

Media release

14 February 2019

Real partnership with First Peoples a prerequisite for closing the gap

Reconciliation Australia has expressed its disappointment at the lack of progress under the Closing the Gap Strategy, following the Prime Minister's report that found five of seven targets set by the Council of Australian Governments are not on track.

Karen Mundine, CEO of Reconciliation Australia, said her organisation was disappointed by the failure but remained hopeful that a bipartisan commitment to a greater First Nations' voice in the planned refresh of the CTG would lead to more effective programs being delivered in partnership with communities.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and peak bodies have been demanding a greater say in the policy priorities, and design and implementation of programs around the CTG since its inception over a decade ago," said Ms Mundine. "Today's commitment by the Prime Minister, supported by the Opposition Leader, is welcome albeit overdue, and builds on the COAG commitment in December.

"It is simple common sense that people, who live each day with the problems CTG is trying to address, will have the greatest knowledge and understanding of the causes and solutions to these problems," she said.

Ms Mundine said a recent national survey on community attitudes around reconciliation strongly supported an increased say by First Nations people in matters that affect them.

"Our [2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer](#) found that an overwhelming 95% of Australians agree that **it is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in matters that affect them** and around 60% **believe more must be done by government departments to close the gap in areas of disadvantage**.

"These figures prove that Australian Governments have a mandate from the Australian people to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a greater voice to ensure effective policies and programs are developed and real change occurs."

Ms Mundine said that in light of the 2018 Barometer results she was pleased that Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten, committed any future Labor Government to a referendum on a First Nation's Voice to Parliament as proposed in the Uluru Statement.

Media contact: Al Harris media@reconciliation.org.au
0409658177

Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is the peak body promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. For more information visit www.reconciliation.org.au