



QUEENSLAND

CLOSING THE GAP

SNAPSHOT REPORT CARD 2018

Department of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships



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 Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, 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.



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Queensland is home to the second largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the nation and is the only state that proudly has Australia's two First Nations peoples.

The Queensland Closing the Gap Report Card (the Report Card) is one important step in the Queensland Government's commitment to closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, based on a true partnership underpinned by the rich cultural traditions of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Report Card not only reports on the current Closing the Gap targets but incorporates the aspirations of Queensland's First Nations about what is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as we move into the future. As a State we are doing well in some areas, but across other priority areas we need to do much better.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have told us what is important to them, and working in true partnership we need to acknowledge and listen, if we are to achieve sustainable change. Only by having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders at the centre of the decision making will we deliver true and sustainable change.

We must remain committed and dedicated towards working in genuine partnership to guarantee improvements in outcomes for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities so that they can move from surviving to thriving. This is about providing practical on-the-ground initiatives that will make a real difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, further supporting self-determination, community leadership, and respect for Queensland's Indigenous cultures.

The Honourable Jackie Trad MP

Deputy Premier

Treasurer

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

01. PURPOSE OF THIS SNAPSHOT REPORT CARD

The Queensland Closing the Gap Report Card supports ongoing and regular reporting to track progress, identify and build on strengths and success stories, and inform areas of focus. The Report Card also provides a source of information to inform a partnership approach and co-design work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities.

Using the latest available data* this Snapshot Report Card measures the progress of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap targets and provides additional data on other priority areas raised in recent community consultations. Further, additional supplementary data is also provided on current Closing the Gap targets as these have a significant impact on the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Please refer to the Queensland Closing the Gap Report Card 2018 (full report) for more comprehensive information on our progress and future directions in Closing the Gap at www.datsip.qld.gov.au/ctg.

INTRODUCTION

Non-government agencies, in 2006, developed a National Indigenous Health Equality Campaign and launched a Close the Gap campaign in 2007. This rights-based awareness campaign gave rise to a National Close the Gap Day, inspiring cross-government action. COAG pledged to close key gaps in December 2007, and in March 2008 government and non-government delegates to a National Indigenous Health Equality Summit signed a statement of intent.

In July 2008, the Rudd Government established the National Indigenous Health Equality Council, and in November of that year COAG approved the National Indigenous Reform Agreement which set out the Closing the Gap targets. COAG recognised that overcoming Indigenous disadvantage would require a long-term, intergenerational commitment and a progressive realisation of improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

TARGETS

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Closing the Gap initiative. In Queensland, two of the seven COAG Closing the Gap targets outlined below are on track. Further information on progress to date can be found on the following pages under sections 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

OUR PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

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 ON TRACK
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 PROGRESS
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 ON TRACK
Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years by 2018	NOT ON TRACK

** 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, the latest available data for 2016–2017 have been reported. 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. The Queensland Government Statistician's Office has already commenced preparing the 2019 Closing the Gap report, which will report primarily on the 2017–2018 time period.*

02. PROGRESS SNAPSHOT: HEALTH

FACTS

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy gap for males and females was 7.8 years and 6.7 years respectively

Higher rates of hospitalisation for acute interventions lead to significant system costs and lower health outcomes

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have the highest life expectancy nationally

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH INCREASED



MALE

72.0 years
(2015–17)

Non-Indigenous: **79.8** (2015–17)



FEMALE

76.4 years
(2015–17)

Non-Indigenous: **83.2** (2015–17)

CHILD MORTALITY DECREASED (per 100,000)



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

151.4 (2012–16)
191.1 (2003–07)

Non-Indigenous: **94.2** (2012–16)
117.0 (2003–07)



Photo source: Vicki Yenn Photography

National target progress:

Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031 – not on track

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders continue to have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Queenslanders, recently released data show notable achievements in Queensland.

There has been a significant improvement in life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males of 3.3 years, from 68.7 years in 2010–2012 to 72.0 years in 2015–2017.

There has also been a two-year increase in life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, from 74.4 years in 2010–2012 to 76.4 years in 2015–2017.

National target progress:

Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade by 2018 – not on track

While mortality rates for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been slowly declining over time, there continues to be a gap in outcomes. In 2012–2016, the gap was 57.2 deaths per 100,000, down from 74.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2005–2009.

If improvements in non-Indigenous child mortality since 2005–2009 continue through 2016–2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childhood mortality rates will need to decline by at least a further 20 per cent to meet the target of halving the gap by 2018.

Current strategies:

Initiatives for positive health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders:

- [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.](#)

03. PROGRESS SNAPSHOT: EDUCATION

FACTS

Around 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students achieved at or above the reading NMS[†] in 2017

Around 8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students achieved at or above the numeracy NMS in 2017

Around 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 9 students achieved at or above the numeracy NMS in 2017

7 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds had at least a Year 12 or equivalent education in 2016*

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



PROGRESS

85.3% (2017)

95% of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025

READING



PROGRESS

86.1% (2017)

Year 3 reading gap reduced from **22.5%** (2008) to **10.3%** (2017)

NUMERACY



PROGRESS

84.3% (2017)

Year 3 numeracy gap reduced from **17.8%** (2008) to **12.4%** (2017)

Year 9 numeracy gap reduced from **20.6%** (2008) to **10.4%** (2017)

YEAR 12 ATTAINMENT OR EQUIVALENT



PROGRESS

71.2% (2016)

Year 12 attainment gap reduced from **26.2%** (2006) to **18.2%** (2016)

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (Years 1–10)

PROGRESS

86.5% (2017)

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS



85.4% (2017)

School attendance gap has had little change
Non-Indigenous: **93.0%** (2017)

[†] National Minimum Standards



National target progress:

95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 – on track

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

Queensland is **on track** to achieve this Closing the Gap target. In 2017, 85.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were accessing preschool in the year before they started school.

National target progress:

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

The aim to halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020 is on track.

In 2016,* 71.2 per cent of 20–24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders had attained Year 12 or equivalent.

In 2016,* the attainment gap was 18.2 points compared to 26.2 percentage points in 2006.

National target progress:

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

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have made strong progress towards halving the gap in reading and numeracy in Year 3 and reading in Year 5. Notably, the Year 9 numeracy gap has halved as well.

Year 3 reading

In 2017, 86.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were scoring at or above the National Minimum Standards (NMS) in reading compared to 66.2 per cent in 2008. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was 22.5 percentage points in 2008 and this has reduced to 10.3 percentage points in 2017.

Year 3 numeracy

In 2017, 84.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students scored at or above the NMS in numeracy, up from 75.5 per cent in 2008. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was 17.8 percentage points in 2008 and this has reduced to 12.4 percentage points in 2017.

Year 9 numeracy

Outcomes for Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in numeracy has improved markedly from 73.2 per cent in 2008 at or above the NMS to 86.5 per cent in 2017. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was 20.6 percentage points in 2008 and this has reduced to 10.4 percentage points.

National target progress:

Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years by 2018 – not on track

Overall attendance

In 2017, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rate was 85.4 per cent for all Year 1 to 10 students; 7.6 percentage points lower than the equivalent non-Indigenous rate (93.0 per cent).

Attendance rates have changed little over time and are not on track to close the gap by 2018. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary student attendance rate was almost 10 points lower than the non-Indigenous rate (82.3 per cent compared with 91.8 per cent).

Attendance rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were lowest in remote and very remote regions, particularly for secondary students, with the gap reaching up to 20.2 points.

Current strategies:

Initiatives highlighting the importance of education and giving all children a great start:

- Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland
- Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities
- Every Student Succeeding: State School Strategy 2018–2022.

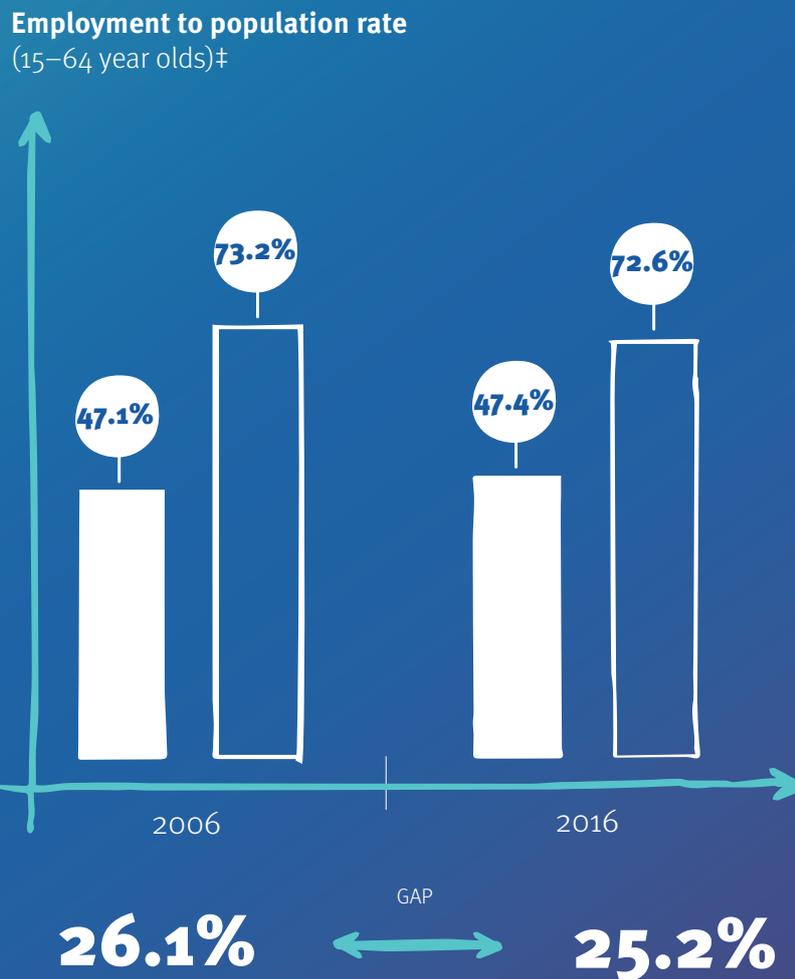
The Queensland Government is increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 12 attainment through:

- Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation
- Every student succeeding: State School Strategy 2018–2022
- Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities.

04. PROGRESS SNAPSHOT: EMPLOYMENT

FACTS

The **unemployment rate** for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples (15 to 64 years old) is 18.1%, three times higher than that of non-Indigenous Queenslanders



‡ Excludes persons who did not state their employment status and/or Indigenous status.



National target progress:

Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade by 2018 – not on track

Employment levels for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and Australia remain largely unchanged since 2006.

In 2016,* 47.4 per cent of 15–64 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were employed compared with 72.6 per cent of non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

While employment rates in 2016* were highest among people aged in their 40's for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, the gap was greatest among 25–34 year olds at 27–28 percentage points.

Current strategies:

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

- Skilling Queenslanders for Work
- Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016–2026
- Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–2020
- Moving Ahead Strategy
- Youth Employment Program.

05. CLOSING THE GAP REFRESH



Community consultation
CTG Refresh. Mount Isa,
5 June 2018.

At its February 2018 meeting, 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.

Special Gathering

As part of the refresh, Indigenous 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.

The Special Gathering agreed the next phase of the Closing the Gap agenda must be guided by the principles of empowerment and self-determination, to deliver a community led, partnership driven strategy for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to move from beyond surviving to thriving. This is built on the understanding that during the past decade the greatest progress has been in those areas where Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have led the design and implementation process from the onset.

Commonwealth Government Closing the Gap Refresh consultations

The Commonwealth Government held three consultations in Queensland – Cairns, Thursday Island and Brisbane – to seek input from Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the priorities important for refreshing the Closing the Gap. Another round of consultations were held in Brisbane and Cairns during August 2018.

Queensland Government Closing the Gap Refresh consultations

Building on outcomes from these meetings and the Special Gathering, the Queensland Government, led by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), held a further nine Closing the Gap Refresh community consultations in remote, regional and urban areas across Queensland (Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cherbourg, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Northern Peninsula Area, Ipswich and Cooktown) in June-July 2018.

The following priorities were proposed during Queensland's consultations:

- **Families, children and youth** (incorporating child protection, family violence, sport and recreation)
- **Housing** (incorporating social housing, home ownership, homelessness services)
- **Justice** (adults and young adults, children 10–17 years)
- **Health** (life expectancy, infant mortality, child health)
- **Economic development** (training, entrepreneurship, workforce development)
- **Education** (early childhood, literacy and numeracy, participation)
- **Land and waters** (national parks, marine reserves)
- **Language** (taught by schools / community organisations)
- **Culture** (truth telling, including in curriculum, cultural training for teachers, health workers)
- **Disability and social inclusion** (participation in the National Disability Insurance Scheme and social inclusion for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ)).

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

Queensland's Closing the Gap consultation participants strongly believed that the three overarching principles of healing, eliminating racism and systemic discrimination, and self-determination should inform every priority and target. The Queensland Government recognises the need to address these priorities and the promotion and support of self-determination at all levels and across all aspects of the Closing the Gap agenda moving forward.

The Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), released in 2018, reaffirms our commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, organisations and across government to refocus our efforts to closing the gap.

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

1. valuing culture
2. leadership and accountability
3. building cultural capability to improve economic participation

4. engagement with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses, and
5. culturally responsive systems and services.

As an overarching objective, the Queensland Government is committed to working with First Nations 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.

Current strategies:

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
- Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037
- Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Service Plan 2018–2021
- Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework
- Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2015–2020
- 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 2017–25
- 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.

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 comprising: 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.

Other significant 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 are therefore also being explored as part of the refresh for consideration on additional target areas to be agreed to nationally.

Children living in out-of-home care

There has been an increase in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0–17 years) living in out-of-home care in Queensland up from 38.9 per 1,000 in 2014 to 42.1 per 1,000 in 2018.

This Queensland Government is committed to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child safety system through *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037* (Our Way). Our Way aims to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

Family violence

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

Current strategies:

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](#)
- [Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026](#)
- [Second Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2017 to 2018–2019.](#)

Youth justice

The overall rate of supervised orders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (10–17 years) in 2016–2017 was 57.8 per 1,000. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth admitted to supervised orders were, on average, younger than other youth with 38.3 per cent aged under 15 years at the time of sentencing in 2016–2017 (compared with 22.9 per cent for other youth).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were more likely to receive a detention order than non-Indigenous other youth (10.3 per cent compared with 5.9 per cent) and less likely to receive a probation order (42.8 per cent compared with 53.7 per cent). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth living in outer regional areas (35.9 per 1,000) and remote areas (41.1 per 1,000) were more likely to be admitted to a supervised order than those living in other regions in 2016–2017.

A Youth Justice Strategy will provide a whole-of-government road map for preventing and responding to youth crime in Queensland. The Strategy will outline ways to achieve the Queensland Government's Our Future State priority to keep communities safe and reduce rates of youth reoffending by 5 per cent by 2020–2021.

Adult imprisonment

Queensland's imprisonment rate continues to increase for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Age standardised rates at 30 June 2017 compared with one year prior show that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders imprisonment increased by 9.5 per cent from 1,626 to 1,780 per 100,000.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners accounted for around 1 in 3 prisoners despite accounting for less than five per cent of Queensland's adult population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners were younger on average than their non-Indigenous peers, with a median age of 30.6 years compared with 34.5 years.

Current strategies:

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

- The From Jails to Jobs pilot initiative
- Community Justice Groups
- Queensland's Murri Courts.

Housing

In 2016, around 33.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households either owned their own homes or were paying a mortgage, up from 31.9 per cent in 2006. Notably over the same period, the proportion of non-Indigenous households owning or mortgaging their home decreased from 66.5 per cent to 63.5 per cent.

Across Queensland's remote 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.

A significant proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in very remote areas live in communities where the Queensland Government is undertaking cross-agency activities geared toward removing barriers to home ownership and enabling construction of new, secure, suitable and affordable housing.

Current strategies:

The Queensland Government is addressing overcrowding of 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.

Entrepreneurship (economic development)

The Queensland Government is committed to improving employment and business outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, benefiting business owners, families, communities, and the State's economy.

The whole-of-government *Moving Ahead Strategy 2016–2022* aims to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through training, skilling, work, business development and growth. Moving Ahead includes 27 actions across the following 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.

The development of the *Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy* as a Moving Ahead action, provides a whole-of-government framework to increase Queensland Government spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to three per cent of addressable procurement spend by 2022. Under this policy, programs such as Enterprise Queensland Indigenous Programs support businesses to develop and grow.

Progress towards this target, which is also reflected in the *Queensland Procurement Policy*, is underway, with Queensland Government engaging 427 Indigenous businesses during the 2017–18 financial year.

The Queensland Government seeks to leverage employment and supply chain outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Strategic Partnership Agreements with industry, government and community stakeholders. To date, 14 partnerships have been negotiated with diverse stakeholders across government, health, resources, tourism, construction, agriculture and employment and training sectors.

Current strategies:

The Queensland Government is committed to creating 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
- 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 partnering with Indigenous communities to care for land and sea country, provide jobs and training and engage future generations, delivering negotiated work plans that reflect Traditional Owner, local community, and Queensland Government priorities through the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. This work includes feral animal and pest plant control, soil conservation, cultural heritage recording and protection, biodiversity and species monitoring and managed burns (savanna burning). Community engagement activities can include Junior Ranger activities, school based and other traineeships, support for disaster recovery and contributions to local community events.

The Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers program is a highly successful initiative delivering conservation and employment outcomes to over 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in some of the most environmentally sensitive parts of our state.

Through the DATSIP's 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.

In 2017–2018, DATSIP worked with:

- the Olkola people to hand back 103,600 hectares of traditional land
- Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Incorporated to employ local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to deliver municipal services in Mossman Gorge, including rubbish collection, road, stormwater and sewer maintenance, and power supply
- Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation to support the development of a community-owned tourism business for the Gamaay section of the Cape York Dreaming track, including a comprehensive business plan leading to employment outcomes.

Current strategies:

The Queensland Government continues to partner with Indigenous 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.](#)

Social inclusion and disability

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

Queensland's commitment to implement the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 and complement the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Queensland will be delivered by breaking down barriers to the participation of people with disability in community life and improving access to the services that everyone needs.

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, as well as increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in delivering disability services to NDIS clients.

Current strategies:

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.](#)

Culture and language

The Queensland Government, through DATSIP, protects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage through administering the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*.

These Acts require land users to take all responsible and practicable measures to ensure their activity does not harm cultural heritage. DATSIP manages an award-winning cultural heritage database, which is accessible to land users through an online portal, to ascertain whether any cultural heritage sites and places have been previously recorded on the database, with 372 Cultural Heritage Management Plans registered at 30 June 2018. This efficient search process enables land users to meet their duty of care obligations established by the Cultural Heritage Acts.

As Queensland has more than one hundred unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, the Queensland Government commemorated International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on 9 August 2018 with a meeting to progress a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language policy.

The Queensland Government is continuing to work with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop a language policy as part of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

The policy will be co-designed and developed in partnership with the Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee, the State Library of Queensland, the Department of Education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Current strategies:

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

- State Library of Queensland – Indigenous Knowledge Centres
- Backing Indigenous Arts 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
- 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 Indigenous communities, and develop educational programs which support Indigenous students.

06. MOVING FORWARD

This report evidences that significant progress has been made in a number of Closing the Gap priority areas.

Despite 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 the wellbeing and life outcomes for Queensland's First Nations people by building upon the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and embracing their strong cultural knowledge to develop solutions.

Partnerships with a range of agencies, such as with the Queensland Government Statistician's Office in preparing this report are important contributors to 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.

While it has been recognised that trauma and healing, eliminating racism and systemic discrimination, and self-determination are difficult to measure, they impact on all priority areas, are intrinsic to true equality, and link strongly to the achievement of real self-determination. It is therefore critically important to work with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in true partnership to co-design policies and programs that produce real and improved outcomes.

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

The Queensland First Children and Families Board is an important example of such an approach that has been established to provide leadership, guidance and advice to inform the implementation of Our Way and Changing Tracks. The Queensland Government has worked with Family Matters to develop the shared strategy for Our Way and Changing Tracks to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland will grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

DATSIP's Policy Leaders Forum (PLF) has been a key body established for 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 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.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing body is an action highlighted in the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2020 action plan: Building a better housing future for all Queenslanders*. It will be established to work with Indigenous Community Housing Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils to improve Indigenous housing outcomes in urban, regional and remote communities across Queensland.

We must also continue to advocate for changes in the service delivery system reforms to support thriving remote and discrete communities – as recommended in the Queensland Productivity Commission's Service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities report.

In conclusion, a refreshed Closing the Gap agenda is part of the reframed relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the Queensland Government by monitoring outcomes and developing solid targets and measures of importance to Aboriginal peoples 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.

