

s47F

Subject: Meeting | ONLINE | Indigenous Affairs Minister's Meeting
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Start: Tue 25/02/2025 4:00 PM
End: Tue 25/02/2025 5:00 PM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Accepted

Organizer: McCarthy Invites
Required Attendees: minister.edgington@nt.gov.au; Natalie.hutchins@minstaff.vic.gov.au; MinisterMaher@sa.gov.au; office@harris.minister.nsw.gov.au; minister.petrusma@dpac.tas.gov.au; maroochydhore@parliament.qld.gov.au; ORR; 'electronic'; 'christine.couzens@parliament.vic.gov.au'; 'christine.couzens@minstaff.vic.gov.au'

Optional Attendees: Senator McCarthy (APH); s47F; Indigenous Affairs Ministers Meeting; s47F
 s47F
 s47F Jody BROWN

*Thank you for confirming a time in your diaries for the Indigenous Affairs Ministers Meeting **16:00-17:00 AEDT**.*

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact:

- Chief of Staff, s47F
- Executive Officer, s47F

Type: Online

Attachments: Agenda, meeting papers

Apologies:

- Hon Natalie Hutchins MP (VIC)
- Hon Jacqui Petrusma MP (TAS)

Attendees:

- Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy (Federal)
- Hon David Harris MP (NSW)
- Hon Kyam Maher MLC (SA)
- Hon Steve Edgington (NT)
- Hon Fiona Simpson MP (QLD)
- Hon Suzanne Orr MLA (ACT)
- Christine Couzens MP – Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples Victoria

1. Ministerial Staff – TBC

- Federal
 - o s47F Chief of Staff

- s47F Deputy Chief of Staff
- s47F Senior Advisor
- NT
- SA
- QLD
- NSW
- ACT
- VIC
- s47F Senor Advisor to Minister Hutchins
- TAS
- WA

s47F Executive Officer & Program Manager
 Office of the Minister for Indigenous Australians
 Senator for the Northern Territory and Christmas and Cocos Keeling Islands

s47F
 Electorate Office: 38 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT 0801, PO Box 1596, Darwin NT 0801
 Ministerial Office: MG.60, PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, Australia

For all meeting requests & invitations please email s47F



🐦 @MalarndirriMcCarthySenate | @Malarndirri | @Malarndirri19

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Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

OFFICIAL

Indigenous Affairs Ministers' Meeting

Tuesday 25 February 2025

16:00-17:00 AEDT

Online – Microsoft Teams

Agenda

No.	Item	Presented by
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s222(1)

4.	Justice	Commonwealth
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s222(1)

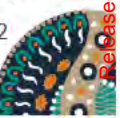
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OFFICIAL

s22(1)

OFFICIAL



Indigenous Affairs Ministers Meeting

AGENDA ITEM 4: Justice

Meeting: 25 February 2025

Recommendations

1. **Note** updates from state and territory ministers on actions being taken in their jurisdictions relating to the issues raised in Joint Council Co-Chairs' letters to Attorneys-General and to achieve Target 11.
2. **Agree** that all Indigenous Affairs Ministers will liaise with their respective Attorney-General to respond to Joint Council letters.

Key issues

- Progress towards Target 11, by 2031, to reduce the rate of First Nations young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent, is **not on track** to be met.
- The Joint Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council) has agreed that youth justice is an urgent priority and requires collective action across all governments and portfolios to deliver an effective and coordinated response to the issue.
- States and territories have primary responsibility for youth justice. However, the wide variation in overrepresentation between states and territories demonstrates the need for a shared commitment to Target 11.
- At Joint Council, Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs were asked to identify remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison and discussed opportunities for practical reform.
- Minister McCarthy and her Joint Council co-chair, Ms Pat Turner AM, wrote to Attorneys-General from all jurisdictions in January 2025, seeking details on actions their governments are currently taking to meet target 11 and further actions that could be considered to ensure First Nations young people stay out of the justice system.
- State and territory ministers for Indigenous Affairs are asked to provide a progress update on these items.
- The opportunities for practical reform discussed at Joint Council were:
 - **Legislative changes to bail laws, alternatives to custody and bail support programs.** Working across portfolios to review bail laws, increase the availability of bail accommodation and support for therapeutic programs, including ensuring access in custodial settings.

- **Targeted action to address the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system**, including investing in protective factors such as housing, early childhood, education and connections to cultures, languages, and Country for those at risk of contact with the youth justice system.
- Holistic and culturally responsive **early intervention and prevention approaches**, including support for community-controlled organisations to deliver place-based, therapeutic responses for at-risk First Nations children.
- **Enhanced training for workforces involved in the youth justice system**, including police. Training to cover child rights, mental health, disability, cultural competence/awareness, and trauma-informed practice.
- Access to **mental health and disability supports** including screening to support children with complex neurodevelopmental disabilities or other intellectual disabilities in the community rather than criminalising their behavior.
- The Commonwealth is investing in a range of prevention and diversion programs, including to address the drivers of crime such as through the remote NT housing program and the new remote jobs and economic development program.
- The Government has committed \$69 million over 4 years from 2022-23 for the National Justice Reinvestment Program to support up to 30 community led justice reinvestment initiatives across Australia. Of the 27 justice reinvestment initiatives funded to date, \$25.5 million has been invested in 12 projects that have a specific focus on youth. This funding is ongoing.
- Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) the Government has also allocated \$57.2 million in 2024-2025 for a range of prevention and diversion activities for First Nations children and young people.

Consultation

- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department
- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Risks and sensitivities

- On 6 March 2024, the Productivity Commission update to the Closing the Gap data dashboard changed Target 11 (youth incarceration) from being 'on track' to 'no change from baseline'. The rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is slightly above the trajectory required to meet the target by 2031.
- A Senate Inquiry has been established into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system (the Inquiry), including the over-imprisonment of First Nations Children and compliance by federal, state and territory prisons and detention centres with their international human rights obligations.

- The Australian Government is engaging with the Committee process and will consider its findings when the Inquiry's report is finalised in July 2025.
- All levels of government received criticism at the first public hearing of the Inquiry about a perceived lack of coordinated action and accountability for youth justice outcomes.

Background

- Young First Nations people's high rates of contact with the justice system is a national issue. This is identified as a critical area of focus in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- Recidivism rates are high – detention is ineffective at reducing reoffending rates and generally, early involvement in the criminal justice system is likely to cause further criminal behaviour. Detention is not an evidence-based solution to addressing youth crime and detention rates. Just over 3 in 4 First Nations young people (76 per cent) under supervision during 2022–23 had a supervision history containing sentenced or unsentenced detention (AIHW, 2024).
- The average cost per young person subject to detention-based supervision in Australia is \$3,320 per day (Productivity Commission, 2025).
- First Nations children are among the nation's most disadvantaged and vulnerable. At the November 2024 Joint Council meeting, members considered a paper on the lack of progress toward Target 11 and the critical need to increase jurisdictional accountability for Youth justice outcomes.
- Lead ministerial responsibility for Target 11 varies across jurisdictions and can include Attorneys-General and ministers responsible for young people, youth justice, corrections, and police.

Standing-Council of Attorneys-General

- The Closing the Gap justice targets, including Target 11, is a standing agenda item for the Standing-Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG).
- In September 2023, following tasking from SCAG, an interjurisdictional, officer-level working group delivered a report outlining a principles-based framework for jurisdictions to consider when raising the MACR.
- In February 2024, SCAG asked the Justice Policy Partnership (JPP) to consider and provide advice on bail and remand reform, recognising the significant impact that remand has on the rates of incarceration of First Nations adults and young people.
- In July 2024, the JPP provided a report to SCAG. SCAG agreed to establish a Working Group on Bail and Remand Reform to progress the recommendations contained in JPP's report. This group will report to SCAG in mid-2025.

Justice Policy Partnership

- The JPP is progressing priorities related to the four key pillars under its Strategic Framework, including:
 - an anti-racism strategy for the justice system
 - a national sector-strengthening plan
 - strengthening justice partnerships at all levels of government
 - establishing key cross-sector partnerships, with an early focus on disability and health.
- At its November 2024 meeting, the JPP agreed that the next area of focus for cross-sector partnerships would be youth justice. Scoping has commenced for this work.
- On 13 January 2025, the Government established the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young people as a separate and independent entity within the Social Services portfolio. Ms Lil Gordon has been appointed as Acting National Commissioner until the formal selection process for the ongoing role has been finalised.
- The role is dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights, interests and wellbeing of First Nations children and young people across a range of issues, including the over representation of First Nations children in out-of-home care and in the youth justice system.

Facts and Figures

- First Nations young people are **28 times as likely** as non-Indigenous young people to be in youth detention (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024 (AIHW)) and represent 6 per cent of those aged 10-17 years in Australia but make up 63 per cent of young people in youth detention (AIHW, 2024).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 10-13 are **47 times more likely** to be in detention than non-Indigenous children (Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing (AIHW), 2024).
- The Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) disproportionately impacts First Nations children and widens the Target 11 gap. The United Nations, Australian Human Rights Commission and stakeholders recommend the MACR be at least 14. In most jurisdictions, the MACR remains at 10 years old. The ACT has raised their MACR to 12 years old, and Victoria has passed legislation to raise to 12 years old.
- Rates of youth offenders have decreased since 2008-09, despite a slight upwards trend in the 12 months to June 2023 (ABS, 2024).
- Over 3 in 4 First Nations young people (76%) under supervision during 2022–23 had a supervision history containing sentenced or unsentenced detention (AIHW, 2024).



MS24-000641

The Hon Michael Daley DipLaw MP
Attorney General of New South Wales
PO Box 535
MAROUBRA NSW 2035

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the justice system are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in this country. Overwhelmingly the research shows that they are also more likely to experience a range of risk factors including, disability, complex trauma, mental health, drug/alcohol disorders, out of home care and economic disadvantage. It is time we broke the nexus between the justice system and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

At Joint Council, we tasked your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to identify, in your jurisdiction, remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison. The Commonwealth will also look at other options available, and how we can better connect policy partnerships to address cross sectoral issues, as well as continuing to encourage input and action from all jurisdictions on the agreed priorities of the Justice Policy Partnership.

We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.

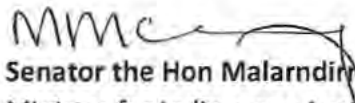
Opportunities for practical reform that were discussed at Joint Council include:

- *Access to mental health and disability supports.* Increasing screening to identify the required support accompanied by additional resourcing, would improve outcomes. There is a significant need for complex neurodevelopmental disabilities and other intellectual disabilities support rather seeking to criminalise their behaviour.
- *Addressing the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system.* Protective factors such as ensuring families have safe, appropriate housing; children have good health and thrive in their early years; young people are meaningfully engaged in education; and that connections to cultures, languages, lands and waters are strong, ensure at risk behaviour is reduced and communities are safer.
- *Early intervention and prevention approaches,* including first time offender support, intensive cultural support and support for community-controlled organisations to deliver therapeutic responses.
- *Enhanced capability for workforces involved in the youth justice system,* including police, to ensure awareness and competence on child rights, mental health, disability, culture and trauma. This also requires working flexibly to build trust and engaging with families and children in their own space.
- *Legislative changes and alternatives to custody and bail support programs.* Most children who are on remand in Australia will not go on to be given a custodial sentence. Reviewing bail laws, increasing availability of bail accommodation and therapeutic programs, including in custodial settings would improve outcomes. Reviewing policing approaches that disproportionately lead to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children coming into contact with justice systems is also key to making headway on Target 11. Such actions however require cross sector support to address issues such as housing, health and wellbeing, education and disability.

The Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) and the Justice Policy Partnership have undertaken two key projects that will support progress in this area on bail and remand reform and minimum age of criminal responsibility. For example, the SCAG minimum age of criminal responsibility working group, which included membership from the Justice Policy Partnership, undertook significant work to identify the support services needed to divert children from justice systems. Without adjusting the minimum age of criminal responsibility, work can still be done across governments in each jurisdiction to establish therapeutic pathways that support children and families outside of justice systems.

Officials have been asked to report back on current and planned actions at the first meeting of Partnership Working Group in 2025. We seek your urgent attention and response on actions your government is taking to meet Target 11 including what further actions you can pursue to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people stay out of the justice system and areas for collaboration.

Yours sincerely



Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22 / 1 / 2025



Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29 / 01 / 2025

The Hon Michael Daley MP
Attorney General

RECEIVED

7 MAY 2025



Ref: EAP25/1934

Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy & Ms Pat Turner
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Malarndirri + Pat
Dear Senator McCarthy and Ms Turner,

Response to Joint Council Discussion on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth in Detention

Thank you for your letter of 29 January 2025 regarding the discussions at Joint Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention and efforts to achieve Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The New South Wales Government recognises the urgent need to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention. We are working to reduce the number of young people in custody through targeted reforms, strengthened partnerships with Aboriginal communities, and investment in community-led initiatives.

Youth Justice NSW (YJNSW) plays a critical role in supporting young people to desist from offending and reconnect with their families and communities.

The YJNSW approach to meeting Target 11 is guided by the following focus areas from the NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap:

- **Prevention and Early Assistance:** Expanding therapeutic pathways, community-led assistance, and family support programs.
- **Diversion from Court:** Increasing diversionary actions to reduce arrests and improve court-based diversion mechanisms.
- **Diversion from Detention:** Enhancing non-custodial options and reducing bail refusals, breaches, and revocations through alternative court processes.
- **Reintegration Following Custodial and Community-Based Orders:** Strengthening throughcare support and increasing the use of community-based sentencing options.

In line with these priorities, YJNSW has implemented several key initiatives, including:

- **Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2024-2030**, aligning Youth Justice's priorities with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

- **Aboriginal Employment Plan (since April 2024)** to increase Aboriginal staff representation within the agency. This includes increasing the number of Aboriginal people in key decision-making roles.
- **Aboriginal Practice Mandate**, enshrining access to cultural services as a right for Aboriginal young people in custody. This includes increasing the number of Aboriginal Practice Officers.
- **Anti-Racism Plan**, fostering a culturally safe and responsive environment for young people, families, and staff. This includes holding people accountable for racist conduct, protecting people who report racism, and building anti-racism capability across the agency.
- **Increased investment in Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOS)**, across all of our early intervention and diversion funded services.
- **Increasing scrutiny on Youth Justice services**, inviting Aboriginal Legal Services and other ACCOs, oversight bodies, community members into the detention centres to monitor processes, connect with young people and lift accountability

Additionally, YJNSW is trialling innovative projects under the Target 11 program, including:

- **Short-Term Remand Programs** in South Sydney and the Riverina, testing different support models for statewide expansion.
- **Bail Advocacy Program**, led by the Aboriginal Legal Service, operating in three pilot locations across NSW.
- **Moree Bail Accommodation Program**, a co-designed initiative that will provide culturally appropriate accommodation and support for young people in contact with the courts.

The NSW Government is committed to working collaboratively across portfolios and with First Nations partners to ensure sustained progress in reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. We acknowledge that achieving Target 11 requires cross-sectoral support, including improvements in housing, health, education, and disability services.

Raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility is not currently on the NSW Government's agenda. The NSW Government is considering alternative and additional responses needed to maintain community safety, while supporting the diversion of children aged 14 years and under from the criminal justice system who are demonstrating problematic and harmful behaviours.

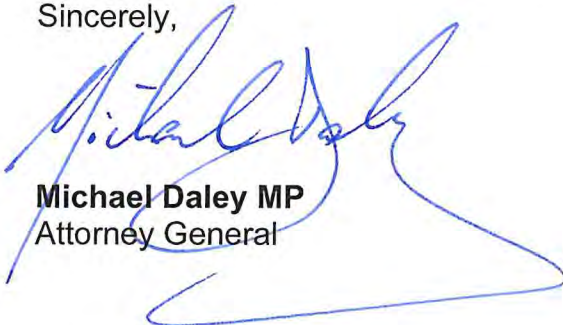
Youth crime, and bail settings as they relate to young people, are a key focus of the NSW Government. Parliament made changes to the bail framework with the passage of the *Bail and Crimes Amendment Act 2024*. Following a recent extension, those amendments are due to expire two and a half years after their introduction and their impact and operation will be the subject of a statutory review by the Attorney General. The statutory review will include data and information from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. The Government will continue to closely consider youth crime and bail settings, to ensure the legislative framework supports appropriate outcomes.

The NSW Government is seeking ways to improve early intervention and prevention initiatives to address the need of young people at risk of contact with the justice system and to keep the community safe. On 12 March 2024, the NSW Government announced a \$26.2 million package of reforms and initiatives to support community safety and wellbeing, including improving services to support young people at risk of crime, and their families. This includes an investment of \$13.4 million for targeted initiatives in Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. This also includes an investment of \$12.9 million to fund a range of state-wide regional crime prevention initiatives including expansion of Youth Action Meetings, expansion of the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program, and the continued commissioning of Justice Reinvestment grants and funding.

Further, the *Young Offenders Act 1997* (the Act) provides a framework for the diversion of young offenders from the criminal justice system, with the aim to reintegrate them into the community and reduce reoffending. The Act establishes a hierarchy of responses, including warnings, cautions and youth justice conferences. These can be used by police or the Children's Court as alternatives to court proceedings.

I trust this information has been of assistance to you. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Michael Daley MP
Attorney General

10 APR 2025



MS24-000641

The Hon Marie-Clare Boothby
Attorney General of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 32
PALMERSTON NT 0831

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the justice system are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in this country. Overwhelmingly the research shows that they are also more likely to experience a range of risk factors including, disability, complex trauma, mental health, drug/alcohol disorders, out of home care and economic disadvantage. It is time we broke the nexus between the justice system and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

At Joint Council, we tasked your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to identify, in your jurisdiction, remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison. The Commonwealth will also look at other options available, and how we can better connect policy partnerships to address cross sectoral issues, as well as continuing to encourage input and action from all jurisdictions on the agreed priorities of the Justice Policy Partnership.

We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.

Opportunities for practical reform that were discussed at Joint Council include:

- *Access to mental health and disability supports.* Increasing screening to identify the required support accompanied by additional resourcing, would improve outcomes. There is a significant need for complex neurodevelopmental disabilities and other intellectual disabilities support rather seeking to criminalise their behaviour.
- *Addressing the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system.* Protective factors such as ensuring families have safe, appropriate housing; children have good health and thrive in their early years; young people are meaningfully engaged in education; and that connections to cultures, languages, lands and waters are strong, ensure at risk behaviour is reduced and communities are safer.
- *Early intervention and prevention approaches,* including first time offender support, intensive cultural support and support for community-controlled organisations to deliver therapeutic responses.
- *Enhanced capability for workforces involved in the youth justice system,* including police, to ensure awareness and competence on child rights, mental health, disability, culture and trauma. This also requires working flexibly to build trust and engaging with families and children in their own space.
- *Legislative changes and alternatives to custody and bail support programs.* Most children who are on remand in Australia will not go on to be given a custodial sentence. Reviewing bail laws, increasing availability of bail accommodation and therapeutic programs, including in custodial settings would improve outcomes. Reviewing policing approaches that disproportionately lead to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children coming into contact with justice systems is also key to making headway on Target 11. Such actions however require cross sector support to address issues such as housing, health and wellbeing, education and disability.

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Yours sincerely


Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22/1 / 2025

s47F

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29/ 01 / 2025



MINISTER FOR CORRECTIONS

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
minister.maley@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8999 8671

Senator Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

Email: ministermccarthy@ia.pm.gov.au

Dear Minister

Thank you for your correspondence dated 22 January 2025 to the Attorney General for the Northern Territory, the Hon Marie-Claire Boothby MLA, regarding the Northern Territory Government's action to address Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the Minister for Corrections.

In 2022-23, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reported that on an average day in the Northern Territory, 93 per cent of young people in detention were on remand. The 2023-24 AIHW report states nearly all (99%) of young people in detention in the Northern Territory were unsentenced – that is, they were awaiting the outcome of their court matter or had been found guilty and were awaiting sentencing.

Young people receive primary health care from Danila Dilba Health Services at Holtze Youth Detention Centre and Central Australian Aboriginal Congress at Alice Springs Intake and Transfer Facility. The Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services provide comprehensive healthcare, including physical, mental and development assessments and interventions. They also provide follow-up to young people on their release from detention to the community as part of their outreach services.

In addition, the Department of Correction's Specialist Assessment and Treatment Services (SATS) team provide group program delivery, positive behaviour support plans, treatment plans, counselling and therapeutic intervention to young people in detention.

Following admission to a youth detention facility, a comprehensive assessment of a young person's needs has been conducted by a multidisciplinary team in accordance with the requirements of the Northern Territory Youth Detention Centres Model of Care. The assessment includes physical health, mental health and/or social and emotional wellbeing, education, training, and/or employment, criminogenic factors, disability (including cognitive disability), and other issues as required.

A Throughcare Plan is developed to ensure ongoing care is provided to the young people during and following their release from youth detention. Where therapeutic support is required, the SATS team can provide counselling for the young person while in a Youth Detention Centre and make appropriate referrals to external services as part of the young person's Throughcare Plan on release. North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency throughcare services provide ongoing support to young people after they leave detention in Darwin and Alice Springs.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support services regularly visit young people in youth detention to provide intervention and assessments. All Aboriginal young people in detention can access this support. The NDIS Justice Liaison Officer attends the youth justice centre once a fortnight to assist in NDIS access requests, planning meetings and any other concerns regarding young people accessing NDIS supports.

The Northern Territory Government continues to invest heavily in youth diversion programs to divert young people away from the youth justice system with place-based and community-led program providers. Current youth justice programs include:

- Community Youth Diversion
- Back on Track
- Restorative Youth Justice Conferencing
- Restorative Youth Justice Conferencing Victim Support program
- Register of Appropriate Support Persons
- Business Crime Victim Support Program
- Youth Camps.

The Northern Territory Government is redirecting its focus towards interventions that address the underlying causes of offending behaviour and redesigning the Community Youth Diversion (CYD) program to invest in culturally responsive services and models of intervention to reduce the number of children entering detention in the first place, and positively alter their life trajectories.

The new CYD program will support a range of community-led place-based initiatives across the Northern Territory and meet the specific needs of the local community by attempting to address some of the underlying issues in the region, such as youth boredom, community safety, social and emotional well-being and connectedness to community and culture.

The Department currently funds a number of organisations to deliver CYD programs to divert young people away from the youth justice system and support crime prevention. An evaluation occurred in June 2024, with consultation occurring with 17 current funded providers. The recommendations have been incorporated into the new CYD program.

The youth diversion programs address the Joint Council's recommendations for practical reforms around *early intervention and prevention approaches*, including first time offender support, intensive cultural support and support for community-controlled organisations to deliver responses.

The youth justice system does not operate in isolation and the Department of Corrections works collectively with government and non-government organisations to address the many factors that may put a young person at risk of offending. It is through addressing the contributing factors of crime with services, support, and early intervention, we can break the cycle of crime.

Thank you for your correspondence.

Yours sincerely



GERARD MALEY

- 4 APR 2025



MS24-000641

The Hon Shane Rattenbury MLA
Attorney General of the ACT
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

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Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

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Opportunities for practical reform that were discussed at Joint Council include:

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- *Addressing the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system.* Protective factors such as ensuring families have safe, appropriate housing; children have good health and thrive in their early years; young people are meaningfully engaged in education; and that connections to cultures, languages, lands and waters are strong, ensure at risk behaviour is reduced and communities are safer.
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The Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) and the Justice Policy Partnership have undertaken two key projects that will support progress in this area on bail and remand reform and minimum age of criminal responsibility. For example, the SCAG minimum age of criminal responsibility working group, which included membership from the Justice Policy Partnership, undertook significant work to identify the support services needed to divert children from justice systems. Without adjusting the minimum age of criminal responsibility, work can still be done across governments in each jurisdiction to establish therapeutic pathways that support children and families outside of justice systems.

Officials have been asked to report back on current and planned actions at the first meeting of Partnership Working Group in 2025. We seek your urgent attention and response on actions your government is taking to meet Target 11 including what further actions you can pursue to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people stay out of the justice system and areas for collaboration.

Yours sincerely



Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22 / 1 / 2025



Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29 / 01 / 2025



MS24-000641

The Hon John Quigley MLA
Attorney General of Western Australia
PO Box 2024
CLARKSON WA 6030

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the justice system are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in this country. Overwhelmingly the research shows that they are also more likely to experience a range of risk factors including, disability, complex trauma, mental health, drug/alcohol disorders, out of home care and economic disadvantage. It is time we broke the nexus between the justice system and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

At Joint Council, we tasked your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to identify, in your jurisdiction, remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison. The Commonwealth will also look at other options available, and how we can better connect policy partnerships to address cross sectoral issues, as well as continuing to encourage input and action from all jurisdictions on the agreed priorities of the Justice Policy Partnership.

We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.

Opportunities for practical reform that were discussed at Joint Council include:

- *Access to mental health and disability supports.* Increasing screening to identify the required support accompanied by additional resourcing, would improve outcomes. There is a significant need for complex neurodevelopmental disabilities and other intellectual disabilities support rather seeking to criminalise their behaviour.
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Yours sincerely


Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22/1 / 2025

s47F

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29/01 / 2025



**Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA
Attorney General; Minister for Commerce;
Tertiary and International Education; Multicultural Interests**

Our Ref: 80-21576

Co-Chairs
Joint Council on Closing the Gap
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Co-Chairs

YOUTH JUSTICE AND CLOSING THE GAP

I write in response to your letter of 29 January 2025 outlining Joint Council on Closing the Gap's (Joint Council's) concerns in relation to the youth justice system and the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in detention.

Western Australia (WA) remains strongly committed to both the priority reforms and the socio-economic targets outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement). It is working to continue to shape a downward trend in detention of Aboriginal young people through action and commitment to collaboration.

Target 11 of the National Agreement commits Australian governments to a 30 per cent reduction to the number of Aboriginal young people in detention by 2031. There has been considerable improvement in the rate of Aboriginal young people in detention in WA since the baseline year of 2018-19. In 2018-19, the rate of Aboriginal detention in WA was 50.4 per 10,000 young people. In 2023-24, the most recent reporting date, the rate has dropped to 28.1 per 10,000 young people.

It is acknowledged that WA started from a high baseline, noting that the national baseline detention rate in 2018-19 was 28.3 per 10,000 young people. Nevertheless, the year-over-year downwards trend in WA is encouraging.

The WA Government agrees that more needs to be done and has already announced significant new investment in initiatives to prevent young people entering and becoming entrenched in the criminal justice system.

- In January 2025 the WA Government announced \$7.8 million for the On Track to Thrive pilot program, a targeted multi-agency response that will focus on preventing 5- to 9-year-old children from entering the criminal justice system
- \$2.1 million for new and expanded bail support services for 10- to 17-year-old young people in Geraldton and Perth.

- The development of 'On Track to Thrive' was informed by the work undertaken by the SCAG minimum age of criminal responsibility working group.

Following the recent State election, the WA Government will also deliver several youth justice election commitments, including a safe night space for street present young people in Kununurra and increased funding for Police and Community Youth Centres (PCYC) youth diversion programs across WA, including in Broome, Bunbury, and Geraldton.

A detailed list of significant actions and commitments by the WA Government to reduce the rate of detention for Aboriginal young people is at **Attachment 1**.

The WA Government has also re-instated the Justice Planning and Reform Committee (JPRC) which brings together senior officials from the Departments of Justice, the Premier and Cabinet, Communities, Treasury, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and WA Police Force. The JPRC is a mechanism for developing a common understanding of strategic issues within, and impacting, the justice system, and identifying cross-agency responses to address these issues. The National Agreement is one of the primary lenses employed by JPRC in examining future and existing initiatives.

The WA Government has continued to engage in the Justice Policy Partnership (JPP), the Partnership Working Group (PWG), and Joint Council to help foster national cooperation between States, Territories, and the Commonwealth and to create genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities on issues like youth justice.

Youth justice has been discussed at the JPP, PWG and Joint Council and the WA Government will continue to participate in strategic work identified to address target 11.

I note that the JPP is currently undertaking a 3-year review of the JPP, including its contribution to Closing the Gap targets and priority reforms. The review presents an opportunity to better understand how the JPP can support work to address target 11, particularly how it can collaborate with other policy partnerships to address the underlying drivers of youth offending.

Finally, I would like to thank the Joint Council for highlighting this issue and for its strong advocacy for continued work to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in detention in Australia. Work from all parties to the National Agreement must continue in order to close the unacceptable gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in the criminal justice system.

Yours sincerely



Hon. Tony Buti MLA
ATTORNEY GENERAL

23 MAY 2025

OMIA/FOI/2425/002

OFFICIAL

ATTACHMENT 1**WA Government initiatives to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in detention in WA**Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy

- The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy (KJJS) is a Department of Justice led initiative designed to offer opportunities for Aboriginal young people in the region to engage in culturally safe and appropriate activities to deter them from behaviours that are likely to cause contact with the criminal justice system.
- The KJJS provides funding through grant agreements to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and other service providers to deliver culturally appropriate services to young people. These include structured activities outside of school hours, community night patrols, cultural camps, a youth engagement program, and a tailored TAFE program.
- In 2022/23, concepts for a safe space for young people in Broome were co-designed with Aboriginal community partners, various government agencies and the Shire of Broome leading to the establishment of the Broome Immediate Response Night Space.

Ngurra Buru – Broome Immediate Response Night Space

- Ngurra Buru - meaning Night Space in the traditional Yawuru language - is a proactive service helping to get young people off the streets to a safe space and connected with outreach services.
- The program offers a culturally secure service led by an Aboriginal organisation to young people in Broome aged 10-17.
- In addition to connecting young people with a responsible adult, Ngurra Buru provides a safe physical location, outreach services including a night patrol, meals and next-day family follow-up.
- Staff have reported multiple successes in supporting young people to re-engage with education.
- Ngurra Buru is being run by the Kullarri Regional Communities Indigenous Corporation and is part of a broader collaborative project under the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy.

On Track to Thrive

- The WA Government is investing \$7.8 million to trial the On Track to Thrive program in Perth and Geraldton. The program will provide a multi-agency response to young people, ages 5 to 9, who come into contact with the justice system.
- The program has been developed in response to evidence that over half of the most prolific young offenders in Western Australia first come to the attention of the police between the ages of 5 and 9 years old.
- The program will bring together the Departments of Justice, Communities, Education and Health to provide therapeutic services for young people in circumstances where their offending behaviour would not otherwise receive a response because they are under the minimum age of criminal responsibility and fall outside the scope of the criminal justice system.

Youth Engagement Program

- The Youth Engagement Program (YEP), operated by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, currently provides a culturally secure bail support program for young Aboriginal people in Perth and the Kimberley.
- The program employs Aboriginal Diversion Officers who help young people comply with the requirements of their court orders and bail to reduce further entrenchment in the youth justice system and provide support to enable young people to reengage in education and participate in therapeutic programs.
- The programs use bail as an opportunity to transition young people to services that can support them in the longer term.
- In January 2025 the WA Government announced the expansion of YEP to Geraldton ensuring that young Aboriginal people on bail are provided with support to prevent them from breaching bail conditions or committing other crimes.

In-Roads Therapeutic Court

- The In-Roads Therapeutic Court is a program being piloted in the Perth Children's Court providing an alternative to detention for young people who have pled guilty to criminal charges. The program aims to reduce the number of young people sentenced to detention and improve community safety by addressing the social, environmental and health factors at the core of the offending behaviour.
- The program is situated in a critical window of opportunity for young people and their families, where intervention has the capacity to directly improve their long-term outcomes.
- The program provides case managed health support, a direct link to the Department of Communities' Target 120 program to provide family support, and an additional Department of Education Principal Consultant at the Children's Court to ensure access to educational options and supports.
- Funding for In-Roads has been extended in the 2025-26 State Budget.



MS24-000641

The Hon Guy Barnett MP
Attorney General of Tasmania
guy.barnett@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

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We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.


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Yours sincerely


Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22/1 / 2025

s47F

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29/ 01 / 2025

Minister for Children and Youth
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Community Services
Minister for Finance

Level 5/4 Salamanca Place HOBART TAS 7000 Australia
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia
Ph: 03 6165 7670
Email: minister.jaensch@dpac.tas.gov.au



24 MAR 2025

Ms Pat Turner and Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Lead Convener Coalition of Peaks and Minister for Indigenous Australians
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Turner and Senator McCarthy

Thank you for your correspondence dated January 2025 to the Hon Guy Barnett MP Attorney General of Tasmania concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention. As the Minister for Children and Youth, I am responding on behalf of the Tasmanian Government.

The imperative that "more needs to be done" is highlighted in the Final Report of the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings*, inclusive of Aboriginal youth in the youth justice system. The Tasmanian Government has accepted all of the 191 recommendations and has established a broad reaching program of reforms drawing on the joint effort of government agencies and community organisations.

A cross-cutting pillar of the youth justice reforms is to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system. The program of works recommended by the Commission bearing on Target 11 of Closing the Gap is multi-faceted. The Government's three stage response will extend to 2034 and will be ongoing thereafter. The program of works draws extensively on the architecture and policy requirements of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Tasmanian Government is making information about cross-portfolio current and planned actions available through the [Keeping Children Safe website](#) – interjurisdictional colleagues can access key strategies, actions and updates through the website. The governance arrangements for the reforms and Closing the Gap will provide opportunities for more in-depth discussions with colleagues. As we work through the implementation program there will be many opportunities to share plans and review outcomes.

I wish to first draw your attention to our most recent key planning documents. In October 2024, the Tasmanian Government released the [Youth Justice Reform Taskforce Action Plan 2024-25](#). The *Plan* outlines the immediate actions and approach the Tasmanian Government will take to advance Commission of Inquiry recommendations that align with the government's [Youth Justice Blueprint 2024-2034](#). The *Plan* focusses on prevention and diversion activities and therapeutic practice to advance reform across the youth justice continuum.

A key element of the *Blueprint* policy settings and actions is a focus on partnerships with Aboriginal organisations to build capacity to deliver services to Aboriginal youth engaged with youth justice or at risk of entering the system.

Five actions form the foundation of the *Plan*, which will deliver an integrated and connected youth justice system to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Action 1: finalise and commence implementation of a youth justice model of care.

Action 2: implement a range of early intervention, prevention and diversion programs and options.

Action 3: implement a range of assisted bail and transition from detention options.

Action 4: develop a Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy.

Action 5: design and construct a new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility.

These interlinked actions are already underway, including engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and organisations in the design and implementation of activities for all five actions.

The *Plan* is a companion document to the [Keeping Kids Safe 2024-2026 in Detention Action Plan](#) that outlines actions the Tasmanian Government is progressing to keep children safe in detention settings.

I would also like to bring to your attention [Change for Children](#) and its accompanying two-year Action Plan. The report addresses the broader reforms of the Commission and other community sector reforms being progressed by the Tasmanian Government.

These documents and many more specific reports detail current and planned actions underway in the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Justice, Health, and Education, Children and Young People. The Tasmanian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2025-2028 currently in preparation will include new and continuing actions addressing Target 11 and the integrated reform work of Government and Aboriginal organisations.

As I write, the government is supporting the development of the Aboriginal-led *Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy*. The *Strategy* will focus on immediate, short- and long-term priorities to design and progress Aboriginal-led services for Aboriginal children and young people. The *Strategy* will complement without duplicating or repeating the partnership work on the broader youth justice reforms also already well underway.

The *Strategy* will build upon decades of conversations and actions with Aboriginal people, made contemporary through our current work co-designing the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission. What we have heard has three critical components: first, increasing the number and capacity of Aboriginal-led youth justice services; secondly, increasing the number and capacity of Aboriginal-led wellbeing, health and education therapeutic services available for youth and families within the youth justice system; and thirdly but perhaps most critically, increasing access to cultural support through improving Aboriginal family and local community access to Aboriginal children and young people in the system. Foundational issues include the recognition of the importance of being On Country and the sovereign actions of Aboriginal community organisations.

The Tasmanian Government recognises it is critical to go beyond words to acts, beyond plans to actions.

My colleague, the Hon Guy Barnett, Attorney General of Tasmania, and I will be pleased to provide additional details to colleagues working within the Closing the Gap architecture about the Tasmanian Government's actions to meet Target 11.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon Roger Jaensch MP
Minister for Children and Youth



MS24-000641

The Hon Sonya Kilkeny MP
Attorney General of Victoria
GPO Box 4356
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the justice system are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in this country. Overwhelmingly the research shows that they are also more likely to experience a range of risk factors including, disability, complex trauma, mental health, drug/alcohol disorders, out of home care and economic disadvantage. It is time we broke the nexus between the justice system and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

At Joint Council, we tasked your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to identify, in your jurisdiction, remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison. The Commonwealth will also look at other options available, and how we can better connect policy partnerships to address cross sectoral issues, as well as continuing to encourage input and action from all jurisdictions on the agreed priorities of the Justice Policy Partnership.

We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.


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Yours sincerely



Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22/1 / 2025



s47F

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29/ 01 / 2025



The Hon. Enver Erdogan MLC

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Youth Justice

Level 16, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 1300 315 189

Our ref: 25020819

Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians
PO Box 1596
Darwin NT 0801

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter on 4 February 2025 to the Attorney-General, the Hon. Sonya Kilkenney MP, seeking current actions the Victorian Government is taking to meet Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Attorney-General has referred your letter to me as Minister for Youth Justice.

I acknowledge the importance of reducing the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in detention, and of supporting Aboriginal children and young people so they remain outside the justice system and can live culturally rich lives.

I am pleased to advise that through substantial reforms, Victoria is currently on track to meet Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's *Youth Detention Population in Australia 2024* report shows that Victoria had the lowest national rate of Aboriginal young people aged 10 to 17 years in youth detention (5.8 per 10,000 as compared to the national rate of 27.3 per 10,000). While Aboriginal young people remain overrepresented in youth detention in Victoria (at approximately 11 times the rate of non-Aboriginal young people), this is significantly lower than the national level (27 times the non-Aboriginal rate).

Nevertheless, there is more to do. Any level of overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in Youth Justice is unacceptable.

The Victorian Government is committed to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in Youth Justice, as per the vision of [Wirkara Kulpa, Victoria's first Aboriginal youth justice strategy](#). Wirkara Kulpa was launched in 2022, written for and by Aboriginal children and young people, and developed through the leadership of the Aboriginal Justice Caucus under Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja – Aboriginal Justice Agreement 4.

It captures the aspirations and changes Aboriginal children, and young people want to see in a culturally safe and responsive youth justice system.

Under Wirkara Kulpa, several reforms are planned or underway to address this issue.

Government initiatives that respond to the practical reforms outlined by the Joint Council include:

- Supporting access to mental health and disability supports through initiatives such as a new Victorian Youth Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy.
- Improving early intervention through expansion of the Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program, continuing to deliver Community Based Aboriginal Youth Justice services and investing in new programs such as intervention family services and specialist family practitioners for children aged 10-14 years.
- Supporting legislative changes and alternatives to custody and bail support programs through the new *Youth Justice Act 2024* (Vic).

The Victorian Government is committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners throughout these efforts, and maintains strong justice partnership and shared decision-making forums via the Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

This includes, but is not limited to, the Aboriginal Youth Collaborative Working Group who guide the implementation of Wirkara Kulpa and other relevant initiatives impacting Aboriginal children and young people in their contact with youth justice.

As Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja – Aboriginal Justice Agreement 4 nears completion, the government looks forward to the development of Aboriginal Justice Agreement 5, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice partners.

For further information on this and other work related to Wirkara Kulpa, you may wish visit the Wirkara Kulpa webpage: <https://www.aboriginaljustice.vic.gov.au/wirkara-kulpa-aboriginal-youth-justice-strategy-2022-2032>

I trust this information has been of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely

The Hon. Enver Erdogan MLC
Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Youth Justice

3 / 3 /2025



MS24-000641

The Hon Kyam Maher MP
Attorney General of South Australia
GPO Box 464
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Kyam
Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the justice system are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in this country. Overwhelmingly the research shows that they are also more likely to experience a range of risk factors including, disability, complex trauma, mental health, drug/alcohol disorders, out of home care and economic disadvantage. It is time we broke the nexus between the justice system and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

At Joint Council, we tasked your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to identify, in your jurisdiction, remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison. The Commonwealth will also look at other options available, and how we can better connect policy partnerships to address cross sectoral issues, as well as continuing to encourage input and action from all jurisdictions on the agreed priorities of the Justice Policy Partnership.

We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.

Opportunities for practical reform that were discussed at Joint Council include:

- *Access to mental health and disability supports.* Increasing screening to identify the required support accompanied by additional resourcing, would improve outcomes. There is a significant need for complex neurodevelopmental disabilities and other intellectual disabilities support rather seeking to criminalise their behaviour.
- *Addressing the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system.* Protective factors such as ensuring families have safe, appropriate housing; children have good health and thrive in their early years; young people are meaningfully engaged in education; and that connections to cultures, languages, lands and waters are strong, ensure at risk behaviour is reduced and communities are safer.
- *Early intervention and prevention approaches,* including first time offender support, intensive cultural support and support for community-controlled organisations to deliver therapeutic responses.
- *Enhanced capability for workforces involved in the youth justice system,* including police, to ensure awareness and competence on child rights, mental health, disability, culture and trauma. This also requires working flexibly to build trust and engaging with families and children in their own space.
- *Legislative changes and alternatives to custody and bail support programs.* Most children who are on remand in Australia will not go on to be given a custodial sentence. Reviewing bail laws, increasing availability of bail accommodation and therapeutic programs, including in custodial settings would improve outcomes. Reviewing policing approaches that disproportionately lead to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children coming into contact with justice systems is also key to making headway on Target 11. Such actions however require cross sector support to address issues such as housing, health and wellbeing, education and disability.

The Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) and the Justice Policy Partnership have undertaken two key projects that will support progress in this area on bail and remand reform and minimum age of criminal responsibility. For example, the SCAG minimum age of criminal responsibility working group, which included membership from the Justice Policy Partnership, undertook significant work to identify the support services needed to divert children from justice systems. Without adjusting the minimum age of criminal responsibility, work can still be done across governments in each jurisdiction to establish therapeutic pathways that support children and families outside of justice systems.

Officials have been asked to report back on current and planned actions at the first meeting of Partnership Working Group in 2025. We seek your urgent attention and response on actions your government is taking to meet Target 11 including what further actions you can pursue to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people stay out of the justice system and areas for collaboration.

Yours sincerely


Senator the Hon. Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22/1 /2025

s47F

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29/ 01/2025



**Government
of South Australia**

Minister for
Aboriginal Affairs

Attorney-General

Minister for
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and Public Sector

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The Hon Kyam Maher MLC

25MAA0015

Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

Email: MinisterMcCarthy@ia.pm.gov.au

Ms Pat Turner AM
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

Email: s47F

Dear Minister McCarthy and Ms Turner

South Australia's actions to achieve Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

I write in response to your letter dated 29 January 2025, requesting information about the current and planned actions our government is taking to meet Closing the Gap Target 11: to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30% by 2031.

I share the views expressed in your letter that we must collectively do more to achieve this critical target. While South Australia is currently assessed as improving in relation to Target 11, this progress has recently plateaued and I am determined that we do not become complacent. I also see great value in using Joint Council and the Partnership Working Group as a forum to share information, collaborate and drive progress, noting also the important role for the Justice Policy Partnership that led national collaboration for Targets 10 and 11.

To meet Target 11, we must address the systemic inequities in the criminal justice system, provide adequate early intervention and diversion programs, ensure access to culturally appropriate education and mental health services, and promote community-driven solutions. Crucially, it requires government to work collaboratively with Aboriginal communities and organisations to achieve meaningful change.

I have enclosed a full response to your letter, including information relating to remand ratios within South Australia's youth justice system, the impacts of accommodation availability, and health responses for young people detained at the Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre.

The Office of the Hon Kyam Maher MLC acknowledges Aboriginal people's ongoing connection to the land and waters of South Australia. We recognise the importance of Country to Aboriginal identity, community and wellbeing. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and recognise the key role they play in caring for Country, community and culture.

I have also provided a copy of this correspondence to my colleague, the Hon Nat Cook MP, Minister for Human Services, who holds responsibility for youth justice in South Australia and whose department was engaged in the development of this response.

I look forward to continuing this important discussion.

Yours sincerely



Hon Kyam Maher MLC
Attorney-General

25 / 2 / 2025

Enc: South Australian update – Closing the Gap Target 11
cc: Hon Nat Cook MP, Minister for Human Services

Closing the Gap Target 11 – South Australian update

In South Australia, the detention rate for Aboriginal children is currently assessed as 'improving'. Since 2018-19, the rate at which Aboriginal young people are detained in South Australia has decreased by 34%. While this is positive, progress has plateaued recently.

Addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system remains a key focus for South Australia.

Youth justice remand ratios

At its meeting in November 2024, Joint Council discussed the issue of the high numbers of children in youth detention who have not been sentenced and are on remand, and tasked members with identifying remand ratios within their jurisdictions.

Data provided by the South Australian Department of Human Services confirms this issue. On 19 February 2025, Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre had a total population of 51. Of these:

- 30 were Aboriginal young people (59%), with 27 (90%) being unsentenced
- 20 were non-Aboriginal young people, 18 of whom (90%) were unsentenced
- One young person had an unknown status

Accommodation

Joint Council has asked jurisdictions to consider the connection between young people being held on remand with the availability of safe and appropriate accommodation, and what can be done to address this issue.

Under South Australia's *Bail Act 1985*, access to appropriate accommodation is not expressed as a requirement for a person to be granted bail. Nevertheless, previous inquiries have indicated that a lack of suitable accommodation is a significant barrier to Aboriginal people being released on bail.

Anecdotally, the availability of suitable accommodation has been cited as a challenge for Aboriginal children and young people in contact with the youth justice system. Appropriate and safe bail accommodation remains one reason for young people to be remanded in custody. For some children and young people, the family environment may be deemed unsafe or parents may not have stable accommodation. There also may not be available housing options for young people who need to transition into independent or supported living.

Accommodation options for young people leaving Kurlana Tapa or being diverted directly away from custody allows the Department of Human Services to undertake more comprehensive scoping and activate interagency collaboration for both the young person and their family, prior to the young person re-entering the family environment.

The Department of Human Services estimates that approximately 155 young Aboriginal people could be eligible for diversion from custody per year. This figure is based on existing referrals to the Child Diversion Program and the numbers of young people detained to Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre who serve a remand mandate.

The South Australian Child Diversion Program aims to divert Aboriginal children aged between 10 and 14 years who have been charged with an offence away from a custodial environment. Other eligibility criteria for the program includes Aboriginal children who:

- have not yet experienced incarceration,
- were refused bail on the grounds that they do not have a suitable bail address,
- have been arrested for a non-serious offence, and
- not considered to be a high risk to public safety.

The State Government invested a further \$1million in this program in the 2023-24 state budget.

There are two key components to the Child Diversion Program, including:

- Family scoping and Aboriginal family-led decision-making to identify suitable bail accommodation with kin or family. This is supplemented by on-going case management to address factors leading to offending and engage community-based services. Skilled Aboriginal staff are central to achieving positive outcomes for children in contact with the justice system.
- For children who do not have an identified suitable bail address, short term bail accommodation is provided at the Child Diversion Program house, Marni Wodli (Kurna language for good home).

The South Australian Department of Human Services has observed an increase in the use Marni Wodli from 2023 as a bail address for Aboriginal young people. This has assisted in diverting Aboriginal young people from Kurlana Tapa.

The program currently operates with one bail accommodation house in Adelaide. The Department of Human Services is exploring options to expand the program to include eligibility across all age groups and for additional premises to increase capacity.

Outcomes data from the Child Diversion Program indicates that more than 50% of participants have not been charged for further offences. For those participants that have re-offended, the offences involved minor charges. This indicates that participants have not experienced an escalation in relation to the seriousness of offending.

Access to quality health care

Joint Council discussed the provision of health care within youth justice facilities, including access to mental health and disability supports.

In South Australia, Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre has a visiting health service that has a community-based service model as its premise. There is no co-located prison health service for youth, which is a feature of the adult incarceration system. Like other jurisdictions, young people in detention in Kurlana Tapa do not have access to Medicare services.

Young people with a NDIS plan can have difficulty accessing their plans when in detention, requiring staff to advocate on their behalf. Once they are released, they often no longer have an advocate to access these plans on their behalf.

South Australian initiatives to achieve Target 11

The South Australian Government continues to invest in measures which will directly contribute to a decrease in incarceration rates in South Australia, with significant funding allocated to Aboriginal justice and other intersecting initiatives in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 State Budgets.

Specific examples which target Aboriginal children and young people include the Youth Aboriginal Community Court, which was established in 2023. This is a specialist court for Aboriginal children, which supports eligible participants to have their sentencing deferred for up to six months, during which time they participate in a culturally responsive and trauma informed program that seeks to address their trauma and criminogenic needs, implements protective factors, and diverts them from engaging in further offending. Anecdotally, the Youth Court is seeing a significant improvement in the recidivism rates of participants. A formal evaluation of YACCA will occur in the second half of 2025.

Early intervention programs are also important to address Target 11. In addition to the Child Diversion Program I have already discussed, the government funds the Service to Aboriginal Youth (STAY) Program. The STAY program is for Aboriginal young people between 10 and 19 who are at risk of disengaging from education, cultural learning, family and Community, or who have a connection to the child protection and youth justice systems. It provides safe places for Aboriginal youth to attend outside of school hours, with service providers offering such services as cooking classes, homework clubs, cultural camps, fishing programs, surfing trips and bicycle programs.

Other Youth Justice related programs and services include:

- Community Youth Justice, which provides supervision services to children and young people in custody or in the community, across metropolitan and country areas. Community Youth Justice intervenes and coordinates services to support children and young people to desist from offending and achieve positive outcomes for them, their family, and the Community, with case management tailored to the individual needs of each child or young person.

- The Aboriginal Youth Pathways to Employment pilot program, which operates in partnership with the RAW Group, a 100% Aboriginal owned and managed company. This pilot program will run over a 24-month period and provides culturally safe training and employment opportunities for young Aboriginal people in contact with the youth justice system. On 22 November 2024, the RAW program received a recognition award presented by the Hon Bill Shorten, MP at the South Australian Aboriginal Building and Civil Construction Academy Gala Event.
- Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth and Family Services (MAYFS), which provides direct supports to Aboriginal young people in Adelaide. MAYFS, managed by the Department of Human Services, is a dedicated Aboriginal youth and family service that uses strength-based approaches to divert young people away from the justice system and towards improved life outcomes.

Moving forward, South Australia's Implementation Plan 2024-26 for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap identifies the establishment of a Youth Justice Working Group with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON) to embed a partnership approach towards improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people. This includes the development and review of:

- Specific measures to reduce the significant overrepresentation of Aboriginal children aged 10-13 in the criminal justice system
- Best practice for non-custodial alternatives
- Community-based pathways that are preventative and divert Aboriginal children away from the criminal justice system
- Culturally appropriate holistic service models and responses
- Throughcare supports for Aboriginal young people leaving Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre.



MS24-000641

The Hon Deb Frecklington MP
Attorney General of Queensland
GPO Box 149
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Attorney General

On 15 November 2024, Joint Council met to discuss the critical matter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention.

Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) sets out to reduce the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention by at least 30 per cent. Recent data by the Productivity Commission indicates the rate of youth in detention has worsened since 2022 and is not on track to meet the target by 2031. More needs to be done collectively to address this issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the justice system are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in this country. Overwhelmingly the research shows that they are also more likely to experience a range of risk factors including, disability, complex trauma, mental health, drug/alcohol disorders, out of home care and economic disadvantage.

At Joint Council, we tasked your Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to identify, in your jurisdiction, remand ratios, particularly for young people, the availability of safe and appropriate housing for those on remand or exiting detention and access to quality health care services within prison. The Commonwealth will also look at other options available, and how we can better connect policy partnerships to address cross sectoral issues, as well as continuing to encourage input and action from all jurisdictions on the agreed priorities of the Justice Policy Partnership.

We acknowledge the effort of your jurisdiction to date, but greater effort across multiple portfolios is critical to delivering effective and coordinated responses to this issue.

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

We must also work with First Nations partners on the design and implementation of solutions to ensure actions are culturally appropriate and will meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities.

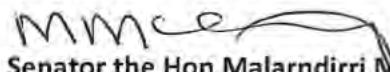
Opportunities for practical reform that were discussed at Joint Council include:

- *Access to mental health and disability supports.* Increasing screening to identify the required support accompanied by additional resourcing, would improve outcomes. There is a significant need for complex neurodevelopmental disabilities and other intellectual disabilities support rather seeking to criminalise their behaviour.
- *Addressing the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system.* Protective factors such as ensuring families have safe, appropriate housing; children have good health and thrive in their early years; young people are meaningfully engaged in education; and that connections to cultures, languages, lands and waters are strong, ensure at risk behaviour is reduced and communities are safer.
- *Early intervention and prevention approaches,* including first time offender support, intensive cultural support and support for community-controlled organisations to deliver therapeutic responses.
- *Enhanced capability for workforces involved in the youth justice system,* including police, to ensure awareness and competence on child rights, mental health, disability, culture and trauma. This also requires working flexibly to build trust and engaging with families and children in their own space.
- *Legislative changes and alternatives to custody and bail support programs.* Most children who are on remand in Australia will not go on to be given a custodial sentence. Reviewing bail laws, increasing availability of bail accommodation and therapeutic programs, including in custodial settings would improve outcomes. Reviewing policing approaches that disproportionately lead to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children coming into contact with justice systems is also key to making headway on Target 11. Such actions however require cross sector support to address issues such as housing, health and wellbeing, education and disability.

The Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) and the Justice Policy Partnership have undertaken two key projects that will support progress in this area on bail and remand reform and minimum age of criminal responsibility. For example, the SCAG minimum age of criminal responsibility working group, which included membership from the Justice Policy Partnership, undertook significant work to identify the support services needed to divert children from justice systems. Without adjusting the minimum age of criminal responsibility, work can still be done across governments in each jurisdiction to establish therapeutic pathways that support children and families outside of justice systems.

Officials have been asked to report back on current and planned actions at the first meeting of Partnership Working Group in 2025. We seek your urgent attention and response on actions your government is taking to meet Target 11 including what further actions you can pursue to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people stay out of the justice system and areas for collaboration.

Yours sincerely


Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians

22 / 1 / 2025

s47F

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor, Coalition of Peaks

29 / 01 / 2025



The Honourable Deb Frecklington MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
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Our ref: 619759/1, 7299339

Your ref: MS24-000641

7 March 2025

Senator the Honourable Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians
senator.mccarthy@aph.gov.au

Ms Pat Turner
Lead Convenor
Coalition of Peaks
secretariat@coalitionofpeaks.org.au

Dear Minister and Ms Turner

Thank you for your correspondence dated 29 January 2025, on behalf of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, regarding Queensland's current and planned actions to contribute progress towards Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement).

The Crisafulli Government is committed to working towards the objectives of the National Agreement, prioritising health, housing and education outcomes to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples opportunity and reduce disadvantage.

We are strengthening our commitment to the National Agreement by taking tangible steps to divert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people away from the criminal justice system, and have committed to address every stage of the youth crime cycle through our *Making Queensland Safer Plan*.

Enclosed is a comprehensive summary of Queensland's efforts and progress towards Target 11 under the National Agreement, on the understanding this information will inform an update to the Partnership Working Group meeting on 7 March 2025. I would, however, like to particularly highlight the following actions:

Department of Justice (DoJ)

- The First Nations Justice Office was established within the DoJ in response to Recommendation 1 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce's first report, *Hear her voice - Report one*, to develop and implement a co-designed whole-of-government and community strategy to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Queensland criminal justice system;

- Better Justice Together relies on a whole-of-government commitment to doing things differently and the Foundational Action Plan includes a number of initiatives consistent with the Government's commitment to gold standard early intervention and effective rehabilitation; and
- DoJ is also developing a whole-of-government strategy for women and girls who are accused or convicted of crime, aligning with Targets 10 and 11.

Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS)

- DYJVS is delivering a range of new programs aimed at early intervention, prevention and rehabilitation which are expected to reduce offending and therefore contribute positively to Target 11;
- These programs include *Staying on Track*, which will support youth offenders leaving detention and provide them with wraparound support to break the cycle of offending, funding for non-government organisations for gold standard early intervention, residential programs such as Regional Reset, two Youth Justice Schools for high-risk young offenders, and four Crime Prevention Schools to re-engage young people (grades 7-12) who have fallen out of mainstream schooling and are assessed as at-risk of falling into crime; and
- These new services will work at the individual, family and community level, and will be supported by existing departmental programs that support cultural connections and support families to address issues contributing to their children's offending.

Department of Education (DoE)

- To address Target 11 of the National Agreement, DoE is actively working to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools via its draft *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2025–2028* (the draft strategy), which has been co-designed with Aboriginal employees, Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Indigenous employees from across the state;
- Further, DoE is continuing the rollout of the highly successful First Nations Attendance and Engagement programs (\$43.72 million from 2023-24 to 2027-28) which support students (currently 5,500) who are disengaged, or at risk of disengaging, to attend school, engage in learning, complete Year 12 and transition into employment, training or further education; and
- DoE is also committed to increasing school attendance in youth detention settings as outlined in the Charter Letter for the Minister for Education and the Arts, and in connection to this, will continue to ensure that any education services provided in detention support connection to culture, languages, lands and waters through the use of tailored curriculum resources that embed First Nations voices, stories and knowledge within the context of the Australian Curriculum, which identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures as a cross-curriculum priority.

Queensland Police Service (QPS)

- The QPS is committed to enhancing engagement with First Nations communities, increasing representation within our agency, and strengthening community trust;
- To enhance First Nations representation and engagement, the QPS has established a dedicated First Nations Division, with a new office set up in Cairns to improve connections with communities in Far North Queensland.

- The First Nations Division is developing and implementing a Cultural Safety Framework in partnership with a First Nations contractor, to improve wellbeing, cultural safety and psychological safety for First Nations police officers and staff;
- The QPS is also delivering cultural capability training, co-designed with First Nations community members, across police training programs to ensure a trauma-informed and victim-centric approach;
- Building strong, trusted relationships with First Nations communities remains a priority. We have recruited seven Principal Cultural Advisors across the state to develop community awareness and preparedness induction packages, which will assist police officers in better engaging with remote and discrete communities. We are in the process of recruiting the eighth position this year;
- The QPS is also supporting initiatives that reduce the involvement of First Nations people in the justice system due to driving and vehicle-related offences. We are working with the Justice Policy Partnership to expand the Licensing Muster initiative, which helps community members obtain driver's licences and identity documents. This initiative is part of our broader commitment to reducing incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, in line with Closing the Gap Target 11; and
- The QPS remains committed to working in partnership with First Nations communities and stakeholders to ensure that these initiatives continue to make a meaningful impact.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Deb Frecklington', with a stylized flourish at the end.

DEB FRECKLINGTON MP

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Integrity

Enc. Queensland Government current and planned actions to meet Target 11

Queensland Government actions: Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Queensland Government	Response
Department of Justice (DoJ)	<p><u>Justice Reform Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JRO is leading the development of a strategy for women and girls as accused persons and offenders (the Strategy) (in response to Recommendation 93 of report two of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce). The Strategy has a focus on preventing and reducing the risk of reoffending for women and girls and aligns with Targets 10 and 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. JRO has been undertaking consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, Elders and key First Nations services providers and stakeholders.
	<p><u>First Nations Justice Office (FNJO)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FNJO was established within the Department of Justice in response to Recommendation 1 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce's first report <i>Hear her voice - Report one</i>, to develop and implement a co-designed whole-of-government and community strategy to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Queensland criminal justice system and, to meet Queensland's justice targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. <i>Better Justice Together: Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Strategy 2024-2031</i> (Better Justice Together) and the <i>Better Justice Together: Foundational Action Plan 2024-26</i> (Action Plan) were released in July 2024. The Foundational Action Plan focuses on working in partnership to build and secure strong foundations for Better Justice Together, and is the first step for change towards a culturally safe justice system that is free from discrimination and works for all Queenslanders. The Foundational Action Plan will be followed by two more action plans, over the life of Better Justice Together. The success of Better Justice Together relies on a whole-of-government commitment to doing things differently and embracing a justice system that is culturally informed by Elders and communities.
	<p><u>Disability Royal Commission – Recommendation 9.3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FNJO, DoJ is leading implementation of Queensland Government's response to Recommendation 9.3 of the <i>Royal Commission into the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability</i> (DRC). In response to Recommendation 9.3, the Queensland Government committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of all criminal justice agency strategies to identify recommendations to achieve a system that strongly supports cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including children and young peoples. DoJ is partnering with Queensland Corrective Services and the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support to deliver on the intent of the recommendation supported by the Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism, Department of Families, Seniors, Child Safety and Disability Services and Queensland Police Service. DoJ will also work with community and sector stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and views are at the forefront of this work, with a view to creating systemic change that will help address the overincarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including children and young people. It is anticipated the process will be completed by June 2026. DoJ is also co-leading a Disability-Justice Cross-Sector Partnership initiative with the First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN). The initiative, which is still in early scoping and planning stages, aims to improve responses and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability in the Queensland criminal justice system. The initiative supports broader efforts under the Justice Policy Partnership, which provides a national joined up approach to Closing the Gap, including outcomes to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system.

Queensland Government actions: Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The co-leads are continuing to engage with government and non-government disability and justice stakeholders to determine where best to focus partnership efforts. <p><u>Licensing Muster</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Licensing Muster is an early intervention and prevention initiative aimed at reducing unnecessary criminal justice system contact, particularly in relation to driving and vehicle related offending. The Muster focuses on a cross-agency, evidence-based and culturally safe approach to service delivery. Government agencies work collaboratively at a specific location to assist local communities with driver licencing applications, securing primary identification documentation, assistance with debt resolution and a general legal health check. The FNJO, DoJ has delivered muster events in Inala, Toowoomba, Cherbourg, and two events in Mount Isa; and, is leading an interagency working group consisting of government and non-government organisations to explore expansion of the muster initiative across Queensland.
Department of the Premier and Cabinet	<p>DPC provides a range of training programs designed to deepen employees' understanding and knowledge of First Nations history and heritage. By equipping DPC staff with a deeper understanding of First Nations cultures and histories, we aim to create a workforce that is more culturally sensitive, informed, and capable of contributing to policies and programs that positively impact the lives of First Nations individuals, including young people. Training programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the Strengths of Our Stories: A two-day course provided by the Department of Resources' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships team, strengthens our understanding of the historical context and impacts of legislative frameworks on Australia's First Peoples. This training fosters our ability to consider First Nations perspectives in policy-making effectively. This two day program is offered multiple times throughout the year. Starting the Journey (induction mandatory training): Completed by every new starter in our department and refreshed every three years, this online program consists of five modules conveying the nuances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and histories. Its comprehensive curriculum enables participants to understand the significant social, legal, and cultural factors that contribute to the contemporary experiences of First Nations communities. Aboriginal Cultural Landscape Walking Tour - The BlackCard: A unique, half-day walking tour taking place annually, enabling our employees to engage with the heritage of Aboriginal culture in Brisbane. This includes interactive experiences at historical sites and installations in Meanjin (Brisbane City), delivering a meaningful connection to the local Aboriginal history. Personalise my Acknowledgement of Country with Black Diamond Dreaming: This workshop is delivered on an ad hoc basis and equips employees with the knowledge to construct meaningful and personalised Acknowledgements of Country. Participants delve into its history and significance, navigating language and sensitivity to honour the Traditional Owners correctly. By crafting their acknowledgements, employees demonstrate genuine respect and connection to the land and communities upon which they stand.

Queensland Government actions: Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support	<p><u>Planned and future actions</u></p> <p>The Queensland Government is implementing new programs which will positively impact on progress towards the Target 11 and reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Standard Early Intervention programs to support new ideas and expand proven initiatives focused on reducing crime, boosting education, training and employment across Queensland, with stable funding on offer to programs with proven success. (<i>Early intervention</i>) • Regional Reset Programs, which will deliver nine early intervention residential programs with wraparound supports to reset habits and behaviours that are driving at risk young people toward crime. (<i>Early intervention</i>) • The Staying on Track Program, which will provide 12 months of intensive support to help young people transition back into the community after detention and stop offending and returning to detention. (<i>Remand</i>) • Two Youth Justice Schools to work exclusively with high-risk youth offenders to minimise their risk of reoffending while serving their orders. The schools will deliver highly specialised behavioural reform with individual dedicated case management, one-on-one mentoring, family support and parental coaching, to provide wraparound support that leads to long-term change. (<i>Education</i>) • Four Crime Prevention Schools to re-engage young people (grades 7-12) who have fallen out of mainstream schooling and are assessed as at-risk of falling into crime. (<i>Education</i>)
	<p><u>Current actions</u> (the above initiatives and programs are supported by these existing DYVJS programs and initiatives)</p> <p><i>Remand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Support in Watchhouse provides personalised cultural support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10-17 who are being held in watchhouses to provide support including remaining connected to, or are supported to reconnect with, family, community and culture.
	<p><i>Rehabilitation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency Collaborative Panels, which are aimed specifically at reducing and preventing re-offending by young people who are already in the youth justice system. The panels address systemic challenges and barriers to stop young people offending. The initiative aims to reduce over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system.
	<p><i>Disability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Disability Practice Team has been established within DYVJS to implement the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission to introduce screening, assessment and treatment for young people with neurodevelopmental disability within the youth justice system ("Screener"). It is expected that the Screener will reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in custody by identifying neurodevelopmental disability earlier, enabling support to be given before a young person is entrenched in the youth justice system.
	<p><i>Housing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Practice Team is working with partner agencies as part of a wider Disability Housing Support Hub initiative. The aim of the Disability Housing Support Hub model is to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to secure, suitable and stable housing. This hub-based model will roll-out initially in the Brisbane region with the aim to be statewide in the future. Culturally Appropriate service responses are being embedded in the service design phase and the procurement process.

Queensland Government actions: Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

	<p><i>Connection to culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive On Country, provides high intensity supervision for young offenders using cultural immersion to reengage young offenders in education, welfare, health and family support. • As at 11 February 2025, the department funded 31 service outlets that are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community-controlled or owned and led. This represents 36 per cent of investment in Outsourced Service Delivery. • Cultural Mentoring (a component of the Community Youth Response initiative in Townsville, to address youth offending through the courts) provides culturally appropriate support through mentoring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people via a trusted gender specific adult who can promote and influence a non-offending, prosocial lifestyle. • the Family-Led Decision-Making, a program funded by DYJVS and delivered by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-led community-based organisations to support families to address issues contributing to their children's offending. • Cultural Family Partnership, a culturally specific, place-based program that provides intensive case work to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10-17 and their families to identify practical supports to comply with conditions (including those under the Conditional Bail Program or subject to Electronic Monitoring) and help keep them out of custody.
	<p><i>Workforce capability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DYVJS is in the process of developing three frameworks: the Girls and Young Women Framework; Domestic and Family Violence Framework; and Neurodevelopmental Disability Framework ("Frameworks"). The Frameworks will inform and underpin the DYJVS work with young people in the youth justice system. Cultural responsiveness underpins each framework, and it is expected that working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in a culturally responsive way, will reduce offending and reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in custody. • Active efforts to increase the number of First Nations staff across the organisation are underway to facilitate more effective engagement with First Nations engagement and young people and therefore reducing their contact with the youth justice system and possible detention. • DYJVS has a dedicated cultural capability team who works with teams across the department to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives and knowledge in the services the department delivers, and helps to develop cultural capability amongst staff, thereby increasing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
	<p><i>Diversion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Action Group (EAG), bringing together Youth Justice, Queensland Police Service and key government representatives to provide early intervention and intensive coordination of tailored services to support young people who are at risk of falling into a cycle of crime. These services, located in Townsville, Cairns and Mt Isa, provide a family-focussed early intervention case management response and an opportunity for young people to turn their lives around.

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Department of Housing and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) supports a multi-agency response for the prevention, early intervention, and support for young people, particularly those engaged with Youth Justice and Child Safety. • DHPW is working to increase the availability of safe accommodation and housing for families and young people, including increased social housing supply and increased temporary supported (crisis) accommodation. This includes 10 new or replacement DFV Shelters across the State. • Young people can seek housing assistance from DHPW, including support to access temporary supported accommodation, delivered by Specialist Homelessness Services. • DHPW offers a range of housing and support options including social housing, assistance with private rentals, and homelessness outreach services either directly through the department's Housing Service Centres or through funded providers. • DHPW is supporting cross-agency collaborations aimed at addressing youth homelessness. This includes the Youth Housing Essentials program, targeted to support young people exiting care or youth detention and expansion of Youth Foyers. • The <i>Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Roadmap to 2031</i> (Our Place Roadmap) is an eight-year, strategic framework to accelerate and close the housing gap in Queensland. • The <i>Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027</i> (Our Place Action Plan) is backed by \$61.3 million investment and commits to 27 actions to deliver whole-of-sector responses for First Nations peoples living in Queensland across the housing and homelessness systems. • The Our Place Action Plan complements the Queensland Government's 20-year Securing Our Housing Foundations Plan, that spans actions including to boost home ownership and unlock the homes needed for our growing state. This includes commitments to Indigenous home ownership and to deliver 1,200 social homes in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local government authorities and communities. • The Our Place Action Plan includes a specific action to deliver a housing program to support First Nations peoples and families who are at risk of homelessness (preventative) or chronically homeless in a regional location over four years. • DHPW supports delivery of housing outcomes in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Local Government areas based on community identified priorities and community led decision making. Local Housing Plans for each community identify and propose responses to local housing challenges, opportunities, and priorities, with housing foundational to outcomes for an array of health, well-being, and socio-economic indicators. • DHPW delivers an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship Program and a Workforce Pathways Program to support improving culturally appropriate and informed training, education, and employment opportunities and pathways for First Nations peoples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Traineeship Program provided 64 First Nations Queenslanders aged 16-25 years with traineeships, work experience, and a nationally accredited certificate through placements with the Queensland Government and other organisations. The placements have been in urban, regional, remote, and discrete communities and have led to employment for some trainees - the Workforce Pathways Program will provide pathways for First Nations Queenslanders to complete training and employment that leads into successful career pathways. The initiative is being delivered through a phased approach with a trial of up to 40 participants being engaged in upskilling, pre-employment, employment re-engagement opportunities, providing skills and knowledge to conduct repairs and maintenance of housing structures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Certificate II Indigenous Housing Repairs and Maintenance has now been declared as a qualification, with the course specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The skills set in this qualification will enable First Nations people to carry out housing repairs and maintenance and develop skills within their community. The program will deliver a pipeline of skilled employees ready to strengthen the workforce in their communities.
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Queensland Government actions: Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

	<p><u>Employment and Education Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2010, Employment and Education Housing (EEH) has developed to remove housing as a barrier to education, employment and/or training opportunities off-community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from remote and very remote communities. • EEH includes facilities such as AFL Cape York House (48), NRL Cowboys Boys House (50) and NRL Cowboys House Girls (50). The EEH program also provides 24 units of accommodation in Townsville (13), Gladstone (7), Rockhampton (2) and Toowoomba (2), ranging from two-bedroom duplexes to four-bedroom houses. EEH participants are engaged in a range of employment, education and training opportunities across these locations. • The Queensland Government continues to provide support for the dwellings and boarding house facilities established for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and families under the EEH program, in partnership with the Australian Government. • By EEH removing housing as a barrier to education and/or economic participation and the provision of appropriate support, EEH participants are achieving success in completing their secondary education, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and University courses. Consequential benefits have included numerous children electing to participate in extra-curricular activities, including representative sporting opportunities, not otherwise accessible in their remote communities. • There is no direct measure to demonstrate the success of EEH contributing to a reduction in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention, nonetheless EEH does provide protective factors to address the socio-economic drivers of contact with the justice system by providing a meaningful engagement of young people in a culturally appropriate environment. • Many of our EEH participants have undertaken academic and community leadership roles in their respective schools and community organisations, with others achieving success in tertiary education and various employment industries. • The department's aim to remove housing as a barrier continues to enable the economic engagement for people from remote communities.
Department of Education (DoE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoE department) is actively working to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools via its draft <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2025–2028</i> (the draft strategy), which has been co-designed with Aboriginal employees, Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Indigenous employees from across the state. • Increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools tends to improve the quality of educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. • The draft strategy outlines the steps the department is taking to move towards the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target of 4% by 2026. • The draft strategy has three priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ culturally safe workplaces: embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and practices to create a culturally safe workplace; ○ culturally responsive employment pathways: attracting, nurturing and retaining Aboriginal employees and Torres Strait Islander employees; and ○ strong leadership and shared decision making: leaders within the department making informed decisions in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices via co-design and co-evaluation. • The DoE co-designed <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework</i>, supports the draft strategy, and provides resources and tools to build employee cultural capability and guide employees when designing projects and programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities. • The draft strategy is an action of the department's Reframing the Relationship plan, a legislative requirement under the Public Sector Act 2022.

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	<p><u><i>First Nations Attendance and Engagement Programs</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Attendance and Engagement programs (A&E programs) support students who are disengaged, or at risk of disengaging, to attend school, engage in learning, complete Year 12 and transition into employment, training or further education. • The department currently funds five providers to deliver A&E programs across 58 state schools for approximately 5,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students per year. • A&E programs generally provide in-school mentoring, case management, out of school activities and post-schooling pathways support. • Students accessing A&E programs have shown improved attendance, reduced school disciplinary absences and improved academic achievement. <p><u><i>Current and planned actions – A&E Programs/Investment</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2023–24 to 2027–28, the department has allocated \$43.722 million (excluding GST) to continue delivery of A&E programs in 58 state schools. • In December 2023, as part of a \$288 million Youth Engagement Education Reform package, an additional \$29.108 million (excluding GST) over five financial years to 2027–28 and \$10 million ongoing (excluding GST) was provided to expand A&E programs. • A&E programs support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increased attendance; ○ reduced school disciplinary absences; ○ academic achievement and Year 12 completion; and ○ students to transition to employment, training or higher education. • Low school attendance rates contribute significantly to academic achievement and in turn Year 10 to 12 retention. • Semester 1, 2024 data indicates the following comparisons between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students accessing an A&E program (program students) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students not accessing an A&E program (non-program students): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 78.2% attendance rate of program students compared to 77.5% attendance of non-program students; ○ 4.9% of program students received two or more school disciplinary absences compared to 3.3% of non-program students; ○ 64.1% of program students achieved 'C' or better in English compared to 67.8% of non-program students; and ○ 62.5% students achieved 'C' or better in Mathematics compared to 70.5% of non-program students.
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	<p><u>Future actions - Expansion of A&E Programs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expansion of the A&E programs aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ expand programs into new communities and is focused on students with the most need; ◦ support Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students of all genders to access programs; and ◦ enable co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, stakeholders and schools. • As demand exceeds funding provided, the department is prioritising schools based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ student needs – based on Attendance, SDAs, A to E Performance and Retention; ◦ access to programs that support attendance and engagement in schooling; and ◦ school and community agreement. • The department consults schools, communities and students regarding the supports they need to improve school attendance, behaviour and academic achievement. • The department engages providers through open tender processes as required by the Queensland Procurement Policy. • In 2027, an independent evaluator will be engaged to complete an evaluation of A&E programs, in accordance with the Project Plan for A&E program expansion. The evaluation will determine the effectiveness of measures taken to strengthen oversight of program performance through the implementation of program logics and regular reporting.
	<p><u>Education in detention</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department provides education services in youth detention. Students are provided with differentiated educational programs, delivered in small classes of no more than four students over 48 weeks of the year. • Programs are typically aligned to the Australian Curriculum, focusing on general capabilities, particularly literacy and numeracy, or to nationally accredited vocational education and training courses. • All young people in detention are expected to participate in education or training; however, attendance can be impacted by security concerns and operational issues, including capacity of education facilities. • Ministerial charter letters for the Honourable Laura Gerber MP, Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services and the Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP, Minister for Education and the Arts, include a key priority to work together to increase access to increase school attendance in youth detention.
	<p><u>Education engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department provides a range of services to support engagement for young people currently attending school who are at risk of disengagement, and to enable re-engagement of those who have become disengaged. These education services are a protective factor in preventing escalation to criminal behaviours and repeat offending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ FlexiSpaces in selected high-needs primary and secondary schools provide intensive, differentiated, in-school education programs to support students showing early signs of disengagement to remain at school and engaged in learning. ◦ Link and Launch supports Year 12 completers who are not in study or work to navigate options and make a successful transition to a post-school destination.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth Support Coordinators (YSCs) provide individual support, case management, group programs and referral services to students in Years 10 to 12 who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from education. ○ Student, Child and Family Connect supports individual children, young people and their families who need clear and united responses across agencies to support them to remain engaged in education. ○ Queensland Pathways State College provides a tailored state education program for vulnerable students in Years 10 to 12, helping them complete their education and provide pathways to further education, training and employment. ○ Intensive Education Case Management for students excluded from school or on long suspensions to improve their educational engagement and outcomes. ○ Regional Youth Engagement Services partner with a range of government agencies, schools, registered training organisations, community-based organisations and other stakeholders to assist young persons who have disengaged to reconnect with education, training or employment. ○ The Education Justice Initiative provides information, referral and advocacy for vulnerable young people attending court and field-based support to re-engage with education and training. ○ Specialised alternative learning programs are being established in partnership with non-government organisations to support young people involved in the youth justice system to transition to sustainable education, training or employment pathways. <p><u>Connection to cultures, languages, lands and waters – state school settings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Queensland schools, across all educational settings, provide the Prep to Year 10 Australian Curriculum. It sets the expectations for what all young Australians should be taught, regardless of their background or where they live. • The Australian Curriculum is 3-dimensional; it includes learning areas, general capabilities, and cross-curriculum priorities. Together, the 3 dimensions set out essential knowledge, understanding and skills all young Australians need so they will be able to learn, contribute and shape their world now and into the future • One priority is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) developed the curriculum acknowledges the gap in learning outcomes between First Nations Australian students and their non-First Nations peers and recognises the need for the Australian Curriculum to provide every possible opportunity to 'close the gap'. • Through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority, the Australian Curriculum provides opportunities for all students to deepen their knowledge of Australia by learning about the world's oldest continuous living cultures. And learn that contemporary First Nations Australian communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. • When engaging in education the curriculum supports students develop deeper understandings about Country/Place, Culture and People. <p><u>Connection to cultures, languages, lands and waters – custodial settings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education services in detention support connection to culture, languages, lands and waters through the use of tailored curriculum resources that embed First Nations voices, stories and knowledge within the context of the Australian Curriculum, which identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures as a cross-curriculum priority. • Education and Training Centres (ETCs) in youth detention centres recognise that First Nations students may speak traditional languages or non-standard varieties of English, such as Aboriginal English, and support the department's commitment to value language varieties used for everyday talk, explicitly teach Standard Australian English (SAE), and support access to heritage by maintaining, learning or researching traditional language and cultures. • ETC student wellbeing teams facilitate a range of tailored programs that support cultural connection and positive cultural identity for First Nations students. Students are encouraged to participate in cultural events and activities co-delivered with or delivered by the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support.
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	<p><u>Diversion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education engagement services contribute to diversion from the criminal justice system by supporting young people to maintain or re-establish connection with education, training and employment. The Education Justice Initiatives supports court-based diversion options by providing courts with information about existing engagement, and support options.
Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety	<p><u>Child Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence based actions through the Our Way strategy and supporting action plan, Breaking Cycles 2023-25, to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system (Target 12) works to ensure service systems are designed, developed and implemented with communities to ensure children and families receive the support they need to mitigate the risk of child safety and youth justice intervention. Initiatives ensure that families are involved in decision-making, partnering with community to identify local solutions and greater collective action/integrated service responses, shared responsibility and accountability, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding access to prevention and early intervention services that are culturally responsive and support families to prevent children and young people coming into care. Transition of investment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led placed based responses to meet local priorities and needs. The statewide implementation of Delegated Authority, where one or more of the functions or powers of the Chief Executive (Child Safety) under the Child Protection Act 1999 can be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entity, for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child when certain requirements are met. Embedding the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles to the standard of active efforts across the child protection system. Implementing extended care options and support for care leavers through to the age of 21. Co-design and implementation of a new kinship care model, Family Caring for Family. Reducing barriers to kinship care by developing a fit-for-purpose kinship care screening framework that is culturally safe and includes appropriate safeguards. Ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of the implementation of programs to assess impact and outcomes. <p><u>Disability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program and the Queensland Peaks and Representative Bodies Program, the DFSDSCS funds the following organisations to provide disability supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mob 4 Mob is funded as the disability peak body for all Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability including both adults and children with disability living in urban, regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland. Mob 4 Mob provides information, advice and referral for people with disability, and their families and carers. Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council is funded as a peak body to help strengthen the capacity and capability of disability service providers. Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion delivers specialist disability advocacy for all Queensland children with disability (0-18 years), their families and carers.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia is funded to deliver 'Yarn2Action' - a specialist disability advocacy service for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability, including both adults and children with disability living in urban, regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland. • The Queensland Government continues to play a key role in connecting eligible Queenslanders with disability to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) through the work of the Assessment and Referral Team (ART). • ART provides intensive supports to Queenslanders aged 7-64 living in remote and very remote locations across Queensland to access the NDIS. • ART also supports people to access the NDIS who meet at least one of the following criteria, regardless of where they live in Queensland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ people with disability living in remote and very remote locations; ○ people with disability interacting with complex service systems, regardless of where they live; ○ at risk of service failure, such as people living in supported accommodation or facing homelessness; ○ engaged in early intervention justice (early intervention groups); young people who are classified as serious repeat offenders and people engaged in adult offender management programs; and ○ arriving in Queensland through Humanitarian Settlement Programs.
Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism (DWATSIPM)	<p><i>Housing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATSIPM's Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office (RILIPO) contributes to the construction and refurbishment of social housing in Queensland's remote, discrete First Nations communities by ensuring that there is land available to meet housing targets and service delivery needs for these communities. <p><i>Health</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATSIPM is engaged in a partnership (MOU) with the Queensland Mental Health Commission to deliver on shared priorities under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Queensland's implementation of priority reforms, specifically Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector and Target 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing. • Through this partnership, the department is delivering \$2 million in funding for the 2024-25 First Nations Social and Emotional Wellbeing grants, which provide funding to First Nations providers to deliver a suite of trauma-informed programs to strengthen social, cultural, educational, and vocational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people experiencing vulnerability. • Current recipients of these grants are located in six communities: Barcaldine, Cherbourg, Kowanyama, Logan, Pormpuraaw and Wujal Wujal. • Officers within DWATSIPM also support the Queensland Government's Early Action Groups (EAG) that operate in Townsville, Mount Isa and Cairns. • EAGs provide early intervention and wrap-around support to young people and their families, aged 8-16 years old, who are at high risk of escalating their behaviour and becoming entrenched in the youth justice system. • EAGs bring a whole-of-government strategic and operational response to help address complex cultural, social, and economic factors that negatively impact at-risk young people. Each of the Early Action Groups aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pro-actively case manage 20 at-risk young people and their families to divert them away from the Youth Justice system, with a particular priority upon First Nations young people. ○ Develop place-based solutions to improve better outcomes for young people who are at high risk of entering the Youth Justice system.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convey positive community safety messages to the community.
	<p><i>Health, education and custodial settings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWATSIPM's Central South West (CSW) region employs a permanent AO7 position to support Justice Reinvestment in Cherbourg. The Justice Reinvestment initiative in Cherbourg is led by a local community-controlled organisation focussing on collaboration, designing and implementing early intervention, pre and post youth detention support and local employment Positive Relationships Cultural Connectors (PRCCs) work alongside the DFV High Risk Teams (HRT), providing cultural advice and referrals in collaboration with local communities particularly local leadership, to co-lead the development of place-based, strength-based, culturally appropriate integrated service systems by assisting to facilitate strategic communications. The department has progressively established 10 PRCCs throughout the regions. The PRCCs roles are predominantly focused on the broader integrated service response outside of the HRT context. PRCCs can also support cultural capability development within the HRT.
	<p><i>Workforce capability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WATSIPM supports the whole-of-government Cultural Capability Framework and supports delivery of Living Under the Act cultural competency training to partner organisations that support First Nations specific youth programs.
	<p><i>Diversion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers within DWATSIPM support the Queensland Government's youth justice reforms through their participation on Multiagency Collaborative Panels (MAC-P). MACPs are established to bring relevant information, planning, oversight, and coordination of services for young people who are identified as obtaining a score of six on the Youth Justice Serious Repeat Offender Index (SROI). DWATSIPM staff contribute to this initiative by providing strategies and recommendations to decrease the events of reoffending for young people through the provision of community-based knowledge and experience. This includes local and acquired knowledge of service arrangements, networks and local contacts, community leadership and support agency availability. Representatives also provide advice and referrals around local cultural and community protocols and support processes to grow cultural capability across the sector – including with relevant NGO's. Cherbourg is delivering a Justice Reinvestment initiative to improve justice outcomes, reduce contact with the criminal justice system and incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and young people, in line with Closing the Gap Targets 10 and 11.
Queensland Police Service	<p><i>First Nations Engagement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QPS established a dedicated First Nations Division in November 2023 to ensure the QPS is keeping First Nations peoples and communities safe and feeling safe. Key focus areas of the division include recruitment and retention of frontline police officers, providing cultural expertise through strategy, policy and research, engaging with community and building trusted relationships with stakeholders, including frontline police.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further regional engagement, the QPS has established a new office in Cairns for the First Nations Division, ensuring stronger connections with communities in Far North Queensland.
	<p><i>Cultural Capability Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QPS has developed cultural capability training which is mandatory face-to-face training for all QPS employees with a focus on trauma-informed and victim-centric awareness. This training commenced in November 2024 and is due to be completed in 2026. This training is incorporated into Police Liaison Officer, Recruit, and In-Service training to improve engagement with First Nations communities. The QPS is committed to transformational change through the development and implementation of a Cultural Safety Framework, which aims to improve wellbeing, cultural safety and psychological safety for First Nations police officers and staff.
	<p><i>Community Trust</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing trusted relationships with First Nations communities is a key priority. The QPS has recruited seven Cultural Advisors across the state, and is recruiting an eighth position, to lead the development of community awareness and preparedness induction packages. These packages will be co-designed in consultation with local community stakeholders to inform police posted to remote and discrete communities, aiding in the enhancement of cultural capability and police-community relationships.
	<p><i>Licensing Muster Initiative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QPS is collaborating with other Government agencies through an interagency working group to expand and continue the Licensing Muster initiative. Licensing Musters are interagency events run over multiple days in First Nations communities, to support community members to obtain drivers licenses and identity documents. The ultimate goal of Licensing Musters is to reduce the incarceration of First Nations people due to driving and vehicle-related offences. The QPS will continue working with the Justice Policy Partnership to expand the initiative in direct support of Closing the Gap Target 11.
	<p><i>Youth Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QPS delivers a range of youth programs targeted to engagement and early intervention. While not all of these programs are specifically targeted to First Nations young people, a large proportion of attendees are from First Nations backgrounds. The following provides a broad overview of programs delivered/supported by the QPS which contribute to Closing the Gap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u><i>Project Booyah</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered bi-annually across 11 sites within Queensland, Project Booyah is a QPS Youth mentoring program which provides 16-week community inclusive program incorporating adventure-based learning, policing strategies and family inclusive principles to help young people aged 14-17 years make better life choices. The program is supported by a 12-18 month post-program case management Framing the Future program which supports graduates seek employment, education and with other tailored interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across all Booyah cohorts, approx. 38% of all participants identify as First Nations. 92% of Booyah participants have a criminal history prior to commencing program.

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- 53% of participants do not reoffend during the 18 months of mentoring.

Police Citizens and Youth Club(s)

- The QPS partners with the PCYC in the delivery of a range of youth programs across 53 sites in Queensland. This includes six clubs located in discrete communities (Aurukun, Mornington Island, Napranum, Palm Island, Yarrabah and Woorabinda). Programs delivered focus on prevention, intervention, diversion and leadership development and include:
 - Club and Culture (including “breakfast club”) – a broad program offering structured sport, recreation, cultural, educational and developmental activities before and after school, on Saturdays and school holidays;
 - Braking the Cycle – volunteer mentor driving program supporting learner drivers without access to a supervisor or vehicle to complete their logbook hours;
 - Cadet club – life-skills program supported through PCYC programming from age 5-12 years;
 - Skilling Queenslanders for Work – training and support for unemployed and underemployed young people to assist them gain stable employment;
 - After Dark Programs – free sport-based program for young people aged 12-18 years who are experiencing some level of disengagement. Designed to improve physical health, wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence; and
 - Drop-in programs – targeted program that offers a broad range of diversionary activities generally after school or evenings. Activities include dance, sport, recreation, craft, music, culture etc.

Youth Development Partnership Fund

- In partnership with Department of Tourism and Sport (now Dept Sport, Racing and Olympics and Paralympic Games), QPS administer the Queensland Government \$4million youth development partnership fund. This initiative supports and uplifts ‘at risk’ youth through the power of sport and adventure-based learning. Assessment of funding applications considers cultural context, particularly those which target and benefit First Nations young people:
 - Additional early intervention/diversion programs being delivered across our Indigenous clubs;
 - Youth Leadership Team – A team of young leaders who assist with the organising, planning and implementation of sports, activities and events at the PCYC;
 - Team Up – An eight week program delivered at the school through a term to instil life skills, leadership skills, confidence, teamwork, acceptance and resilience;
 - Youth Support Service – Provides holistic, individualised, practical and case management support for at risk young people that are 8 to 21 years of age. The service offers planned support towards achieving goals within the young person’s priority areas for change. Support is delivered in the context of the family wherever possible and focuses on reconnecting young people with natural and community supports;
 - Changing Gears – This program helps learner drivers in get supervised driving hours they need to get their driver’s licence, utilising community volunteers as mentors;
 - School Holiday Program – Consists of activities such as sports, fishing, cultural activities, movies and discos. The activities are designed to engage the youth to assist in addressing anti-social behaviour and provide a safe place for the youth to attend; and
 - Deadly and Active – Encompasses youth engagement strategies through sports and outdoor recreation, including large sporting events drawing other indigenous communities to Yarrabah for tournaments and carnivals of netball, basketball and boxing. Prevention and intervention strategies also incorporate back to country cultural education programs with community elders.

Queensland Government actions: Target 11 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Queensland Corrective Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) manages adult correctional centres across the state and is one of many government departments aiming to achieve Target 10 under the National Agreement. QCS acknowledges the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system in Queensland and the change that is required to address this. Whilst the work of QCS does not directly address Target 11 of the National Agreement which focuses on the rate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in detention, it is acknowledged the overrepresentation of First Nations individuals in the adult system does have an impact on the children of those incarcerated and there is overlap in families linked with Youth Justice and QCS. In 2022, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce recommended that the Queensland Government partner with Griffith University's Criminology Institute to deliver the Transforming Corrections to Transform Lives (TCTL) Centre. This innovative partnership between Griffith University, the Paul Ramsay Foundation and QCS aims to disrupt the intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and create new conditions for families to thrive through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Transform Lives Program (TLP) designed to work directly with incarcerated mothers, children and their families a Transforming Corrections Hub designed to improve system capacity to better meet the needs of mothers and children through integrated service delivery; and ongoing research and evaluation to build an evidence base to inform future service system investment. The TCTL Centre was established to support mothers and their children to have safe, dignified, and fulfilling lives, breaking down intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and incarceration, by transforming systems and generating new knowledge for evidence-based programs. The TCTL model was developed through significant engagement and co-creation with mothers in prison, including First Nations women. The TLP is a trial intervention program being delivered to mothers in South East Queensland and Townsville Women's Correctional Centres, and mothers' children in the community. Specifically, the TLP commenced at Southern Queensland Correctional Centre in January 2024 and commenced at Townsville Women's Correctional Centre in June 2024. The TLP focuses on building strong connections for women and their children by offering tailored support while in prison and up to 3 years post-release. The TLP principles and guidelines have been developed to ensure the program upholds First Nations women's voices from the design phase. The TLP team also draws on broader cultural advice and knowledge to support the cultural wellbeing and healing journeys of families in the program. Program Managers and Coaches are responsible for delivering the TLP and draw on Elders for cultural advice and development. The TLP intake process ensures that the proportion of First Nations mothers in the program closely match the proportion of First Nations women in the respective correctional environments. Of the 28 women in the TLP, 16 (57%) identify as First Nations women. Whilst the work of the TCTL Centre and delivery of the TLP was not designed to directly address Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap the desired outcomes for the program include the following three priority areas that align: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Priority 1</u>: Better outcomes for the women who participate in the TLP, including reduced reoffending, improved health, housing, and employment outcomes, and greater family wellbeing. <u>Priority 2</u>: Better outcomes for the children who participate in the TLP, including improved school attendance and engagement, stronger support networks, and reduced risks for youth offending. <u>Priority 3</u>: Better system outcomes, including costs savings through reduced days in custody and children in out of home care, and more effective, efficient and joined up service delivery.
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s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 21 February 2025 6:05 PM
To: minister.edgington@nt.gov.au; Natalie.hutchins@minstaff.vic.gov.au; MinisterMaher@sa.gov.au; office@harris.minister.nsw.gov.au; minister.petrusma@dpac.tas.gov.au; maroochydhore@parliament.qld.gov.au; ORR; 'electronic'; 'christine.couzens@parliament.vic.gov.au'; 'christine.couzens@minstaff.vic.gov.au'
Cc: Senator McCarthy (APH); s47F Indigenous Affairs Ministers Meeting; s47F
Subject: Meeting | ONLINE | Indigenous Affairs Minister's Meeting - Papers & Agenda [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IAMM Agenda - 25 Feb 2025.docx; s22(1)
IAMM - 25 February 2025 - Agenda item 4 - Justice.docx; s22(1)

OFFICIAL

Hi All,

Please see attached the meeting papers and agenda for next

Kind Regards,

s47F | Executive Officer & Program Manager
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