



New South Wales  
Aboriginal Education  
Consultative Group Inc.



## NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO)

### NSW CAPO Statement RE: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Report to Parliament on Closing the Gap progress in NSW

24 November 2021

Today the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Don Harwin, provided the first report to Parliament on progress in NSW on Closing the Gap.

The current National Agreement on Closing the Gap was signed on 30 July 2020 by all Australian Governments and the Coalition of Peaks (peak Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) from across Australia). In NSW, the NSW Government and NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (**NSW CAPO**) are the parties to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The current National Agreement is an acknowledgement by governments that a new way of working with Aboriginal people is needed as business-as-usual approaches have not been effective in 'Closing the Gap'.

NSW CAPO understands that working in partnership with Aboriginal people is a new approach for Government and one that will take time to reach full maturity. NSW CAPO will continue to work within the partnership to develop meaningful approaches to shared decision making and the design and delivery of programs that are focused on needs and priorities identified by Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people understand what strategies will work best for Aboriginal people and are the best placed to design and deliver programs that build on the strength of our communities. True partnership is a cornerstone for supporting the transformational change within how government organisations operate, that is required to achieve outcomes for Aboriginal people, communities and organisations.

The establishment of governance arrangements to underpin the partnership in NSW have been important steps in its first year. NSW CAPO looks forward to the partnership continuing to evolve and grow over the life of the National Agreement and achieving significant and lasting progress against the priority reforms and socio-economic outcomes and targets.

NSW CAPO acknowledges that the 2021-22 NSW Implementation Plan sets the baseline of existing initiatives in NSW, focussed on the five priority reforms. While the National Agreement commits governments to realign existing work to Closing the Gap priorities, the continued reliance on business-as-usual approaches will not achieve the goals of the National Agreement. The partnership must remain forward focussed on transformational programs and initiatives required to achieve the commitments made in Closing the Gap.

NSW CAPO looks forward to partnering with the NSW Government to develop future NSW Implementation Plans that focus on new and ambitious initiatives that will achieve meaningful progress on the priority reforms and socio-economic outcomes and targets.

Monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes are essential elements in the success of our shared efforts to achieve outcomes in Closing the Gap. Quarterly progress meetings have been established with Ministers. These provide an opportunity for NSW CAPO to hear directly from Ministers about progress made within government departments and agencies and the opportunities to do more.

NSW CAPO acknowledges the release of the first NSW Indigenous Expenditure Report (IER). The IERs are a commitment under the National Agreement that shine a light on government spending on Indigenous specific programs and services. The IER notes that 24.2% of funding for Indigenous specific programs is spent with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, while the vast majority of spend is with government departments and agencies.

The IER provides an opportunity to evaluate programs and services and for the partnership to identify programs that should be stopped, enhanced or changed using evaluation data. The IER also allows the partnership to identify where funds for programs and services can be redirected from government departments to the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector.

NSW CAPO agrees with the Minister that more needs to be done and that NSW can and must do better. We look forward to significant and lasting progress being made in coming years under the commitments within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.