



Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

Minister for Families and Social Services

Minister for Women's Safety

The Hon Ken Wyatt MP

Minister for Indigenous Australians

MEDIA RELEASE

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Social Services funding boost towards Closing the Gap

The Morrison Government is investing \$98 million in a series of innovative new programs to prevent vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families falling through the cracks as part of the first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

Minister for Families and Social Services Anne Ruston said the new Social Services programs would help address disproportionately high rates of family and domestic violence, and the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care.

Minister for Indigenous Australians Ken Wyatt said the programs would embed cultural competency and trauma responsiveness by ensuring Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations play a central role in service provision.

Department of Social Services measures address the Closing the Gap Targets on out-of-home care (12) and family violence (13) and include:

Strengthening service models

\$49 million will be provided over five years to support states and territories to review and redesign frontline service models including family violence, mental and physical health, substance abuse and disability. The purpose is to improve how practitioners work together to plan support for families at risk of interaction with child protection authorities and focus on early intervention.

Redesigned service models are anticipated to bring together a range of professionals such as social workers, mental health and medical professionals, drug and alcohol specialists, domestic violence support, legal services, financial counsellors, child protection workers, disability support providers, teachers and child-care providers and police to support families in an integrated way.

Outcomes and Evidence Fund

\$38.6 million over three years will be provided to support proposals identified by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that address targets 12 and 13. Through a co-design process with the Government, tangible service delivery and outcome targets will be agreed and payments made on the basis of demonstrated achievement against the targets.

Based on social impact investing funding models, the Fund will ensure accountability to the ultimate goal of changing the lives of the most vulnerable in our community in a real way. In order to achieve this and support a shift towards more outcomes focused funding, this investment includes resourcing for capacity building in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and expert support.

Improve and develop Cultural Competency

\$7.7 million over three years to develop the cultural competency and trauma responsiveness of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous child and family sector workforce through Department of Social Services grant funding in prevention and early intervention services in the child and family support sector.

Assess barriers identified by ACCOs

\$3.2 million over two years to assess the needs, and increase the involvement of, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the child and family sector.

“The rates of family and domestic violence, and children in out of home care among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are absolutely heartbreaking,” Minister Ruston said.

“We must make sure we are prioritising investments so that we are all responding to the evidence and doing the things that will make the most difference.

“These new Social Services measures demonstrate our commitment to shared decision-making in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programs because we know when we walk side by side we can and will improve outcomes for all Indigenous Australians.”

Minister Wyatt said the Implementation Plan builds on this year’s Budget announcements and recognises that improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could only be done by working together.

“For the first time, all governments and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector share responsibility for achieving outcomes, embedding priority reforms and reporting their progress,” Minister Wyatt said.

“Sharing accountability acknowledges that all parties have a role to play in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

For more information read the [Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#).

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