

## **PRESS CONFERENCE – OPENING STATEMENT**

Today is another historic day under the partnership arrangement that was set up a little over two years ago between the Coalition of Peaks and all governments on Closing the Gap.

I want to acknowledge your leadership Prime Minister. It was you who first agreed to the proposal from community-controlled leaders for a formal partnership with governments on Closing the Gap.

It was also you who supported the National Agreement be built around four Priority Reforms, that came from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Coalition of Peaks, and are designed to change the way governments work with our organisations and communities.

And today, the Commonwealth is taking a significant step forward in making its commitments a reality.

I also want to thank you Minister Wyatt, my co-chair of the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. The way in which we are working together is testament to the partnership we have set out to achieve.

Importantly, I also want to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled leadership around the country and those that make up the Coalition of Peaks.

We came together to change the way governments are working with our organisations, communities and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It has been a hard slog, but we are starting to see what can be achieved when we work together for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and when we partner with governments.

The Coalition of Peaks also released its Implementation Plan today. We know that having a seat at the table with governments comes with significant responsibilities and obligations to our organisations, members and communities that we serve across Australia.

Our Implementation Plan sets out our commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to governments as part of our partnership. Like governments, we will report on our work annually.

Today's funding commitments by the Prime Minister are very significant.

Our peoples have waited a long time for compensation for Stolen Generation survivors. I will let Fiona Patterson of the Healing Foundation and a member of the Coalition of Peaks speak to this issue in more detail, but I just want to say how much this means to me personally.

It is important recognition. I also know however, that there are many survivors that have died waiting for this recognition, my mum being one of them.

The government is also making some significant commitments in the area of early childhood, providing much needed additional supports and services including in our remote communities. I am pleased to see that this funding will be spent in line with Priority Reform Two and delivered through our own organisations.

I am very pleased that there is a commitment to address the poor state of infrastructure in our community-controlled health clinics across the country.

We also have some very important commitments to funding justice initiatives for our peoples and this also supports the justice policy partnership being established under the National Agreement.

We have a long way to go to seeing improvements in the lives of our peoples across the country and for the gap in life outcomes to be closed, but this is an important step forward.

The Coalition of Peaks will be working with governments over the next ten years to make sure we do all that we can for our peoples and to ensure the full implementation of the National Agreement.