

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BUDGET STATEMENT 2020-21



The ACT Government recognises the need for a shared and collective approach to achieving quality life outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28 was signed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and ACT Government in 2019. It demonstrates the shared commitment of the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to work together to improve life outcomes and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Canberra.

Self-determination is the underlying principle of the Agreement, which is an ongoing process of choice to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community can meet their social, cultural and economic needs.

The ACT was also amongst the first jurisdictions in the country to sign up to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in 2020, along with the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations, of which the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body is a member.

A key part of achieving gender equality
The new National Agreement on Closing the Gap puts into action the principle that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved. It recognises that structural change in the way Governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is needed to close the gap.

The Government has put in place a range of supports specifically to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans throughout 2020. The 2020-21 Budget builds on these supports and meets important commitments under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019 2028 and National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

As part of the ACT's commitment to Closing the Gap, the Government is providing \$317,000 to develop a governance structure for a Healing and Reconciliation Fund. The Healing and Reconciliation Fund will be administered in partnership with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to deliver on the priorities identified through the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.

This initiative will also support facilitation of community conversations about the opportunity for and implications of a Treaty process for the ACT as one of the first projects within the Healing and Reconciliation Fund.

The *Our Booris, Our Way* review is a national leading example of practical self-determination. The Government is committed to implementing the recommendations from the review to achieve significant systemic reform. The Government accepts this as the only way to see a major reduction in, and redress, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care.

We are investing a further \$4.86 million to progress these reforms. This initiative will fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

led Oversight Committee to continue to hold us to account and guide us as we seek to drive systemic reform. The funding will support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations in the child and family services sector. It will also expand frontline services, including the Family Group Conferencing Program and Family Finding.

This initiative builds on funding delivered, committed or provisioned in previous Budgets to establish Functional Family Therapy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and also increase the cultural proficiency of workers, bringing the overall investment to \$15.7 million from 2018-19 to 2023-24.

The Government is providing \$425,000 to support detailed design work for the new accommodation for Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, as part of its commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have access to quality services and support that meets their cultural needs.

The Government will also establish two identified positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within Housing ACT. These staff will be dedicated to the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled housing organisation to support housing access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Following the success of the Ngunnawal Rangers as part of the Jobs for Canberrans program, we are providing ongoing employment for six Ngunnawal Rangers to focus on natural resource management, land, fire, water, wildlife and ecological management. The Rangers will undertake field programs, research, policy development and visitor interpretation in a range of disciplines, providing the opportunity for Ngunnawal people to have an active role in the management of their own Country.