

OFFICIAL



THE HON LINDA BURNEY MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

SENATOR THE HON. MALARNDIRRI MCCARTHY
Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians
Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health

MEDIA RELEASE

*****UNDER EMBARGO WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 12:15am*****

2022 CLOSING THE GAP ANNUAL REPORT

The 2022 Closing the Gap Annual Report shows signs of mixed progress on Closing the Gap targets.

Targets improving or “on track”:

- Babies born with a healthy birthweight (89.5%)
- Children enrolled in preschool (96.7%)

Targets worsening or “not on track”:

- Children being school ready (34.3%)
- Adults in prison (2222 per 100,000)
- Children in out-of-home care (57.6 per 1000)
- Deaths by suicide (27.9 per 100,000)

This is the first Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report since the launch of the 2020 National Agreement and Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan released in August 2021.

The Albanese Labor Government is continuing to work in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks, other First Nations partners and all levels of government to ensure sustained progress over the life of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Work is well-underway to update the Commonwealth Implementation Plan to strengthen the focus on our efforts moving forward to achieve the outcomes, targets and Priority Reforms under the National Agreement.

The Albanese Government’s 2022 Budget included an investment of \$1.2 billion over six years from 2022-23 in measures that directly support First Nations Peoples, including:

- \$54.3 million to train 500 First Nations health workers and practitioners.
- \$164.3 million for vital health infrastructure projects that will provide modern, high-quality health clinics in areas of large and growing First Nations populations, and to build capacity in targeting chronic disease treatment and rehabilitation.
- \$33.7 million to make early education more accessible for Indigenous families, with access to 36 hours per fortnight.
- An immediate boost of \$25 million for housing and essential services on Northern Territory homelands, with a further \$75 million allocated for 2023-24.
- \$81.5 million to invest in up to 30 community-led justice reinvestment initiatives across Australia and establish an independent national justice reinvestment unit as recommended by the Australian Law Reform Commission, the largest funding package in justice reinvestment ever committed by the Commonwealth.

The Australian Government's commitment to Closing the Gap is unequivocal.

We will be clear about our commitments, rigorous in assessing progress and always led by the views, aspirations and priorities of First Nations communities across Australia.

The Closing the Gap Annual Report is available on the National Indigenous Australians Agency website.

Quotes attributable to Minister Linda Burney:

"Closing the Gap is a top priority for the Albanese Labor Government."

"The numbers in the annual report tell an important story – a story of mixed progress."

"We see heartening progress in areas like babies born with a healthy birthweight and children enrolled in preschool. But we also see a disappointing lack of progress in a number of other areas including out-of-home care and adult imprisonment."

"The Closing the Gap architecture can only work when all parties are invested and there is a coordinated effort from all jurisdictions in partnership with First Nations peoples."

"We have to work more closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make real and much needed progress"

Quotes attributable to Assistant Minister Malarndirri McCarthy:

"Closing the Gap in health outcomes is my highest priority as the Assistant Minister for Indigenous health and that's why our first budget represents a fundamental change in the delivery of First Nations health."

"Giving children the best start in life is critical if we want to see more First Nations people achieve their full potential and live longer, healthier and happier lives."

"Slow progress in closing the gap is understandably frustrating to so many First Nations communities and organisations who are working incredibly hard to see a better way of life."

"We must work together, listen to our communities and re-focus our efforts to close the gap and improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – and we're doing"

just that under the new National Agreement by working with the Coalition of the Peaks, state and territory governments and local communities.

“Any single person taking their life is a tragedy, but the rates of suicide in First Nations communities are alarming and a serious indication of the amount of work that needs to be done to support people and their wellbeing.”

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