Indigenous Voice - First Nations Consultative Committee**

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard and influence decision-making on issues that matter the most to them. The Queensland Government has taken a historic step towards an Indigenous Voice with the establishment of Queensland's eight-member First Nations Consultative Committee (FNCC).

Members of the independent FNCC, drawn from across Queensland via a state-wide expression of interest process, will use their connection to the region, experience and community support to co-design an Indigenous Voice model for Queensland that best meets First Nations Queenslanders' views and aspirations.

Co-design work will include investigating a range of Indigenous Voice options including establishment of a state-wide representative body and how this could link

with local and regional voices provided through existing Queensland reform agendas such as Path to Treaty and Local Thriving Communities.

The FNCC's work will also help inform the state's input to the national Indigenous Voice process noting the Federal Government's commitment to constitutionally enshrine a Voice to Parliament in the first term. The FNCC had their inaugural meeting in Cairns on 12 August 2022 and will report back to the Queensland Government on the outcomes of their co-design work and recommended Indigenous Voice model in 2023.

### **New Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Strategy**

Develop a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Strategy to provide a strategic long-term framework to promote economic empowerment and self-determination.

### **Cultural Heritage Acts review**

The department is undertaking a review of the Cultural Heritage Acts with the review examining whether the legislation:

- is still operating as intended
- is achieving intended outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other stakeholders in Queensland
- aligns with the Queensland Government's broader objective to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- is consistent the current native title landscape, and
- complies with contemporary drafting standards.

### **Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa**

The *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020* (the Act), which came into effect on 1 July 2021:

- fulfills the Queensland Government commitment to recognise the outcomes achieved by Torres Strait Islander families' continued use of traditional child rearing practice;
- recognises traditional Torres Strait Islander child rearing practice LORE in western LAW;
- enables the Commissioner to independently consider applications and make a 'Cultural Recognition Order' to give legal effect to the practice;
- is implemented under a framework that provides support and information to Torres Strait Islander community members who are seeking to make enquiries or lodge applications for a Cultural Recognition Order under the Act.

## Embedding the Priority Reforms

Embedding the priority reforms in Queensland Government structures is vital to driving improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Many of the Queensland Government initiatives

in this Implementation Plan cut across the four Priority Reforms and aim to drive improvement across each individual Priority Reform.

# PRIORITY REFORM ONE: FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS AND SHARED DECISION MAKING

The outcome being sought from this Priority Reform is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

Below are examples from across the Queensland Government where partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations have been formed to drive improved outcomes through shared decision-making. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Local Thriving Communities Joint Coordinating Committee (LTC JCC)** – The LTC JCC provides advice and guidance to the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and other key leaders on the co-design and implementation of the LTC reform. The JCC brings a high level of cultural

intelligence to the LTC reform through its membership which includes Indigenous community leaders and Mayors from five remote and discrete Indigenous Councils.

- **Far Northern Biosecurity Initiative** – in 2018 the Palaszczuk Government announced a \$1.7 million funding injection to improve the management of biosecurity risks in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula area of Queensland. The continuing grant program is for the development of regional collaboration of invasive plant and animal biosecurity planning.
- **The Indigenous Native Food Program** – this is a partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) to explore commercial opportunities for scalable Indigenous native food businesses. The program is a pilot project which aims to create opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, diversify the Queensland economy and support growth in the native food industry in Queensland.



- **The First Nations Arts and Cultures Panel** – has been established as part of Creative Together 2020–2030: A 10-Year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland. The Panel will provide advice on the necessary actions to realise a range of Creative Together priorities aligning with cultural maintenance, economic empowerment and participation, community connectedness, truth telling and wellbeing.
- **Local Community Engagement through Co-design (LCETC)** – continuing to progress implementation of the LCETC pilot program in 13 Queensland state schools and four education regions. LCETC improves outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland state schools, through developing Local Community Education Bodies, Regional Community Education Boards, and a Cape York regional education advisory body through the Cape York Education Initiative.
- **Queensland’s framework for action—Reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence** – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Prevention Group was established to provide advice on issues and challenges impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing DFV and providing governance oversight on the progress of the framework and DFV reform program.
- **Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan (QRIDP)** – the QRIDP will detail the vision for Queensland’s resources sector into the future and was developed through a broad public consultation process, as well as a targeted stakeholder advisory group which provided opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to provide input and advice. The final QRIDP includes a specific focus area on ensuring strong and genuine First Nations partnerships across the resources industry, and outlines actions to be taken by Government and industry to support this.
- **First Nations health equity reform agenda** – to drive improvements across the health system by implementing a First Nations health equity reform agenda to achieve health equity, eliminate institutional racism and attain the national goal of life expectancy parity by 2031 in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector. A cornerstone of the reform agenda is the co-design and implementation of legislated Health Equity Strategies by the 16 Hospital and Health Services in partnership with prescribed (legislated) First Nations stakeholders.
- **Police First Nations Advisory Group** – work is underway to establish a new Police First Nations Advisory Group (PFNAG). It is intended that the PFNAG will be comprised of a diverse range of First Nations community representatives, to ensure that a broad cross-section of First Nations voices are heard. It is intended that the Queensland Police Service (QPS) will consult the Group on First Nations policy matters and possibly some place-based matters.
- **The Our Way Strategy and action plans** – provides a foundation for the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA), in partnership with Family Matters Queensland, community, government and non-government partners to continue addressing the drivers to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system by 2037.

## Formal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people /and/or organisations

There are a range of formal partnerships that have been established in individual Queensland Government agencies to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a direct say in the policies and programs. Some of these partnerships are related to a specific project and others are related to more broader activities delivered by a particular department. Below are examples of these formal partnerships:

- **Logan Together Collaboration Agreement** – is a place-based partnership and has an existing Logan Together Collaboration Agreement. The Agreement establishes governments’ and community’s decision to join their resources and efforts for local change. One of the Co-Chairs is Warril Yari-Go Karulbo.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship care model** – identifying and supporting family to care for children when required will keep children safe in culture and assist in reunification success. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) has been contracted to develop a standalone kinship care program to facilitate delivery of improved outcomes for First Nations children in the child protection system.
- **Delegated Authority** – DCYJMA has signed a Collaboration Agreement with the QATSICPP and Family Matters Queensland to progress ‘delegated authority’, the process where functions or powers of the *Child Protection Act 1999* can be delegated from the Chief Executive Officer of the department to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Chief Executive Officer of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation, for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, where certain requirements are met.
- **Community Justice Groups (CJGs)** – CJGs are non-government organisations that develop and deliver strategies within their communities to help reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system. DJAG funds approximately 41 CJGs that support the operation of Magistrates Courts and/or Murri Courts. CJGs also operate across 10 locations in the Torres Strait outer islands to support the operation of circuit courts.
- **Interim Local Decision Making Bodies in Hope Vale, Aurukun, Mapoon, Napranum and Wujal Wujal** – through Local Thriving Communities (LTC) the Queensland Government seeks to build on a community's strengths, embracing existing leadership structures to enable communities to establish Local Decision Making Bodies (LDMBs) that will co-design and influence the delivery of services, ensure investment makes their community stronger and maximise opportunities for local service and industry partnerships. The membership and model for each interim LDMB has been determined by community, with a range of leadership models emerging that build on existing community strengths, including advisory committees to councils and new or existing community structures. LDMBs will be supported to develop a Community Agreement which is designed to be a negotiated, binding document with priorities, precise actions and commitments by all parties, to be signed by Ministerial and Government Champions for each community on behalf of the Queensland Government. This is a direct demonstration of the Queensland Government meeting its Statement of Commitment to a Reframed Relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders which commits Government to work in partnership with community leaders to enable shared decision-making, shared accountability and shared commitment.
- **National Agreement to Implement the Justice Policy Partnership** – has Terms of Reference and is co-chaired by the CEO, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS).
- **Queensland First Children and Families Board** – continues to provide strategic guidance and oversight to the implementation of the Our Way Strategy and action plans that drives the DCYJMA approach to eliminating the disproportionate representation of First Nations children in the child protection system.

# PRIORITY REFORM TWO: BUILDING THE COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED SECTOR

The outcome being sought from this Priority Reform is that there is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of First Nations peoples across the country.

Below are examples from across the Queensland Government where the community-controlled sector in Queensland is being enhanced to provide culturally appropriate services and improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Cape York Timber and Wik Timber Sales Permits** – DAF has issued several Forestry Act 1959 (Qld) sales permits to harvest state-owned native timber, which provide employment and training benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and enterprises. These include permits held by Cape York Timber Pty Ltd (CYT) and by Wik Timber Holdings (WTH).
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland** – the newly established peak body was developed after consultation with Indigenous community housing organisations (ICHOs) across the state, and with the formation of an ICHO Working Group to oversee the development of the body.
- **Kindergarten Funding Scheme** (\$211 million per annum) – providing funding via a new Kindergarten Funding Scheme to all eligible kindergarten providers including community-controlled organisations in some communities.
- **Rookwood Weir Project Indigenous Land Use Agreements with Darumbal People Aboriginal Corporation (DPAC) and Gaangalu Nations People (GNP)** – the agreements provide oversight of activities around the footprint of the Rookwood Weir Project on country and offer a range of benefits to compensate and mitigate for any footprint impacts. The State understands that the benefits for DPAC in particular will support community programs focussed on culture and language as well potential employment and business opportunities associated with the weir.

- **Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP)** – the objective of the QIPP is to increase the value of Queensland Government procurement spend awarded to Indigenous businesses to be three per cent of addressable spend by 2022. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations are included in the definition of an Indigenous business.
- **Making Tracks Investment Strategies, the Making Tracks towards achieving First Nations Health Equity: Interim Investment Strategy 2021–2022** – the Making Tracks towards achieving First Nations Health Equity: Interim Investment Strategy 2021–2022 reaffirms the Government’s commitment to ongoing investment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services. Recognising sustainability and stability of investment as an enabler for success, the Making Tracks Investment Strategy provides a forward commitment to provide a stable and sustainable investment framework and to partnering with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services to deliver culturally and clinically safe and accessible health services to First Nations Queenslanders.
- **Small Business Engagement Framework (SBEF) Indigenous Business Engagement** – funded through SBEF, Indigenous Business Engagement focuses on supporting Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander small business owners with confidence, capability and capacity to thrive, grow and seize opportunities. The program also supports DESBT staff by providing skills needed to understand, work with and support Queensland’s Indigenous communities.

## Future focus area for Priority Reform Two

First Nations Disability Peak body – to be funded by the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to provide information and referral advice for First Nations people with disability.



# PRIORITY REFORM THREE: TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

The outcome being sought from this Priority Reform is that Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including through the services they fund.

Below are examples from across the Queensland Government where the Queensland Government is delivering culturally safe and responsive services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve outcomes. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commercial Fishing Policy** – the *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017-2027* commits to developing a commercial fishing policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support economic development in a way that supports sustainable fishing.
- **Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) Cultural Liaison Officers** – Cultural liaison officer roles within the QBFP facilitate relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Indigenous Land and Sea rangers and QBFP officers.
- **Department of Education's (DoE) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy 2022–2024** – co-evaluating, co-designing and implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy 2022–2024 with two priorities: build inclusive and culturally capable workplaces by embedding DoE's Cultural Capability Framework; and develop employment opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Department of Education's legislation changes** – developing options to explicitly recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in education legislation.
- **Gurra Gurra Framework 2020-2026** – the *Gurra Gurra Framework 2020-2026* will support the Department of Environment and Science (DES) in reframing relationships with First Nations peoples by holding Country and people at the centre of all we do, from policies and programs to service delivery.
- **Yhurri Gurri Framework 2021-2024** – the Framework is an integral part of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning's day-to-day operations and sets out the department's ongoing commitment to have a positive impact on First Nations businesses, communities and peoples.
- **Magistrates Court Reconciliation Action Plan** – on 16 May 2022 the *Magistrates Court Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2022-2025* was released which sets out a range of actions to be undertaken in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to address their over-representation in the criminal justice system.
- **First Nations Justice Office** – Queensland's inaugural establishment of a First Nations Justice Office to lead and contribute to the work of the Justice Policy Partnership, Closing the Gap targets, Path to Treaty and internal Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) strategies to transform DJAG's service delivery and workforce to become culturally capable and to establish a culturally safe environment.



- **Department of the Premier and Cabinet** – explore potential amendment of Queensland’s Cabinet Handbook and templates to require all policy submissions to specifically consider any impacts, or potential impacts, of policies or programs on Closing the Gap priority areas and targets and more broadly on outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.
- **Queensland Indigenous Tourism Government and Industry Reference Group** – the group provides industry intelligence to the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses and feedback on government initiatives that support development of the First Nations tourism industry.
- **Sport and Recreation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Framework** – the new Framework (Department of Tourism, Industry and Sport) guides the development and delivery of funding, programs, infrastructure delivery and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In keeping with the Queensland Government’s commitment to reconciliation and progress towards reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this Framework adopts a collaborative approach to funding, program development, infrastructure development and service delivery.
- **Public Sector Reform** – the Public Sector Reform Office (PSRO) in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is leading the development of new legislation to modernise the Public Service Act 2008. The Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships is working closely with the PSRO to ensure the new legislation provides for the role of public sector entities in supporting the Queensland Government’s commitment to reframing its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by facilitating engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government and non-government stakeholders. .
- **Local Thriving Communities Action Plan 2022-2024** - articulates commitments from across the Queensland Government to support local decision-making and work with communities to determine how government investment can meet community needs and aspirations. This includes actions that will ensure government adapts to different ways of working that place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and self-determination at the centre of its work.

# PRIORITY REFORM FOUR: SHARED ACCESS TO DATA AND INFORMATION AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

The outcome being sort from this Priority Reform is that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

Below are examples from across the Queensland Government where the Queensland Government is aiming to provide local data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to inform and influence policy and program decisions to achieve better outcomes. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Local Thriving Communities (LTC)** – key priority areas of the LTC Action Plan are investment mapping and data sharing and monitoring and evaluation. Investment mapping is progressing for interim Local Decision Making Bodies including developing a consistent methodology for determining direct, regional, and universal service funding for communities and sharing this information with LDMBs. Data sharing is already occurring at the local level, for example a StatShot report prepared by the Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO) for each remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been provided to local leaders, with direct engagement available with QGSO to discuss local trends, confirm interpretation and cross-reference with data that might not be included in current StatShot reporting.
- **First Nations Health Equity monitoring and evaluation framework** – development of a statewide First Nations Health Equity monitoring and evaluation framework co-designed in partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinical Network to measure the effectiveness of the Health Equity Strategies and the broader First Nations health equity reform agenda. The new framework will be underpinned by the principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty to respect the voices and lived experiences of First Nations peoples.
- **Alcohol Management**– the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office (QGSO) are supporting data sharing at the local level to inform local leaders as they design and deliver Community Safety Plans (CSPs) and develop solutions to address local priorities including alcohol management. This includes QPS data reports being made available to local leaders via local QPS Management (Officers in Charge) to share data that will better inform community-led solutions. To support this work, QGSO works with other government agencies to collate and analyse data for use by communities and working groups. CSPs are a key part of the Queensland Government’s renewed approach to alcohol management that includes alcohol restrictions and other strategies to improve safety and wellbeing, reduce demand for alcohol, address sly grog and homebrew, focus on harm reduction and promote a positive alcohol culture in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## The Socio-economic Targets

Currently there are 17 socio-economic Targets in the National Agreement with these Targets being interlinked. Research shows that access to stable and appropriate housing has significant positive benefits on health, education, justice and employment outcomes. Addressing factors such as reducing contact with government statutory systems i.e. child protection, youth justice, adult correction has positive outcomes for health and social and emotional wellbeing. The following section provides examples of Queensland Government initiatives to progress improved outcomes. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

### Long and healthy lives

A good start in life provides the foundation for better life outcomes. Being healthy and having access to appropriate housing are key to improving social and emotional wellbeing. As highlighted by the Healing Foundation, from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, having a focus on the development of social and emotional wellbeing is of great importance for sustainability of culture and traditional practices.

This section focuses on:

Outcome 1: long and healthy lives

Outcome 2: children are born healthy and strong

Outcome 14: social and emotional wellbeing

Recent data shows that life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland has increased over time, with 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born with a healthy birthweight. However, suicide rates for First Nations people continue to increase.

Below are key initiatives aimed at improving health and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes in Queensland. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **First Nations health equity reform agenda** – to drive improvements across the health system by implementing a First Nations health equity reform agenda to achieve health equity, eliminate institutional racism and attain the national goal of life expectancy parity by 2031 in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector. A cornerstone of the reform agenda is the co-design and implementation of legislated Health Equity Strategies by the 16 Hospital and Health Services in partnership with prescribed (legislated) First Nations stakeholders.
- **Rheumatic Heart Disease: Queensland's First Nations Strategy 2021-2024** – implementation of the Strategy provides a pathway to a whole-of-system response to eliminate Rheumatic Heart Disease among First Nations people and was co-designed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Sector.
- **Queensland Cancer Strategy** – developing a Queensland Cancer Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that will set the priorities and goals for the health system in Queensland to address the growing inequitable cancer burden experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.
- **Deadly Choices Healthy Lifestyle program** – funding the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health to deliver the Deadly Choices Healthy Lifestyle program, a broadly recognised campaign supported by programs and health services to encourage health and wellbeing in a holistic way. This includes the Broncos, Cowboys and Titans Deadly Choices partnerships.
- **Queensland Immunisation Strategy** – the Queensland Immunisation Strategy includes targeted initiatives aimed at protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adults from vaccine preventable diseases through increased vaccination to targeted age groups.
- **Queensland Health Growing Deadly Families Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternity Services Strategy 2019-2025** – implementation of the Queensland Health Growing Deadly Families Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternity Services Strategy 2019-2025 to support progress to ensuring every woman in Queensland giving birth to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander babies has access to high quality, clinical and culturally capable maternity services.
- **Better Care Together: a plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services to 2027** – identifies priorities and actions over the next five years and includes initiatives specifically targeted at delivering improved services with First Nations peoples, including embedding First Nations' cultural safety and capability through new and emerging models of care with First Nations peoples, increasing access to community led and controlled MHAOD services, strengthening partnerships with First Nations stakeholders, services, and communities, and increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health workers.
- **Assessment and Referral Team (ART)** – ART supports at-risk children and young people aged 7-25 years to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), including those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- **Deadly Active Sport and Recreation Program (DASRP)** is targeted at 17 identified discrete communities, with grants awarded to local councils or community organisations, community, local councils to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of physical activity opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. DASRP is focused on projects that address community-identified and prioritised physical activity needs. Projects will support the delivery of quality and culturally appropriate physical activities to increase physical activity participation.
- **First Nations Sport and Recreation Program** aims to provide physical activity opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Queensland. The program provides funding to organisations in non-discrete communities to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of community-identified physical activity opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase physical activity participation. The program empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work with local community groups, sporting organisations and Councils when making decisions about the type of sport, active recreation or cultural activities that are delivered.
- **Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2019-2022** – takes a multi-strategy approach to improving environmental health conditions in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments.
- **Local Thriving Communities**
  - **Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program** - implementation and monitoring of initiatives funded through Local Thriving Communities Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program, which have been co-designed with local leadership to improve mental health and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes, respond to substance misuse, and reduce rates of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
  - **Renewed Approach to Alcohol Management** - supports community leadership to drive alcohol management arrangements in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities with alcohol restrictions, to improve overall community safety and wellbeing through a holistic approach to harm reduction and work towards a safe relationship with alcohol.

## The right housing

Housing is an essential human service. Safe, secure and affordable housing enables better connections to support services, improved health, and greater social, economic and cultural participation. A safe and secure home is at the heart of our wellbeing and provides the foundation that allows individuals and families to thrive through independence, growth and success. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders still face significant housing challenges.

This section focuses on:

- Outcome 9: the right housing

Recent data shows that most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders live in homes with enough bedrooms and 8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders live in appropriately sized housing.

Below are the priority initiatives aimed at improving housing outcomes. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan and Housing and Homelessness Action Plan** – there are a range of actions under the Action Plans to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including:
  - develop place-based, community-led, Local Housing Plans with communities to identify and respond to local housing challenges and priorities
  - deliver new housing, as jointly agreed with communities, under Local Housing Plans
  - increase home ownership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  - work in partnership with Queensland Health to develop housing solutions to support improved health outcomes
  - expand opportunities for people to access education, training and employment, including construction apprenticeships, in regional and urban locations
  - provide housing and support for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men exiting the criminal justice system
  - establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing body that will work with Indigenous Community Housing Organisations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils, to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
  - work in partnership with Queensland Health to develop housing solutions to support improved health outcomes
  - work with the community to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, by redeveloping the Joyce Wilding Hostel.

## Thriving children achieving their potential

Education is one of the cornerstones of improved life outcomes. Culture and community play an important role in shaping young people's lives. Having a curriculum that acknowledges and respects the histories, values, languages and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and places them at the centre of our work is important to achieving improved educational outcomes. High expectations are also important with the foundations of a successful learning journey being built through support, encouragement, parent and community partnerships, and quality teaching. Additionally, by building resilience, nurturing creativity and instilling a culture of lifelong learning, this will inspire students to successfully engage in future employment opportunities and achieve their aspirations.

This section focuses on:

- Outcome 3: early childhood education
- Outcome 4: thriving children
- Outcome 5: students achieve their potential

Recent data shows that more than 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are enrolled in preschool in the year before they start school, that 3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children demonstrated well or highly developed strengths in important aspects of their early childhood skills and wellbeing and 7 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds have achieved at least a Year 12 or equivalent education. However, we know that more needs to be done, especially with a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children not assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census.

Below are key Queensland initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **A range of early childhood education initiatives:**
  - Providing new service location funding (as part of the new Kindergarten Funding Scheme) to kindergartens in outer regional, remote and very remote communities to attract and retain early childhood educators, which will help to increase opportunities to employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.
  - Continuing and expanding 'A great start to kindergarten', which supports the successful transition of children aged three years (by June 30), who were not currently attending an early childhood education and care program, into an approved kindergarten program the following year.
  - Expanding State Delivered Kindergarten into communities with a high population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to provide access to a quality, culturally responsive kindergarten program at their local state school.

- Enhancing the new Kindergarten Funding Scheme to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by ensuring that the cost of kindergarten is not a barrier to participation and kindergarten remains low or at no cost for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families no matter where they live.
- Implementing the Kindy Uplift pilot to provide additional funding to more than 900 selected kindergarten services, including services with high enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The funding enables services to invest in evidence-based approaches to enhance learning program quality and outcomes; build the capability of educators to enhance cultural safety, healing and truth telling; and trial early childhood data snapshots to support services to better understand and respond to local community strengths and challenges.
- The Deadly Ears Program and corresponding policy Deadly Kids, Deadly Futures: Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Ear and Hearing Health Framework 2016-2026.

- **Youth Engagement Strategy** – implementing the Youth Engagement Strategy to improve responses to children and young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education through a range of strategies to support students to stay at school; reconnect them if they disengage; and strengthen their transition to further study or work.

## Strong economic development and employment

Engagement in education pathways beyond Year 12 provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the opportunity to fully engage in the employment market and improve wellbeing outcomes not just for themselves but for broader family.

This section focuses on:

- Outcome 6: learning pathways
- Outcome 7: fully engaged young people
- Outcome 8: economic participation and development
- Outcome 17: digital inclusion

Recent data highlights that Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young adults are increasingly engaging in higher education with more than two in five having completed a Certificate III or higher qualification. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students commencing university studies also more than doubled in 10 years. While there has been an increase in 15-24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people fully engaged in some form of education, employment, training, or a combination of these a significant proportion of this age group are not engaged in any of these activities. Employment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults remain a challenge.

Below are key Queensland initiatives aimed at improving economic and employment outcomes. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Attachment.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Strategy** – develop a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Strategy to provide a strategic long-term framework to promote economic empowerment and self-determination (anticipated to be completed later in 2022).
- **Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program** – (QILSRP) – through the QILSRP, grant funding and support is provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to employ rangers to co-steward Queensland’s environment and cultural heritage. The Queensland Government has committed to support the employment of 200 Indigenous Land and Sea rangers by 2023-24.
- **Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program** - this Program was introduced in 2007 and to date has transferred 3.86 million hectares of Cape York land to Aboriginal freehold land, of which about 2.3 million hectares is jointly managed national park. Annual perpetual funding facilitates employment of corporation Rangers on the national parks (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). The Program also assists corporations to apply for grants to support works on their freehold land and which often includes employment and training opportunities. The Program land transfer outcome sets the foundation for economic independence and employment.
- **Link and Launch** – continuing to implement Link and Launch, supporting Year 12 completers not in education, training or employment to make a successful transition to study or work in 30 targeted sites. This initiative has delivered strong transitions for participants, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, who have completed Year 12 to transition to further study or work.
- **Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Public Health Program** – supports the local employment of up to 50 Indigenous Environmental Health and Animal Management Workers across 16 First Nations Local Governments for the next seven years (through to June 2029).
- **Youth Employment Program (YEP)** –YEP is 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. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a Certificate III or higher, who are not supported by a job agency, can also be supported through YEP.
- **Indigenous Driver Licensing Program** – the Indigenous Driver Licensing Program aims to reduce barriers to employment by working with remote and discrete First Nations communities, and supports activities in regional and metropolitan locations, to increase licence ownership and safe driving awareness for First Nations peoples of Queensland. This service provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with increased access to employment opportunities.
- **First Nations Health Workforce Strategy** – develop and implement a Queensland First Nations Health Workforce Strategy for Action co-designed in partnership between Queensland Health and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health sector. The strategy is the first integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce developed for the health system in Queensland and will deliver targeted actions to value, invest in and grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforces.
- **Back to Work (BTW)** – in the 2021–22 Queensland State Budget, the BTW program was extended for a revitalised program to provide businesses the confidence to employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment and help workers facing disadvantage in the labour market. The revitalised program specifically focuses on supporting young people (aged 15– 24 years), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, and long-term unemployed people (unemployed 52 weeks or longer).
- **Skilling Queenslanders for Work** – Skilling Queenslanders for Work helps eligible Queenslanders, including Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to gain the skills, qualifications and experience needed to enter and stay in the workforce.
- **Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032** – *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032* is a 10 year strategy for a strong, skilled and diverse workforce to seize today’s jobs and adapt to future opportunities. The Queensland Workforce Strategy has a focus on workforce participation and actions to help all Queenslanders access more job opportunities and connect with potential employers.
- **First Nations Training Strategy (FNTS)** – the FNTS supports First Nations peoples and communities to be better connected with training and skilling opportunities that link to sustainable jobs.

## Strong families and justice for all

Recent data highlights that while the vast majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up in safe homes, First Nations children are still significantly overrepresented in Queensland's child protection system. This overrepresentation is also repeated in the adult corrections and youth justice system, and we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls are disproportionately impacted by domestic and family violence.

This section focuses on:

- Outcome 12: safe children
- Outcome 13 safe families
- Outcome 11 young people in detention
- Outcome 10: adults in prison

Below are key Queensland initiatives aimed at reducing domestic and family violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and reducing contact with Queensland's statutory systems. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Queensland First Children and Families Board** – continues to provide strategic oversight and advice to the implementation of the Our Way strategy which drives the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) approach to eliminating overrepresentation in the child protection system.
- **The Our Way strategy and Changing Tracks action plans** – provides a foundation for DCYJMA to continue addressing the drivers of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system through continued implementation of delegated authority and transition of funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.
- **Breaking Cycles 2023-2025** – co-design the Breaking Cycles 2023-2025 action plan with an increased focus on community-identified actions. A joint project team has been established between DCYJMA and Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) to lead the co-design of the next phase of Our Way.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services** – continues to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to enhance their capacity to care for and nurture their children, contributing to positive home environments that support the development of children.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family led decision making** – DCYJMA continues to implement and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family led decision making to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are involved in all decisions across the child protection system that affect them.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kinship program** – partner with QATSICPP to develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kinship program, inclusive of relevant services, that connect children in care with kin and culture, enable and support kin to care for children to prevent ongoing statutory intervention and enable children who require ongoing statutory intervention to be cared for by kin wherever possible and safe to do so.
- **Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy** – implement the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy in DCYJMA to address the impact of intergenerational trauma, grief and loss, violence and abuse.
- **Queensland's framework for action-Reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence** – focused on working in partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, deliver wrap-around services that stress trauma-informed approach and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.
- **Community Justice Groups (CJGs) Domestic and Family Violence Enhancement Program** – aims to build the capacity of CJGs in 18 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to respond effectively to domestic and family violence through local responses developed through a co-design process.
- **Justice Policy Partnership** – the purpose of the Justice Policy Partnership is to develop a joined-up approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice policy, with a focus on Outcomes 10 and 11 of the National Agreement, to reduce over-incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and young people.
- **Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce** – implementation of recommendations from Report 1 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce.
- **Youth Justice Taskforce Multi-agency panels** – establishment of 18 intensive multi-agency collaborative panels throughout Queensland. The multi-agency panels provide a holistic approach to address recidivist youth offending, noting a significant proportion of this cohort identify as First Nations children. The panels focus on constructive, realistic, and timely case planning to deliver a coordinated response, including consideration of the cultural needs of the young people in this cohort. The aim of the panels is to reduce recidivism and divert these young people from further engagement in the criminal justice system.

## Flourishing cultures and languages

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages represent a complex and sophisticated system of knowledge developed over thousands of years, where each language represents a unique context for understanding the world. Language is central to identity and connects people to culture, country and kin. Language is also critical to transmitting and preserving cultural knowledge and understanding. Also, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections to land and sea are fundamental as to who they are as a people and having authority to utilise land and sea resources will benefit First Nations people as well as all Queenslanders.

This section focuses on:

- Outcome 15: land and waters
- Outcome 17: flourishing languages

Recent data highlights that there has been an increase in Torres Strait Islander legal rights or interests in land and sea. There is currently no new data on languages with the 2016 Census highlighting that in Queensland around seven per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons spoke an Australian Indigenous language at home.

Below are key Queensland initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for land and sea interests and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. A full range of initiatives and more detail on the specific initiatives can be found in the Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Attachment.

- **Protected area management planning** – partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake protected area management planning. Planning instruments are being co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to ensure that ongoing commitments and cultural obligations form a strong part of managing protected areas.
- **Land and sea interests** – Queensland’s Land Rights legislation, the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991*, provides for the grant of inalienable (cannot be sold) freehold land to be held in trust for the benefit of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Since enactment of these Acts approximately 6.24 million hectares have been granted. Queensland remains committed to recognising native title where it continues to exist and where the requirements of the Commonwealth’s Native Title Act 1993 can be met. Queensland continues to lead other Australian jurisdictions in the settlement of native title claims.

- The **Department of Education** supports Aboriginal peoples’ and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ aspirations to teach and learn in, through and about their languages and cultures in Queensland schools. The First Nations Languages Program School Appropriation and Payments Application core funding profile is available to assist schools and Language Owners with the additional resourcing required to co-design, co-plan and co-deliver Aboriginal language programs and/or Torres Strait Islander language programs. In 2021, over 100 state schools collaborated with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to co-design language programs for 27 different First Nations’ languages.
- **Indigenous Languages Grants** - \$400,000 available in 2021 to projects that help promote, preserve and revive Aboriginal and Torres Strait languages.
- **Celebrating Reconciliation Grants**– \$150,000 available in 2022 to celebrate and build on respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and other Australians during National Reconciliation Week.

# CONCLUSION

Overall, while we have seen improvements in certain outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, more needs to be done. The only way sustained progress can be made is in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities. That is why over the next 12 months the Queensland Government will continue to work with QATSIC and First Nations communities to:

- implement the sector strengthening plans
- progress the place-based partnership with Doomadgee
- advancing initiatives through the Justice Policy Partnership to reduce incarceration rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- establish policy partnerships for early childhood care and development, social and emotional wellbeing, housing and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and
- develop, in partnership with a community-controlled organisation, an ongoing communications framework on Closing the Gap.



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