QUEENSLAND

CLOSING THE GAP

REPORT CARD 2018

Department of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Queensland Government

Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The *foundations* laid by these ancestors—our First Australians—give strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

We recognise it is our collective efforts and responsibility as individuals, communities and governments to ensure equality, recognition and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across all aspects of society and everyday life.

On behalf of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, we offer a genuine commitment to fearlessly represent, advocate for and promote the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders with unwavering determination, passion and persistence.

As we reflect on the past and give hope for the future, we walk together on our shared journey to reconciliation where all Queenslanders are equal.

Purpose of the Report Card

Using the latest available data this Report Card measures the progress of the current COAG Closing the Gap targets and provides additional data on other priority areas raised in recent community consultations. Further, additional supplementary data is also provided on current Closing the Gap targets as these have a significant impact on the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The Report Card supports ongoing and regular reporting to track progress, identify and build on strengths and success stories, and inform areas of focus. The Report Card also provides a source of information to inform a partnership approach and co-design work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities moving away from ‘doing to’ to ‘doing with’.

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Message from the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Queensland is home to the second largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the nation and is the only state that proudly has Australia's two First Nations peoples. The Queensland Closing the Gap Report Card (the Report Card) is one important step in the Queensland Government's commitment to closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, based on a true partnership underpinned by the rich cultural traditions of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Report Card not only reports on the current Closing the Gap targets but incorporates the aspirations of Queensland's First Nations about what is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as we move into the future. As a state we are doing well in some areas, but across other priority areas we need to do much better.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have told us what is important to them, and working in true partnership we need to acknowledge and listen, if we are to achieve sustainable change. Only by having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders at the centre of the decision making will we deliver true and sustainable change.

We must remain committed and dedicated towards working in genuine partnership to guarantee improvements in outcomes for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities so that they can move from surviving to thriving. This is about providing practical on-the-ground initiatives that will make a real difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, further supporting self-determination, community leadership, and respect for Queensland's Indigenous cultures.

The Honourable Jackie Trad MP
Deputy Premier
Treasurer
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Introduction

Non-government agencies, in 2006, developed a National Indigenous Health Equality Campaign and launched a Close the Gap campaign in 2007. This rights-based awareness campaign gave rise to a National Close the Gap Day, inspiring cross-government action. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) pledged to close key gaps in December 2007, and in March 2008 government and non-government delegates to a National Indigenous Health Equality Summit signed a statement of intent.

In July 2008, the Rudd Government established the National Indigenous Health Equality Council, and in November of that year COAG approved the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) which set out the Closing the Gap targets. COAG recognised that overcoming Indigenous disadvantage will require a long-term, intergenerational commitment and a progressive realisation of improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Targets

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Closing the Gap initiative. In Queensland, two of the seven COAG Closing the Gap targets outlined below in Table 1 are on track: early childhood education and Year 12 attainment or equivalent, with improvements in other targets.

Table 1: Closing the Gap COAG Targets

Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031
Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade by 2018
95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025
Halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy achievements within a decade by 2018
Halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020
Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade by 2018
Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years by 2018

Part A: Current Closing the Gap targets

Health

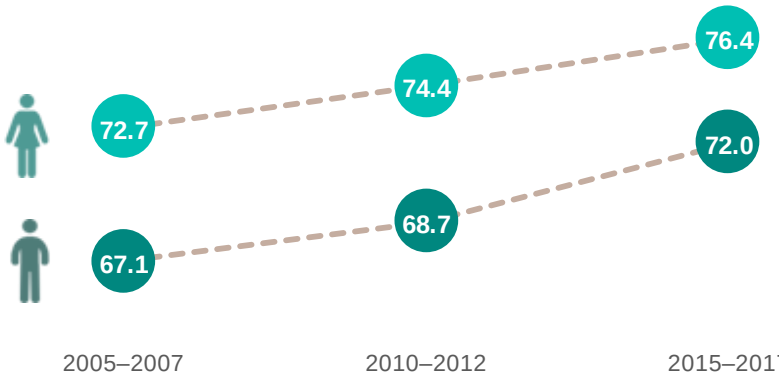
Life expectancy

*Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation by 2031 – **NOT ON TRACK***

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders continue to have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Queenslanders, recently released data show notable achievements in Queensland:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have the highest life expectancy nationally
- A significant improvement in life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males of 3.3 years
  - from 68.7 years in 2010–2012 to 72.0 years in 2015–2017 (Figure 1)
- A two-year increase in life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females
  - from 74.4 years in 2010–2012 to 76.4 years in 2015–2017 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy, Queensland



Source: ABS 3302.0.55.003, Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, various editions

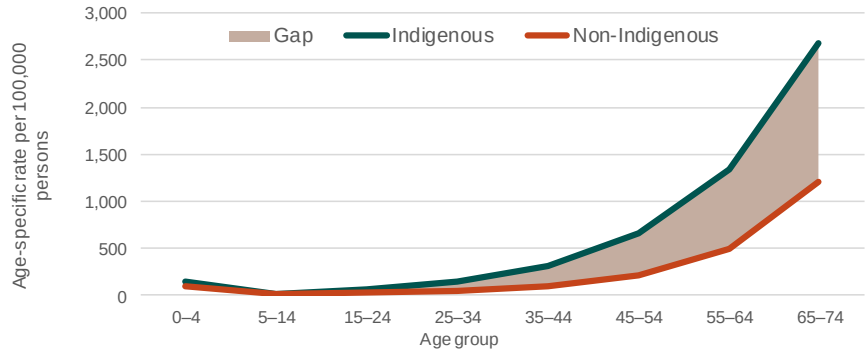
Age specific mortality

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are more likely to die at younger ages than non-Indigenous Queenslanders (Figure 2).

In 2012–2016, the gap in age-specific death rates ranged from 10.6 per 100,000 persons for 5–14 year olds, steadily increasing up to 2,117.8 per 100,000 for people aged 75 years and older (not shown in Figure 2).

By age group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander death rates ranged from 1.3 times that of non-Indigenous persons among older persons (75+ years), up to 3.1 times among 45–54 year olds.

Figure 2: Age-specific mortality rates, Queensland, 2012–2016



Source: ABS 3302.0, *Deaths, Australia,* 2016

Preventable conditions

Preventable admissions are those that may have been prevented through the provision of preventative healthcare measures. They include vaccine preventable conditions, acute and chronic conditions.

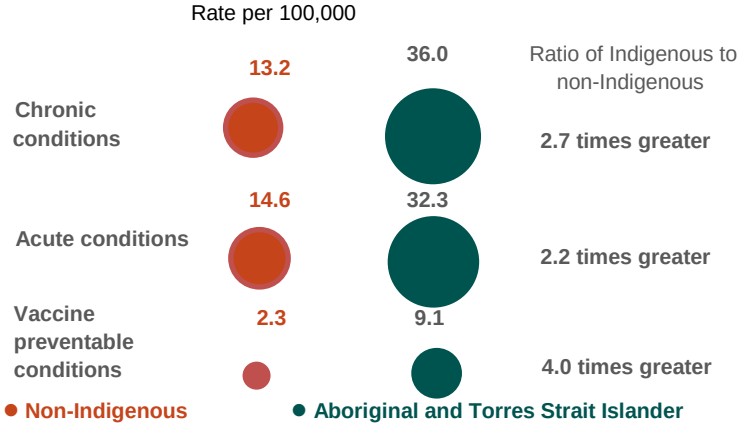
Potentially preventable hospitalisations for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders are increasing (to 76.2 per 1,000 and 29.8 per 1,000 respectively in 2015–2016) (Figure 3).

Over the five years 2011–2012 to 2015–2016, admission rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have increased from around 2.5 times that of non-Indigenous people to 2.6 times, with the gap in rates increasing by around 20 per cent since 2010–2011. For both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples, admission rates for vaccine preventable conditions were much lower than for acute or chronic conditions (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Preventable admissions (age-standardised rate per 1,000), Queensland

Source: Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services*, 2018

Figure 4: Preventable admissions (age-standardised rate per 1,000) Queensland 2015–16



Source: Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services*, 2018

Case Study 1: Centre of Excellence

Southern Queensland Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Centre of Excellence)

The Inala Indigenous Health Service established in 1995 has evolved from pure service delivery to incorporating teaching, research and community development under the banner of the Centre of Excellence. It also provides for training of workforce in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and a research agenda around best practice models of care.

The purpose built Southern Queensland Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, funded by the Department of Health (DoH), opened in 2013 with the completion of Stage 1.

This provided facilities for general clinical services (GP) fully integrated with onsite specialist services for ophthalmology (including on site laser), paediatrics, hepatology, endocrinology and cardiology (echocardiograms, exercise stress tests done on site) all within a primary health care setting. This state of the art facility has increased the number of clients accessing the service from 12 in 1995 to now over 6,000 patients.

The opening of Stage 2 in January 2018, supported entirely by DoH, further enhanced the service through access to specialist care in the primary care setting including integration of adult, child and adolescent psychiatry, expansion of hepatology services to include treatment of hepatitis C out of the hospital system and increased occasions of service across all these clinical areas, the majority of which will attract Medicare revenue.

The opening of the Centre of Excellence has been very successful and is a unique and important milestone in establishing high quality health services for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Infant mortality

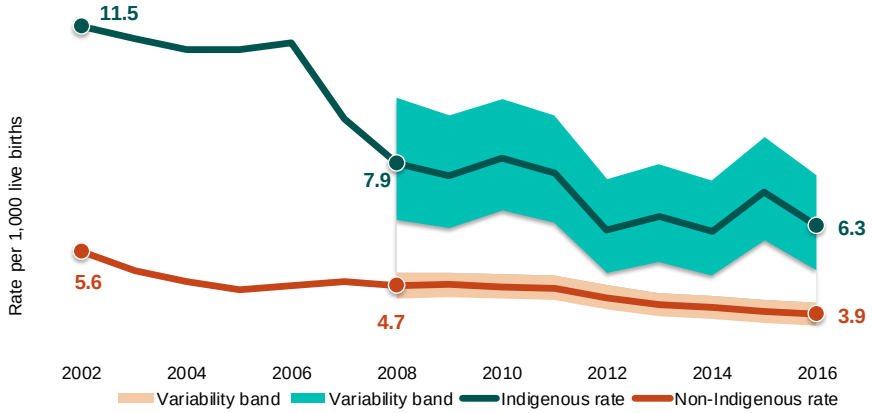
*Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade by 2018 – **NOT ON TRACK***

At least 80 per cent of all child deaths (0–4 years) occur in infancy, with most of these occurring in the first 28 days of life.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 1.6 times more likely to die in infancy than non-Indigenous children in the years 2014–2016 (6.3 per 1,000 live births compared with 3.9 per 1,000 live births) (Figure 5).

While there have been **long term improvements** in both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant mortality rates, there has been no overall decrease in recent years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants.

Figure 5: Infant mortality rate (3-year rolling average), Queensland



Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia, various editions

Child health

While mortality rates for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have been **slowly declining over time**, there continues to be a gap in outcomes. In 2012–2016, the gap was 57.2 deaths per 100,000, down from 74.7 deaths per 100,000 in 2005–2009 (Table 2).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rate is trending downwards

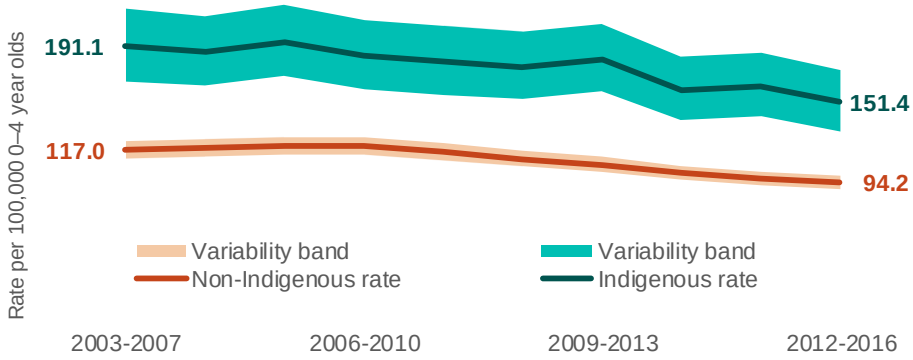
If improvements in non-Indigenous child mortality since 2005–2009 continue through 2016–2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childhood mortality rates will need to decline by at least a further 20 per cent to meet the target of halving the gap (Figure 6).

Table 2: Child mortality rates, Queensland 2012–2016

	Count	Rate per 100,000
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	196	151.4
Non-Indigenous	1,368	94.2
Rate ratio	**74 excess** deaths	1.6 times **more**

Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia 2016

Figure 6: Child mortality rates (0–4 year olds), (5-year rolling average), Queensland



Source: ABS 3302.0, Deaths, Australia, various editions

Antenatal Attendance

There are a number of indicators that have a significant impact on health outcomes for children – a focus of the Closing the Gap targets. These include antenatal visits, immunisation at specific ages and smoking during pregnancy.

First antenatal visit in first trimester

Clinical practice guidelines recommend women present for antenatal care within the first ten weeks of pregnancy, and depending on need, attend a schedule of ten visits for the first pregnancy and seven for subsequent uncomplicated pregnancies.

Antenatal attendance rates in the first trimester have increased significantly for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women over the five years to 2016

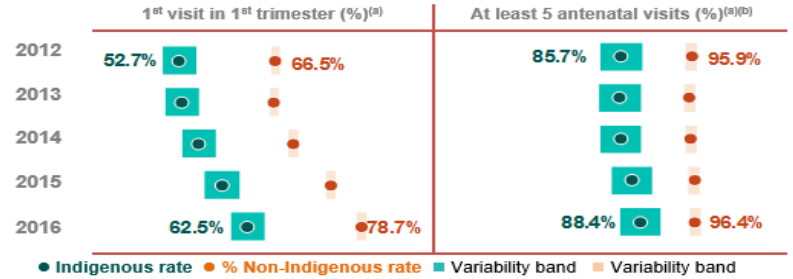
Of the 4,074 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who gave birth in 2016, 62.5 per cent attended an antenatal visit in their first trimester of pregnancy compared with 78.7 per cent of non-Indigenous women[1]—a gap of 16.1 percentage points (Figure 7).

Notably, antenatal attendance rates in the first trimester have **increased significantly** for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women over the five years to 2016, meaning that the gap in attendance rates persists.

Attendance rates have varied across remoteness areas in recent years with levels in inner regional areas of most concern. In 2016, attendance rates for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were significantly lower in inner regional Queensland than in major cities and outer regional areas.

Improvements in major cities however, **have seen the gap narrow** from 21.7 percentage points in 2012 to 15.0 percentage points in 2016.

Figure 7: Antenatal visit participation



Notes:

(a) Analyses of Queensland usual residents only; excludes women who did not state visits; 2016 data are preliminary and subject to change.

(b) Rates for at least five antenatal visits restricted to women who deliver at 32 weeks or more gestation.

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data, extracted November 2017

At least five antenatal visits

In 2016, 88.4 per cent of pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attended at least five antenatal visits during their pregnancy, 8.0 percentage points lower than the rate for non-Indigenous women (96.4 per cent).[2]

Over the five years to 2016, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women attending at least five antenatal visits **increased by 2.7 percentage points**. Nevertheless, the gap in attendance rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous women continues to be significant. Notably, there was little variation in rates across remoteness areas in 2016.

[1] Analyses excludes women who did not state number of visits.

[2] Data restricted to women delivering their babies at 32 weeks or more gestation.

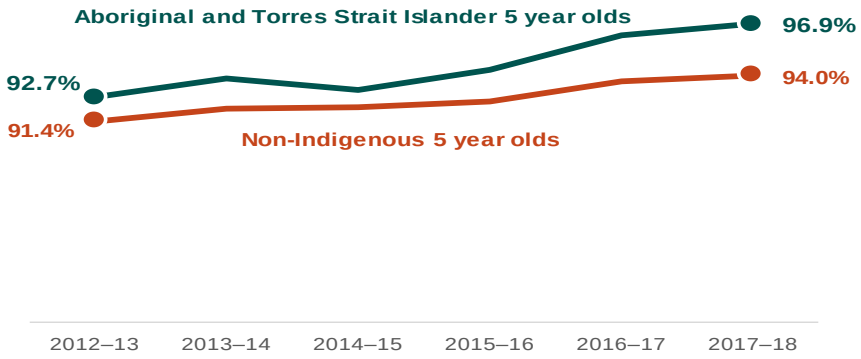
Immunisation

While not an existing Closing the Gap target, the rate of immunisation plays a significant role in positive health outcomes for children.

Immunisation rates have **increased over time**.

Almost 97 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five-year-olds were fully immunised in 2017–2018 compared with 94.0 per cent of non-Indigenous five-year-olds (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Immunisation rates, five-year-olds (60<63 months), Queensland



Source: Australian Immunisation Register, Department of Health, extracted September 2018

Fully immunised at two years, 2016

Immunisation rates for two year olds are currently recovering after a decline in 2015 due to a change in the scope of immunisations included in the definition of 'fully immunised'.[3] The immunisation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in this age group was 3.3 points behind that of all children (89.0 per cent compared with 92.3 per cent).

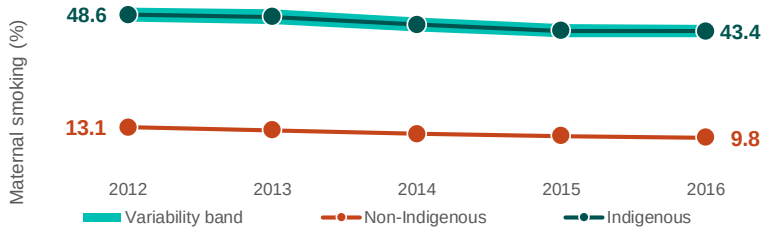
Prior to this change, immunisation rates were **relatively stable** and above 90 per cent with almost no difference between rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children.

Smoking during pregnancy

Smoking during pregnancy is a major risk factor for low birth weight. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Burden of Disease and Injury Study found that in 2011, 28 per cent of low birth weight burden was attributable to smoking during pregnancy.

More than 4 in every 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (43.4 per cent) in 2016 smoked at any time while pregnant compared with less than 1 in 10 non-Indigenous women (9.8 per cent) (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Maternal smoking[(a)], Queensland



(a) Analyses of Queensland usual residents only; excludes women who did not state smoking status.

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data, extracted November 2017

[3] From quarter ending 31 December 2014, meningococcal C (given at 12 months), and dose 2 measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and dose 1 varicella (given as MMRV at 18 months) was included in the definition of fully immunised for the 24<27-month cohort.

In order to close the child mortality gap, addressing child and maternal health is essential—while there have been improvements in many metrics, there is still significant work to be done to achieve parity.

Low birth weight

Low birth weight babies are those weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth. Data presented here describe live born, singleton babies only.[4] Multiple births are excluded. Data are reported by maternal Indigenous status.

Almost 1 in 10 (9.4 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born in 2016 were born with low birth weight. This was almost twice the rate of non-Indigenous babies born in 2016 (4.9 per cent).

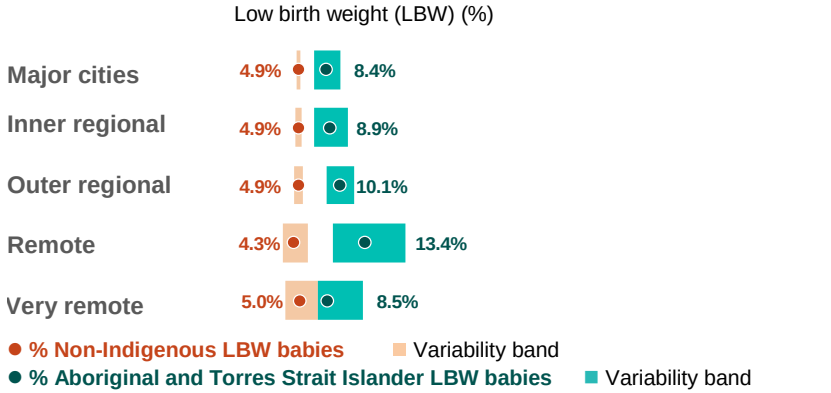
The proportion of low birth weight babies has changed little over the five years to 2016, with **no significant decline evident** over the last decade.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies were more likely to be born with low birth weight than non-Indigenous babies in all remoteness regions, except very remote areas (Figure 10).[5]

Around 70 per cent of low birthweight babies in 2016 were also born preterm (earlier than 37 weeks gestation).

After excluding preterm births from these analyses, low birth weight rates fell to 3.3 per cent and 1.7 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous babies respectively.

Figure 10: Low birth weight by remoteness[(a)], Queensland, 2016



(a) Includes all singleton, liveborn babies weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth. Data are reported by maternal Indigenous status and place of usual residence reported at delivery.

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data, extracted November 2017

[4] Singleton: one that is single, especially: child or animal born as a single birth, especially in contrast to one that is part of a multiple birth.

[5] Rates in 2016 were not statistically different in very remote Queensland.

Case Study 2: Birthing in Our Communities

Birthing in Our Communities (BiOC) program

The Birthing in Our Communities (BiOC) program was established in 2013 through a partnership between the Brisbane Mater Mothers' Hospital, the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane (ATSICHS Brisbane).

The partnership includes a multidisciplinary steering committee, shared clinical governance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural guidance and oversight.

A World Café workshop in 2012 involving community Elders, service users, providers and policy advisors, identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women did not feel comfortable in the hospital, preferring community-based maternity care.

The Queensland Government provided funding to IUIH through the Making Tracks Investment Strategy 2015–2018 for the expansion of the BiOC workforce. This has allowed BiOC to increase the number of midwives and Indigenous Worker positions and to establish a BiOC hub in Salisbury, Brisbane, which opened in October 2016.

The hub delivers intensive antenatal and family support services for vulnerable women birthing an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander baby at the Mater Mothers' Hospital. The program provides continuity of care, twenty-four hours seven days a week, through pregnancy, birth and up to six weeks postnatal.

Every woman has their own midwife on-call twenty-four hours a day and a support team that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student midwives, doctors and other health professionals. The service provides antenatal care, intrapartum care, birthing support, the Stop Smoking in its Tracks incentive program, perinatal mental health, breastfeeding support and family support services.

Since opening, of the women the BiOC Hub has supported to birth at the Mater Mothers' Hospital, 97.8 per cent have had five or more antenatal visits and only 4.0 per cent have birthed a low weight baby (weighing less than 2500 grams).

The Queensland Government continues to pursue positive health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through:

My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026.

Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework 2017–2026.

Immunisation Strategy 2017–2022.

Making Tracks towards closing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033.

Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2016–2021.

Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019.

Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Strategy 2016–2021.

Education

Early childhood education

*95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 – **ON TRACK***

Every person has the right to an education. Accessing high-quality learning provides positive health, education, and employment outcomes for all people and for future generations.

Early childhood

Early childhood education builds a strong foundation for a child's emotional, social, physical and mental wellbeing, providing a focus towards positive outcomes and future lifetime opportunities to thrive in society.

Queensland is **on track** to achieve the Closing the Gap target of 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.

In 2017 in Queensland, 4,451 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling. This means that 85.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were accessing preschool in the year before they started school, compared with 90.1 per cent of non-Indigenous children (see Table 3).

On track

Progress: 85.3% enrolled

To have met the target in 2017 **505** more children would need to have been enrolled

Table 3: Children enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling, 2017[(a)(b)]

	Enrolled		Population
	Number	Percentage	Number
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	4,451	85.3%	5,217
Non-Indigenous	53,558	90.1%	59,429

(a) Excludes not stated Indigenous status.

(b) Includes preschools and preschool programs within other settings.

Source: ABS 4240.0 *Preschool Education Australia,* 2017.

Further, 4,375 children were enrolled for 600 hours or more[6] (or 83.9 per cent of the estimated population). This was **only 4.3 points lower** than the rate for non-Indigenous children.

[6] The census collection date is the first Friday in August of each year. The census date for the 2017 Collection was Friday 4 August 2017, with the 1 week reference period spanning 31 of July to the 6 of August 2017.

Case Study 3: Deadly Kindies

Deadly Kindies

(Target cohort – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in South East Queensland with kindergarten age children).

The Deadly Kindies campaign was launched in January 2016 as a joint initiative between the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and the Department of Education (DoE).

Deadly Kindies builds on IUIH's successful Deadly Choices brand and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as they transition into kindergarten.

Through the IUIH network of Aboriginal Medical Services, the program supports children in South East Queensland with access to free, pre-kindy health checks.

Children who have received all their age-appropriate health checks and have registered their interest in kindy receive a Kindy Kit containing a kindy backpack, shirt, hat, lunch box, drink bottle, library bag, sheets and a blanket.

Mr Johnathan Thurston is the Deadly Kindies ambassador and works closely with the Deadly Kindies team promoting the benefits of kindy. This includes ensuring the children receive the right healthcare and support for a successful transition into kindergarten.

Since its commencement, 532 eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have engaged in the campaign, 66 percent of whom have enrolled in an approved kindergarten program.

Effective marketing and the use of key messaging such as 'Kindy is a Deadly Choice', along with deep community connections and a trust in the Deadly Choices brand has proven to be key success factors of the campaign.

Case Study 4: Early Years Places

Early Years Places in Far North Queensland supporting improved wellbeing and development

(Target cohort – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged from birth to eight years old).

A single parent with two young children participates in playgroup at the Early Years Place (EYP). Staff noticed that the eldest child is displaying behavioural issues, speech difficulties and finds social interactions with other children challenging. The mother mentioned that she has noticed problems with the child's speech and that she does try to get her child to say words but finds it challenging. She also advised that the child is very attached to her and that she is reluctant to leave them to be cared for by others.

The EYP staff provided the following activities to address the family's needs:

- Encouraged continued participation in playgroup
- Early Childhood Educator provided one-on-one sessions with the mother around child development and provided her with behaviour management strategies, and
- Linked mother to speech therapist so that the child could access speech therapy sessions.

It has been observed by the Early Childhood Educator, and also reported by the parent, that they have achieved the following outcomes:

- The child is beginning to say a couple of words
- The child is slowly engaging in group activities
- The child's tantrums are lessening
- The mother is feeling happier with the strategies/direction that she can use for her child
- The mother is using behaviour management strategies when her child demonstrates behaviour issues during playgroup, and
- The mother is accessing speech therapy and will continue until the child is reassessed.

The mother has engaged with EYP and completed a number of parenting programs and feels her parenting capabilities are increasing.

Reading, writing and numeracy

*Halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy achievements within a decade by 2018 – **MIXED PROGRESS***

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Since 2008, students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 have participated in annual NAPLAN assessments. NAPLAN assesses progress in four areas that are essential for every child to progress through school and life – reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation), and numeracy.

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have made **strong progress** towards halving the gap in reading and numeracy in both Year 3 and Year 5. Notably, the Year 9 numeracy gap has halved as well.

Year 3 reading – gap reduced from 22.5 percentage points in 2008 to 10.3 percentage points in 2017

The gap has more than halved

Progress:

86.1% at or above NMS

In 2017, 86.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students scoring at or above the National Minimum Standards (NMS) in reading, **reducing the gap by more than half since 2008** (from 22.5 points to 10.3 points) (Table 4).

Almost 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students achieved at or above the reading NMS in 2017

Importantly, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **Year 3 students scoring in the top two bands has doubled over the same period**, to 2 in 10 (21.0 per cent) in 2017, up from fewer than 1 in 10 (8.2 per cent) in 2008. At the same time, the proportion of **students assessed as below the NMS has decreased from 33.8 per cent to 13.9 per cent**.

Year 3 numeracy – gap reduced from 17.8 percentage points in 2008 to 12.4 percentage points in 2017

In 2017, 84.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students **scored at or above the NMS in numeracy**, up from 75.5 per cent in 2008 (Table 5).

Around 8 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students achieved at or above the numeracy NMS in 2017

While the Year 3 numeracy gap is **not on track** to halve by 2018, **gains have been made in the upper bands** over time. Just over 1 in 10 (11.6 per cent) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students **scored in the top two bands** in 2017, up from fewer than 1 in 20 (4.7 per cent) in 2008.

The gap has reduced

Progress:

84.3% at or above NMS

Year 5 reading

While the Year 5 reading gap has not yet halved, it has **reduced markedly over time**, from 25.9 points to 15.2 points, with 80.3 per cent of Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the NMS in 2017.

The proportion of **Year 5 students in the top 2 bands has also increased**, to 12.0 per cent in 2017, up from 5.4 per cent in 2008.

Year 7 reading and numeracy

After reaching 86.1 per cent in 2015, the proportion of Year 7 students at or above the NMS in reading has declined in recent years to 78.2 per cent (Table 4). The gap in Year 7 reading in 2008 was 19.5 points. By 2015 this had almost halved, falling to 10.5 points. The recent decline in achievement has led to the gap increasing to 17.1 points in 2017.

Apart from a spike in 2015 of 87.6 per cent, the proportion of Year 7 students at or above the NMS in numeracy has **changed little over time**.

Table 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, NAPLAN reading, Queensland

Year level	2008 at or above NMS	*2008 gap % points*	Variation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander levels 2008 to 2017	2017 at or above NMS	2017 gap % points	Significant increase 2008 to 2017
Year 3	66.2%	*22.5*		86.1%	10.3	Yes
Year 5	62.9%	*25.9*		80.3%	15.2	Yes
Year 7	74.8%	*19.5*		78.2%	17.1	No change
Year 9	70.0%	*22.0*		71.6%	20.8	No change

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy,* 2017

Year 9 reading

Outcomes for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Year 9 students for reading in 2017 were similar to those recorded in 2008 (Table 4).

Year 9 numeracy – gap reduced from 20.6 percentage points in 2008 to 10.4 percentage points in 2017

Outcomes for Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students **improved markedly over 2013 to 2015**, **reducing the gap to only 10.4 points in 2017**, down from 20.6 points in 2008 (Table 5). However, the gains made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 9 students were in the lower bands rather than the top two bands.

Almost 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 9 students achieved at or above the numeracy NMS in 2017

Table 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, NAPLAN numeracy, Queensland

Year level	2008 at or above NMS	*2008 gap % points*	Variation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander levels 2008 to 2017	2017 at or above NMS	2017 gap % points	Significant increase 2008 to 2017
Year 3	75.5%	*17.8*		84.3%	12.4	Yes
Year 5	69.5%	*22.5*		84.4%	12.5	Yes
Year 7	81.8%	*14.1*		82.8%	13.7	No change
Year 9	73.2%	*20.6*		86.5%	10.4	Yes

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy,* 2017

NAPLAN outcomes by remoteness

In both reading and numeracy, the gap in outcomes was greatest in remote and very remote areas. This was typically a result of the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the NMS decreasing with increasing remoteness.

The smallest gaps and higher outcomes were seen among Year 3 students in Major Cities and Inner Regional areas in both reading and numeracy. Notably, **Year 9 students in these areas also performed well**.

Year 12 attainment or equivalent

*Halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020 – **ON TRACK***

There are **very positive trends** in this target area. Achieving Year 12 attainment or equivalent provides greater employment opportunities, self-confidence, and more participation in community life.

The aim to halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020 is **on track**.

7 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds had at least a Year 12 or equivalent education in 2016

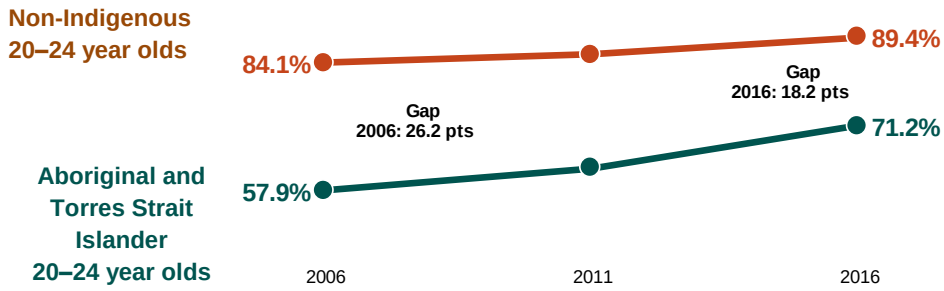
In 2016, 71.2 per cent of 20–24 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders had attained Year 12 or equivalent (Figure 11). This is a **gain of 13.3 points since 2006**, around half of the 2006 gap of 26.2 points.

However, there is still more work to be done—while the 2006 **gap has halved**, attainment rates among non-Indigenous 20–24 year olds have also increased over time, meaning that the gap in 2016 was still 18.2 points.

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds across Queensland have made **gains in attainment over the ten years to 2016**, progress varies depending on where people live.

The **fastest increase in attainment occurred in very remote areas** where the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20–24 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent increased from 45.4 per cent in 2006 to 61.7 per cent in 2016 (Figure 12).

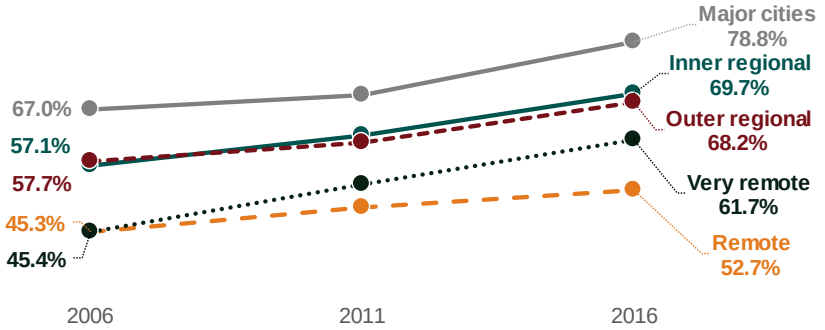
Figure 11: At least a Year 12 or equivalent[(a)] education, Queensland



(a) Equivalent includes AQF Certificate II and above.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016

Figure 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20 to 24 year olds with at least a Year 12 or equivalent education, by remoteness[(a)]



(a) Equivalent includes AQF Certificate II and above.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016

Case Study 5: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF)

QATSIF has been created to give Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families increased educational choices and life opportunities.

It is an independent, not-for-profit trust managed by The Public Trustee of Queensland and operates through a small Secretariat.

The funds used by QATSIF for its programs and activities are drawn from the interest earned on the original capital provided to The Public Trustee to establish the Trust.

QATSIF has committed funding in scholarship programs to assist 7,350 students (from 2009–10 to 2017–18) to successfully complete Year 12, which has made a significant contribution to Queensland's current positive trends in Closing the Gap outcomes. The majority of these students are in mainstream schools throughout Queensland, where there is limited support available to them.

QATSIF will continue to provide support for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students entering Year 11 by providing scholarships to advance the education of young people in community.

A survey of Year 12 QATSIF students who graduated in 2017 demonstrated extremely positive outcomes, both in further education and workforce participation, for QATSIF recipients.

Case Study 6: Youth Employment Program

The Youth Employment Program (YEP) assists a Year 12 graduate to achieve his dream job

A Year 12 graduate from Heatley Secondary College signed up with the Youth Employment Program (YEP) in 2017, attending YEP sessions during his lunch hour whilst at school to prepare for his transition from school to work.

The graduate was successful in obtaining his Queensland Transport Learner Licence through a Queensland Government funded program, including having a professional resume completed for him by Queensland Youth Services.

The graduate completed 80 hours in work experience while at school, received good references, and had a 100 per cent attendance rate at school in which he received numerous awards. The graduate attended other courses to complete his White Card to ensure he was ready for the workforce.

A YEP coordinator referred the graduate to Mr Tony Martens, an Indigenous business owner at Australian Training Works (ATW) – Group Training Organisation. ATW employed the graduate as an Apprentice Carpenter and hosted the graduate to Hutchinson Builders.

Hutchinson Builders has won the tender to build the Medical Centre on Palm Island which is where they will begin their journey together.

Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA)

QCE and QCIA are Queensland's senior school qualifications, awarded to eligible students usually at the end of Year 12:

- The QCE recognises broad learning options and offers flexibility in what, where and when learning occurs. Students also need to demonstrate competency in literacy and numeracy skills to be awarded a QCE.
- The QCIA recognises the achievements of students who are on individualised learning programs. The certificate is an official record that students have completed at least 12 years of education and provides students with a summary of their skills and knowledge that they can present to employers and training providers.

In 2017, 88.7 per cent of the 2,830 graduating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students were awarded a QCE compared with 94.9 per cent of non-Indigenous students (Figure 13). A further 4.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students (121 students in total) were awarded a QCIA along with 1.7 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

Queensland's gap in Year 12 attainment when measured by QCE and QCIA attainment is **almost closed**. There was a 6.2 point gap in QCE attainment in 2017 down from 19.5 points in 2012. Once QCIA attainment is also considered in overall 2017 outcomes, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students **narrows to 3.7 points**.

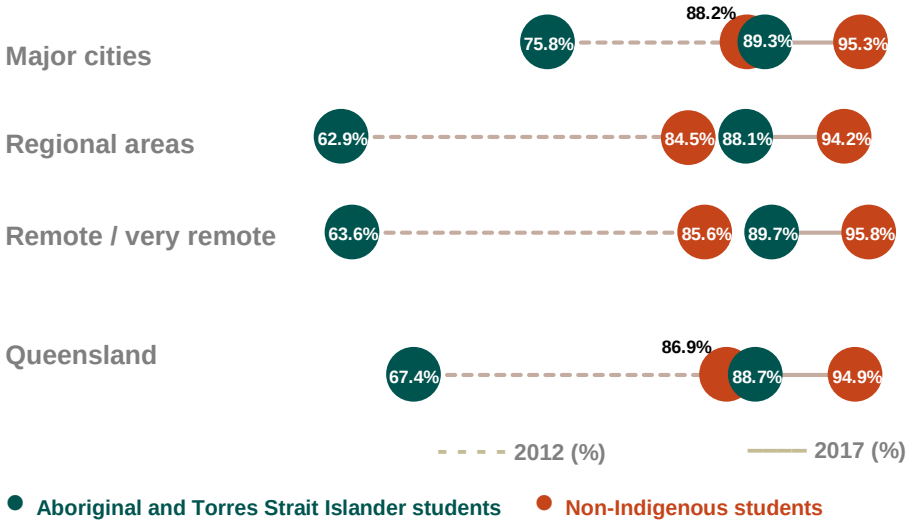
Over 9 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students graduated with a QCE or QCIA in 2017

To close the gap in 2017, a further 103 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and students would have needed to be awarded a QCE or QCIA.

While the percentage point gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous student QCE attainment has more than halved since 2012, it is in remote and regional areas where the **greatest gains occurred**. Reductions in the gap of between 15 and 16 points were recorded in these areas and **attainment rates are now similar to those in major cities**.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students attaining a QCIA in remote areas was **slightly higher** than in major cities (5.6 per cent compared with 4.0 per cent).

Figure 13: QCE attainment by remoteness[(a)], Queensland



(a) QCE attainment is measured as a proportion of graduating year 12 students. These data represent students with a Queensland mailing address.

Primary data source: Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, unpublished data. Analysis by Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Case Studies 7 and 8: Achieving Certification

Above and Beyond: Achieving remarkable certification reform in the Queensland state schooling sector

Kirwan State High School

Kirwan State High School is a large secondary education facility with over 2,000 enrolled students in Townsville, North Queensland. The school believes all exiting Year 12 students can achieve a QCE/QCIA, and this expectation was realised in 2015, 2016 and again in 2017. Strategies employed to boost QCE attainment include the use of 'data walls' employing real-time data to monitor student progress and stimulate professional cross-school discussions, a strong emphasis on team-work across the school (including across departments), and case management of all students including those seeking university entry or alternative pathways.

Student profiles, detailing student progress including QCE tracking, are provided to parents and used as the basis for genuine three-way conversations involving students, parents and teachers in lieu of traditional 'parent-teacher' interviews.

Current and future priorities include increased professional development for staff to improve assessment rigour across the school and a renewed emphasis on improving student effort to boost student engagement in learning. A pedagogical framework – *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007) – underpins the teaching and learning program at Kirwan.

Spinifex State College

Spinifex State College offers programs to students in Years 7–12 in the remote mining town of Mt Isa, north-western Queensland. The student population sits at approximately 900 and includes many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Spinifex has a high proportion of early career teachers on staff (first or second year), and students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

In 2016, the college recorded a one hundred percent QCE/QCIA attainment for its Year 12 student cohort for the first time, and in 2017 realised this outcome once again. The college adopted an 'intensive and targeted' approach to boost senior certification, featuring high expectations for all students. Specific approaches include weekly welfare meetings to monitor student progress and wellbeing, intensive analysis and case management for at-risk students, and extra tutorial support after school (for example: math/science tutorials offered at night).

Data walls monitor student progress and because students possess high-level knowledge of their QCE profiles, they are able to 'self-track' and monitor the individual case management provided to them by the school.

The college contends the critical factor in their success is the relationships between students and teachers. As expectations concerning universal QCE attainment are embedded within college culture and practice, the emphasis is now shifting to teaching and learning (particularly curriculum standards) and improving 'assessment literacy' for teachers and students such that students can engage in mature discussions about curriculum and assessment.

School attendance

*Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance within five years by 2018 – **NOT ON TRACK***

Overall attendance

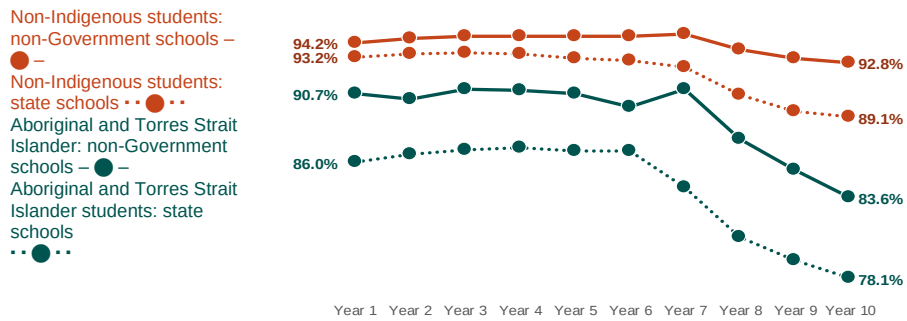
In 2017, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rate was 85.4 per cent for all Year 1 to 10 students; 7.6 percentage points lower than the equivalent non-Indigenous rate (93.0 per cent).

Attendance rates have **changed little over time** and are **not on track** to close the gap by 2018. In 2017:

- Attendance rates were higher in non-government schools in each year level for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. Rates also declined from Year 7 to Year 10 in each group (Figure 14).
- The attendance rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary students was 87.1 per cent compared with 93.6 per cent for non-Indigenous students — a gap of 6.5 points (Figure 15).
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary student attendance rate was almost 10 points lower than the non-Indigenous rate (82.3 per cent compared with 91.8 per cent).

Attendance rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were lowest in remote and very remote regions, particularly for secondary students, with the gap reaching up to 20.2 points.

Figure 14: Student attendance by year level and sector, Queensland 2017



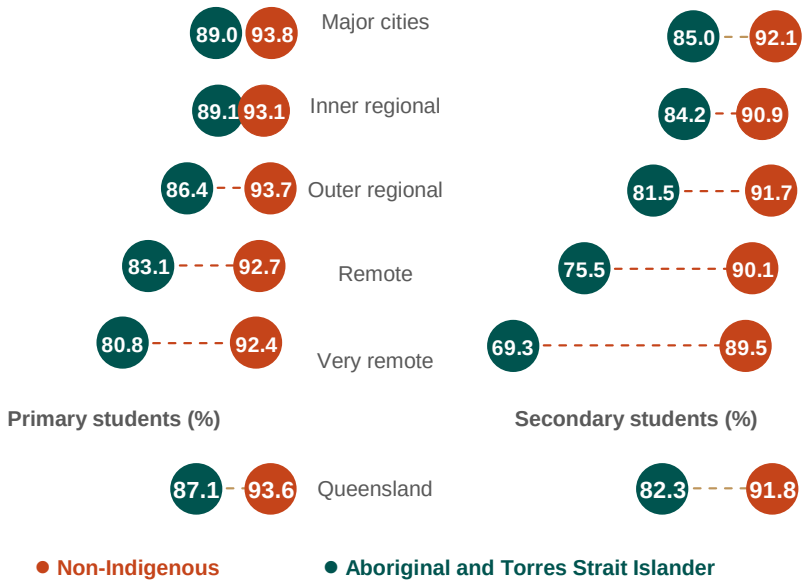
Source: Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services*, 2018

Attending 90 per cent or more days

47.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in state schools attended fewer than 9 in 10 school days in 2017 compared with around 24.5 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

Rates varied considerably by remoteness and school sector with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote area state schools having the lowest proportion of students attending at least 9 in 10 school days (40.7 per cent).

Figure 15: Student attendance by remoteness area, Queensland 2017



Source: Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services*, 2018

The Queensland Government is increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 12 attainment through:

Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland.

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation – increasing educational choices and life opportunities for Year 12 students.

Every student succeeding: State School Strategy 2018–2022 – underpins regional and school planning to ensure every students receives the support needed to belong to the school community, engage puposefully in learning and experience academic success.

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities.

The Queensland Government understands the importance of education and giving all children a great start through:

Advancing education – An action plan for education in Queensland.

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities.

Every Student Succeeding: State School Strategy 2018–2022.

Employment

Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade by 2018 – ***NOT ON TRACK***

Access to employment opportunities provides a strong foundation to enhance life skills and build a prosperous future. Employment facilitates confidence and self-esteem and more broadly benefits overall health and wellbeing.

Employed people are those who worked at least one hour in the week before the Census. These data refer to 15–64 year olds only.

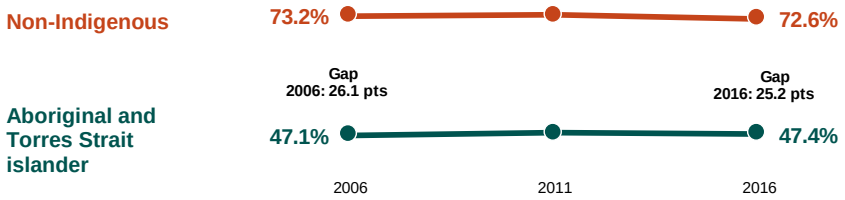
Employment levels for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland, and Australia remain largely unchanged since 2006.

Almost half (47.4 per cent) of 15–64 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were employed in 2016 compared with almost three-quarters (72.6 per cent) of non-Indigenous Queenslanders (Figure 16). If the 2006 gap was halved, around 60 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would have been employed in 2016. If the gap was closed, an extra 25,700 people would have been employed.

While employment rates in 2016 were highest among people aged in their forties for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, the gap was greatest among 25–34 year olds at 27 to 28 percentage points.

Across Queensland remoteness areas in 2016, the employment gap was greatest in remote and very remote areas, where only 2 in 5 (41.4 per cent) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 15–64 year olds were in employment compared with 4 in 5 (80.8 per cent) non-Indigenous persons. In contrast, just over half (55.4 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of working age were in employment in major cities, compared with almost three-quarters (73.3 per cent) of non-Indigenous persons.

Figure 16: Employment to population rate (15–64 year olds)[(a)], Queensland



(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status and/or Indigenous status.

Source: ABS Census of population and housing, 2006, 2011, 2016

Full-time and part-time work

Of those employed in 2016, 58.7 per cent of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were in full-time work, compared with 63.3 per cent of non-Indigenous persons (Figure 17).

Labour force participation

People in the labour force are either employed, or unemployed and actively looking for work.

Almost 3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (59.5 per cent) were in the labour force in 2016 compared with around 4 in 5 non-Indigenous persons (78.4 per cent).

In all age groups from 25 to 54 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were at least twice as likely not to be in the labour force as non-Indigenous persons.

There were variations in labour force participation rates across Queensland remoteness areas in 2016, with levels greatest in major cities (65.8 per cent), and decreasing with remoteness. In contrast, non-Indigenous labour force participation was highest in remote areas at 84.1per cent (Figure 18).

Unemployment

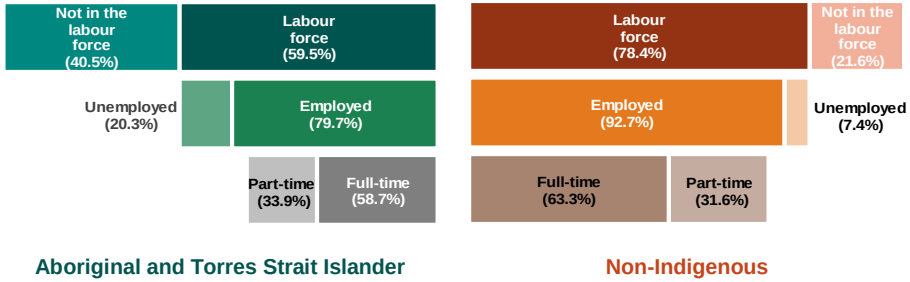
Unemployed people are those not in work, but who actively looked for work in the four weeks before the Census and could start work if they got a job.

Unemployment was higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than non-Indigenous persons in all age groups in 2016, with an overall rate of 20.3 per cent, compared with 7.4 per cent.

If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment rates in each age group were the same as non-Indigenous rates, at least 7,600 fewer people would have been unemployed in 2016.

Unemployment rates were highest among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in remote/very remote areas in 2016 at 22.7 per cent, compared with only 3.8 per cent for non-Indigenous persons.

Figure 17: Labour force (15–64 year olds)[(a)(b)], Queensland, 2016

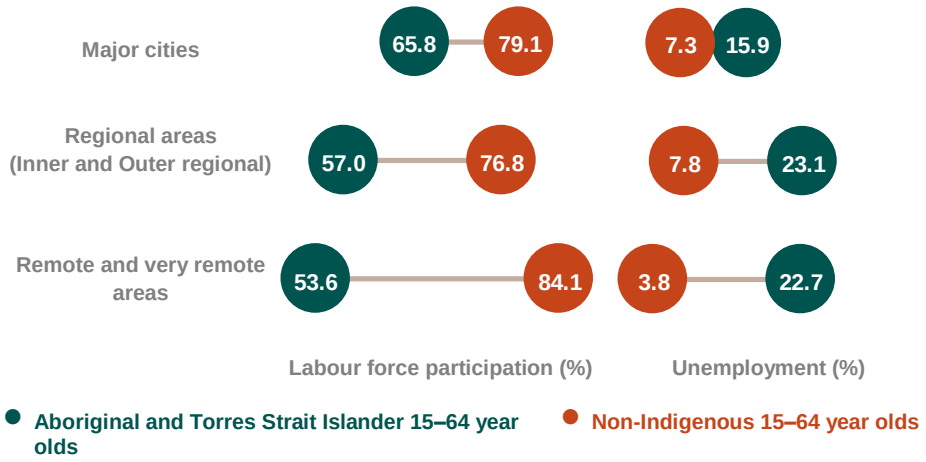


(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status and/or Indigenous status.

(b) Employment rates are shown as a proportion of the labour force rather than the population ratio. Part-time and full-time employment rates are shown as a proportion of those employed.

Source: ABS Census of population and housing, 2016

Figure 18: Unemployment and labour force by remoteness[(a)] (15–64 year olds), Queensland, 2016



(a) Excludes persons who did not state their employment status and/or Indigenous status.

Source: ABS Census of population and housing, 2016

The Queensland Government is pursuing employment and economic development outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through:

Advance Queensland Advanced Manufacturing 10–Year Roadmap and Action Plan.

Moving Ahead: a strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy 2016–2022.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work – $420 million committed over 6 years (2015–2016 to 2020–2021) to support up to 54,000 Queenslanders into work.

The Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP) – a whole-of-government framework to increase Indigenous business access to Queensland Government procurement market to be 3 per cent of addressable spend by 2022.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016–2026 increase in workforce participation across Queensland Health to meet the state-wide target of three per cent by December 2022.

Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20.

The Youth Employment Program – an employment support program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are finishing high school and looking for work or considering further education.

Part B: Closing the Gap Refresh

At its February 2018 meeting, COAG agreed that all governments would review the targets and refresh the Closing the Gap agenda, consulting with and working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Special Gathering

As part of the refresh, Indigenous leaders and prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, including six from Queensland, met in Canberra in February 2018 for a 'Special Gathering' prior to COAG to discuss future priorities with First Ministers.

A Special Gathering Statement (Appendix 1), was released highlighting that existing targets should be retained and reviewed, and outlining areas of highest importance for setting additional future targets as part of the refresh: families, children and youth; housing; justice, including youth justice; health; economic development; culture and language; education; healing; and eliminating racism and systemic discrimination.

The Special Gathering agreed the next phase of the Closing the Gap agenda must be guided by the principles of empowerment and self-determination, to deliver a community led, partnership driven strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to move from beyond surviving to thriving. This is built on the understanding that during the past decade the greatest progress has been in those areas where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have led the design and implementation process from the onset.

Commonwealth Government Closing the Gap Refresh consultations

The Commonwealth Government held three consultations in Queensland – Cairns, Thursday Island and Brisbane – to seek input from Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the priorities important for refreshing the Closing the Gap. Another round of consultations were held in Brisbane and Cairns during August 2018.

Queensland Government Closing the Gap Refresh consultations

Building on outcomes from these meetings and the Special Gathering, the Queensland Government, led by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), held a further nine community consultations in remote, regional and urban areas across Queensland (Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cherbourg, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Northern Peninsula Area, Ipswich and Cooktown) in June–July 2018.

The following priorities were provided during Queensland's consultations, with the overarching principles of healing, eliminating racism and systemic discrimination, and self-determination to guide and inform every priority and target agreed to. The proposed priorities identified were:

1. Families, children and youth (incorporating child protection, family violence, sport and recreation)
2. Housing (incorporating social housing, home ownership, homelessness services)
3. Justice, including youth justice (adults and young adults, children 10–17 years)
4. Health (life expectancy, infant mortality, child health)
5. Economic development (training, entrepreneurship, workforce development)
6. Education (early childhood, literacy and numeracy, participation)
7. Land and waters (national parks, marine reserves)
8. Language (taught by schools / community organisations)
9. Culture (truth telling, including in curriculum, cultural training for teachers, health workers)
10. Disability, social inclusion (participation in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ)).

Overarching principles

Queensland's Closing the Gap consultations' participants strongly believed that the three overarching principles of healing, eliminating racism and systemic discrimination, and self-determination should inform every priority and target.

The Queensland Government recognises the need to address these priorities and the promotion and support of self-determination at all levels and across all aspects of the Closing the Gap agenda moving forward.

The Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), released in 2018, reaffirms our commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, organisations and across government to refocus our efforts to closing the gap.

The Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework provides a strategic vision for Queensland Government agencies to provide efficient, effective and responsive services to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples by ensuring their perspectives are an inherent part of core business across all agencies. This is underpinned by five principles:

1. valuing culture
2. leadership and accountability
3. building cultural capability to improve economic participation
4. engagement with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and businesses, and
5. culturally responsive systems and services.

As an overarching objective, the Queensland Government is committed to working with First Nations Queenslanders to reframe the relationship as part of the response to Recommendation 7 of the Queensland Reparations Taskforce Report – Reconciling Past Injustice.

This approach is underpinned by ‘doing with’ Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and not ‘to’, and builds on a range of initiatives as described below.

The Queensland Government is committed to building stronger relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through:

Queensland Reparations Taskforce Report – Reconciling Past Injustice.

Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce.

The Hope and Healing Framework.

Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037.

Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021 (RAP).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Service Plan 2018–2021.

Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.

Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2015–2020.

Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Strategy 2016–2021.

Queensland: an age-friendly community – Strategic direction statement and Action plan.

Partnering for the future: advancing Queensland's community services industry 2017–25.

Queensland Financial Inclusion Plan.

Making Tracks towards closing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033.

Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027: a 10-year framework driving key reforms and targeted investment across the entire housing continuum.

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities

The Closing the Gap priorities raised during consultations throughout Queensland also have strong alignment with *Our Future State – Advancing Queensland's Priorities*. Our Future State represents the Government's priorities for the community comprising: create jobs in a strong economy; give all our children a great start; keep Queenslanders healthy; keep communities safe; protect the Great Barrier Reef; and be a responsive government.

The Government is committed to addressing the particular views, needs and strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as these priorities and their associated targets are addressed, and this Report Card will also inform that process.

Other significant priority areas

In addition to the existing Closing the Gap targets, the Report Card documents a range of data on significant priority outcome areas as identified in the community consultations held as part of the refresh agenda. Many of these priority areas are therefore also being explored as part of the refresh for consideration on additional target areas to be agreed to nationally. Part B documents these areas and existing data and initiatives related to them in Queensland.

Child protection

Children living in out-of-home care (30 June snapshot)

These data captures the provision of care outside the family home to children who are in need of protection or who require a safe placement while their protection and safety needs are assessed. In accordance with nationally agreed upon reporting definitions, data for out-of-home care refers to children placed with kin, other home-based carers or residential care services.

Figure 19 shows an increase in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0–17 years) living in out-of-home care in Queensland – up from 38.9 per 1,000 in 2014 to 42.1 per 1,000 in 2018. In comparison, non-Indigenous rates are relatively stable.

At 30 June 2018, 3,815 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were living in out-of-home care in Queensland – up from 3,767 children in 2017 and 3,336 in 2014 (Table 6). They made up 42.1 per cent of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2018.

This Queensland Government is committed to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child safety system through *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037* (Our Way) and the *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* reforms. Our Way aims to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

Our Way and *Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2019* (*Changing Tracks*) are a long-term commitment by the Queensland Government to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families, to involve them more closely in decision-making processes.

The Queensland First Children and Families Board will oversee the implementation of Our Way and Changing Tracks.

Figure 19: Out-of-home care (rate per 1,000 children) Queensland, at 30 June each year

Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table OHC.1, 2018

Table 6: Children in out-of-home care, Queensland, at 30 June each year

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	3,336	3,503	3,609	3,767	3,815
Non-Indigenous children	4,849	4,912	5,045	5,153	5,259
Gap (persons)[(a)]	2,929	3,090	3,183	3,330	3,366

(a) The gap shown is the number of children fewer than what would have been reported if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experienced the same out-of-home care rates as non-Indigenous children.

Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table OHC.1, 2018

Children placed with kin

A kinship carer is a person who is related to the child or a member of the child's community who is considered a close family friend, who has been approved by the department to provide family-based care for the child. Kinship carers are approved for a specific child.

Just over half (56.4 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were placed with a kinship or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer as at 30 June 2018. This proportion has been **relatively stable over time**, despite the large increase in children in care.

Children subject to substantiated notifications during the year

Children subject to child protection orders (30 June snapshot)

A child protection order is made by the Childrens Court under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, when a child is considered in need of protection.

At 30 June 2018, 4,181 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were subject to child protection orders. A further 1,002 were subject to ongoing intervention by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women with the agreement of their parent(s). Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to child protection orders in Queensland have increased incrementally almost every year from 2014 to 2018, while rates for non-Indigenous children remained relatively stable (Figure 20).

Child protection orders can be short-term or long-term. Under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, long-term guardianship of the child can be granted until the child's 18th birthday. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to long-term child protection orders[7] increased slightly every year, from 24.4 per 1,000 in 2014 reaching 29.0 per 1,000 in 2018 (Figure 21).

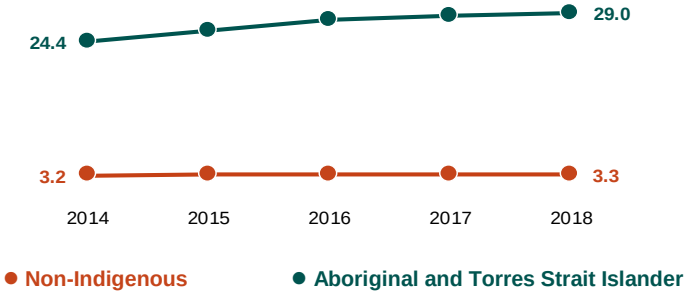
Figure 20: Children subject to child protection orders, at 30 June each year (rate per 1,000 children)

Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women Table CPO.1, 2018

[7] An order made under the *Child Protection Act 1999* can grant long-term guardianship of the child to a suitable family member (other than a parent of the child), another suitable person nominated by the chief executive, or to the chief executive until the child's 18th birthday.

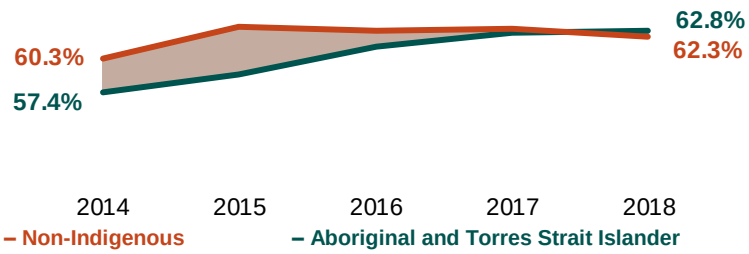
The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children subject to child protection orders that were long-term at June 2018, was similar to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Figure 22).

Figure 21: Children subject to long-term child protection orders (rate per 1,000 children), Queensland, at 30 June each year



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table LT.1, 2018

Figure 22: Children subject to long-term child protection orders as a proportion of all children subject to child protection orders, at 30 June each year



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Tables CPO.1 and LT.1, 2018

Family violence

The *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* report highlights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders experience disproportionately high levels of violence, including domestic and family violence. This emphasises the importance of having a service delivery network which wraps around families and offers holistic support.

In 2016–2017, there were 28,621 reported victims of offences against the person (physical assault, face-to-face threatened assault, non-face-to-face threatened assault, robbery, sexual assault) recorded. Of these, almost 15 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims equating to a rate of 1,966 per 100,000 persons compared with 527 per 100,000 persons for non-Indigenous persons.

In 2016–2017, for the reported offences against the person noted above:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were also around five times (2,688 per 100,000) more likely to be reported as a victim of these offences than non-Indigenous females (508 per 100,000 persons).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were more than twice as likely as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males to be reported victims of these offences – 2,688 per 100,000 persons compared with 1,237 per 100,000 persons.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were around twice (1,237 per 100,000) as likely to be a reported victim of these offences as non-Indigenous males (545 per 100,000 persons).

****** Violence against the person is used as a proxy measure for domestic and family violence. This measure includes all forms of physical violence and excludes non-physical forms of domestic and family violence.

The Queensland Government is working to ensure the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are safe, healthy and resilient through:

Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026.

Second Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2017 to 2018–2019.

Housing

It is fundamental that every Queenslander has a right to a safe and secure home. The Queensland Government is investing in social and affordable housing across Queensland, including in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Ensuring communities have adequate housing is essential to addressing overcrowding, population growth, and employment and education outcomes to stimulate local economies.

Safe, appropriate and sustainable housing underpins the achievement of a range of social and economic wellbeing outcomes, including health, community safety, education and employment.

The *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027* commits to establishing a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Body and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan (the Action Plan) to consider increased home ownership opportunities and improved access to housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples while leveraging jobs and training opportunities as well as growth for Indigenous businesses through the provision of social housing.

The Queensland Government Remote Home Ownership program is providing home ownership outcomes through resolution of outstanding entitlements to home ownership that arose under the now repealed *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985*. The program is also providing new opportunities for residents of remote and discrete communities to achieve home ownership through the transfer of existing social housing under 99-year home ownership leases or through the grant of freehold.

Home ownership

In 2016, around 1 in 3 (33.9 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households either owned their own homes or were paying a mortgage**, up from 31.9 per cent in 2006** (Figure 23). Notably over the same period, the proportion of non-Indigenous households owning or mortgaging their home decreased from 66.5 per cent to 63.5 per cent.

Across Queensland remoteness areas in 2016, the home ownership gap was greatest in very remote areas, where home ownership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dwellings was 12.8 per cent compared with 57.1 per cent non-Indigenous household dwellings.

It should be noted that a significant proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in very remote areas live in communities where the Queensland Government is undertaking cross-agency activities geared toward removing barriers to home ownership and enabling the construction of new housing.

Figure 23: Owned or mortgaged dwellings, Queensland

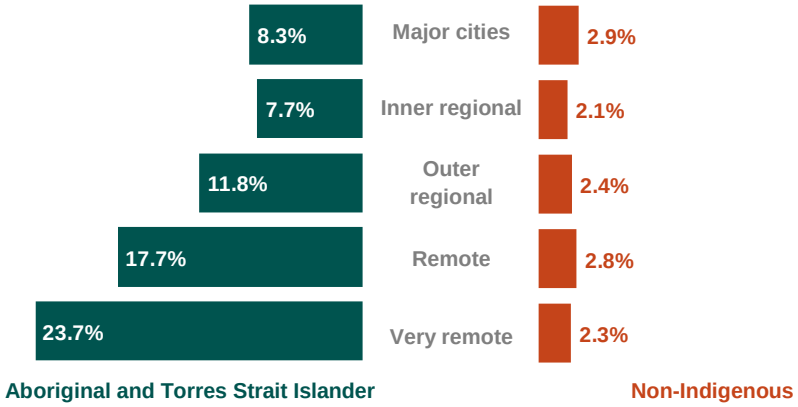
Source: ABS Census of population and housing, 2006, 2011, 2016

Overcrowding

In 2016, 10.5 per cent of dwellings occupied by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Queensland were overcrowded, (requiring at least one extra bedroom) compared with 2.7 per cent of dwellings occupied by non-Indigenous households.

Overcrowding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household dwellings tended to increase with remoteness, with the highest levels occurring in very remote areas – where 1 in 4 dwellings was overcrowded (23.7 per cent) (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Overcrowded dwellings by remoteness, Queensland, 2016



Source: ABS Census of population and housing, 2016

Homelessness

The ABS definition of homelessness has been developed for application to the general population in Australia. The ABS note that homelessness estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are likely to be under enumerated using this definition, and there are likely to be additional aspects to homelessness from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspective that the definition does not currently adequately capture.

While homelessness estimates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are likely to be underestimated by Census data, rates are still many times those of non-Indigenous persons.

In 2016, homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders was estimated to be 23.9 per 1,000 persons, compared with only 3.5 per 1,000 among non-Indigenous persons (Figure 25).

People living in severely crowded houses accounted for the majority of homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland in 2016 (64.3 per cent). Supported accommodation for the homeless was the next most prevalent type accounting for 13.2 per cent.

Figure 25: Homelessness[(a)], rate per 1,000 persons, Queensland

(a) Includes people sleeping out, living in improvised dwellings, boarding houses, temporary accommodation and severely crowded houses.

Source: ABS 2049.0, Census of population and housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016

The Queensland Government continues to pursue home ownership opportunities and sustainable housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through:

Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027: a 10-year framework driving key reforms and targeted investment across the entire housing continuum.

Remote Home Ownership program.

Justice, including youth justice

Adult imprisonment

Queensland's imprisonment rate continues to increase for both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Age standardised rates at 30 June 2017 compared with one year prior were:

- up by 9.5 per cent from 1,626 to 1,780 per 100,000 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and
- up by 7.7 per cent to 168 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous persons (Figure 26).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners accounted for around 1 in 3 prisoners despite accounting for less than five per cent of Queensland's adult population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners were younger on average than their non-Indigenous peers, with a median age of 30.6 years compared with 34.5 years.

Figure 26: Adult imprisonment (age standardised rate per 100,000) Queensland, at 30 June each year

Source: ABS 4517.0 Prisoners in Australia (various)

The Queensland Government is addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in the adult justice system through:

The From Jails to Jobs pilot initiative – to reduce recidivism by providing job training and readiness skills particularly targeting those offenders who are both motivated, and with a lesser criminal history, and therefore more likely to remain out of the justice system with targeted intervention.

The Community Justice Groups – delivery of, or referral to, culturally appropriate support services to improve quality of life and increase cultural understanding in the courts and the wider criminal justice system.

Queensland's Murri Courts – deliver a culturally appropriate court process that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as well as referring defendants to support services that address the underlying contributors to their offending.

Youth justice (10–17 years)

Supervised youth justice orders include detention, community service, intensive supervision, probation, conditional release, restorative justice and graffiti removal. Where a young person is admitted to multiple orders in a reference year, they are counted once only for the distinct youth rate.

Eight-hundred and ninety-nine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were admitted to 1,894 supervised youth justice orders in 2016–2017.

- The distinct number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth admitted to supervised orders equated to a rate of 27.4 per 1,000 (10 to 16 year olds) **down from 33.5 per 1,000 in 2013–2014** (Figure 27).

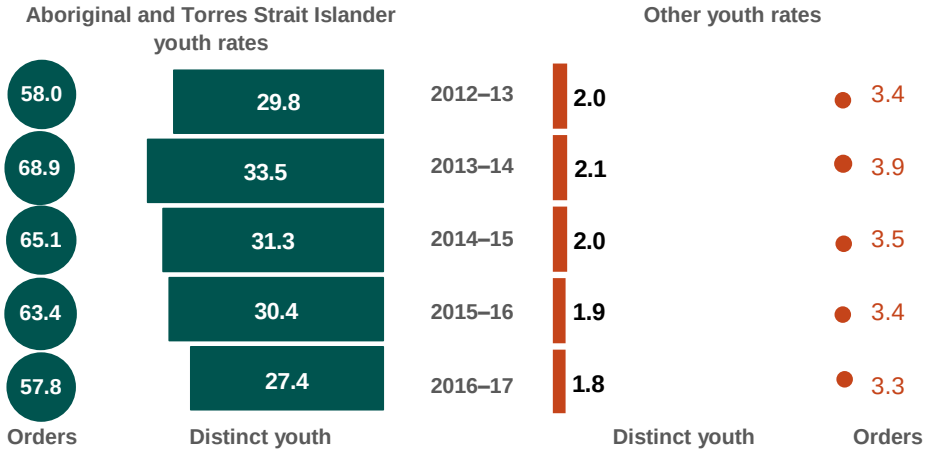
While the admission rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people has decreased, it is around 15 times the admission rate for other youth (1.8 per 1,000 in 2016–2017). Similarly, the overall rate of supervised orders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in 2016–2017 was 57.8 per 1,000 — around 17 times that of the order rate for other youth (3.3 per 1,000).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth admitted to supervised orders were, on average, younger than other youth with 38.3 per cent aged under 15 years at the time of sentencing in 2016–2017 (compared with 22.9 per cent for other youth).

When examining all supervised orders made in 2016–2017, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (10.3 per cent) were more likely to receive a detention order than non-Indigenous other youth (5.9 per cent) and less likely to receive a probation order (42.8 per cent compared with 53.7 per cent). Almost 3 in 5 (59.2 per cent or 550) young people admitted to detention in 2016–2017 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth living in outer regional areas (35.9 per 1,000) and remote areas (41.1 per 1,000) were more likely to be admitted to a supervised order than those living in other regions in 2016–2017.

Figure 27: Supervised youth justice orders (rate per 1,000 10–16 year olds), Queensland



Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, unpublished data

The Queensland Government is delivering a range of initiatives to reduce contact with the criminal justice system. These initiatives include:

Implementation of the Townsville Stronger Communities initiative.

Recruitment – including additional specialist positions focused on mental health and therapeutic services, behaviour management and incident prevention, and cultural services and supports.

Implementation of recommendations from of the Queensland Parole System Review.

Queensland Police Service – undetaking further work towards strengthening pre-court finalisation and restorative justice where appropriate.

Preparations commencing – comprehensive health and disability assessments of children and young people in youth justice, development of a Youth Justice Strategy by the end of 2018.

Investment in additional bail support and legal advocacy to help reduce remand rates.

The Queensland Government intends to keep communities safe and reduce rates of youth offending through:

A Youth Justice Strategy – provide a whole-of-government road map for preventing and responding to youth crime in Queensland.

Entrepreneurship (economic development)

The Queensland Government is committed to improving employment and business outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, benefiting business owners, families, communities, and the State's economy.

The whole-of-government *Moving Ahead Strategy 2016–2022* aims to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through training, skilling, work, business development and growth. Moving Ahead includes 27 actions across the following five priority areas: Build a more skilled and diverse workforce; Focus on youth and plan for the future success; Build our partnership

with industry; Increase entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation; and Overcome barriers and realise opportunities to completion.

The development of *the Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy* (QIPP) as a Moving Ahead action provides a whole-of-government framework to increase Queensland Government spend with Aboriginal businesses and Torres Strait Islander businesses to three per cent of addressable procurement spend by 2022. This policy aims to increase the capacity and capability of Indigenous businesses to successfully tender for Government contracts, supply to the private sector, and create employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by growing the Indigenous business sector. Under this policy, programs such as Enterprise Queensland Indigenous Programs (EQuIP) support businesses to develop and grow.

Progress toward this target, which is also reflected in the Queensland Procurement Policy, is already underway, within DATSIP and across Government, with the **Queensland Government engaging 427 Indigenous businesses during the 2017-–2018 financial year with a total value of $305 million.**

The Queensland Government seeks to leverage employment and supply chain outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Strategic Partnership Agreements with industry, government and community stakeholders. To date, **DATSIP has negotiated 14 partnerships** with diverse stakeholders across the government, health, resources, tourism, construction, agriculture and employment and training sectors.

Strategic Partnership Agreements draw upon the collaborative partnerships to drive investment to develop and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into employment and leverage opportunities for Indigenous businesses to access supply chain opportunities.

The Queensland Government is committed to creating jobs in a strong economy through:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016–2026.

Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP).

Moving Ahead: a strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy 2016–2022.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group.

Land and waters

The Queensland Government is partnering with Indigenous communities to care for land and sea country, provide jobs and training and engage future generations, delivering negotiated work plans that reflect Traditional Owner, local community, and Queensland Government priorities through the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program.

Conservation work can include feral animal and pest plant control, soil conservation, cultural heritage recording and protection, biodiversity and species monitoring and managed burns (savanna burning). Community engagement activities can include Junior Ranger activities, school based and other traineeships, support for disaster recovery and contributions to local community events. Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers are often Traditional Owners of the country on which they work and deliver conservation services that successfully combine methods drawn from both traditional knowledge and western science.

The Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers program is a highly successful initiative delivering real conservation and employment outcomes to **over 100** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in some of the most environmentally sensitive parts of our state. Land and Sea Rangers look after areas of Queensland with iconic natural values including the wetland of Cape York, areas of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Lake Eyre Basin channel country.

Through the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships' Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution program, the Queensland Government is changing the tenure of identified properties to Aboriginal freehold land and jointly managed national parks. The tenure changes allow Traditional Owners to return to their country and pursue employment and business opportunities in national park management, grazing, forestry, natural resource management and tourism.

The Queensland Government, through DATSIP, continues to work with Traditional Owners and other stakeholders to identify and transfer land for employment, business opportunities, nature conservation and cultural heritage protection.

In 2017–2018, DATSIP worked with:

- the Olkola people to hand back 103,600 hectares of traditional land.
- Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Incorporated to employ local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to deliver municipal services in Mossman Gorge, including rubbish collection, road, stormwater and sewer maintenance, and power supply.
- Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation to support the development of a community-owned tourism business for the Gamaay section of the Cape York Dreaming track, including a comprehensive business plan leading to employment outcomes.

The Queensland Government continues to partner with Indigenous communities to care for land and sea country, provide jobs and training and engage future generations through:

Queensland's Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program.

Queensland's Climate Change Response: Queensland Climate Tranisiton Strategy and Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan supported by the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program: Five-year investment plan 2017–2018 to 2021–2022.

Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution program.

Social inclusion and disability

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience higher rates of disability but in some instances do not engage with services in the disability service sector. Queensland's commitment to implement the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* and complement the implementation of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme* (NDIS) in Queensland will be done by breaking down barriers to the participation of people with disability in community life and improving access to the services that everyone needs.

DATSIP has been collaboratively working with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors in ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including people with disability as well as community organisations are made aware of the potential of the NDIS to improve the lives of people with disability, providing them with a full range of services and employment opportunities. This has been done by: engaging with local service providers and providing them with information on the NDIS; assisting people to understand their eligibility for the NDIS and how to access NDIS services; and ensuring health providers know how to make a referral to the NDIS.

The NDIS is also creating longer-term business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based organisations as a result of the implementation of the scheme, as well as increased employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in delivering disability services to NDIS clients.

The Queensland Government is committed to an all-inclusive, all abilities Queensland through:

All Abilities Queensland: Opportunities For All – State Disability Plan 2017–2020.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Service Plan 2018–2021.

Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2015–2020.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group.

Deadly Innovation program.

Culture and language

The Queensland Government, through DATSIP, protects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage through administering the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*.

These Acts require land users to take all responsible and practicable measures to ensure their activity does not harm cultural heritage. The Queensland Government, through DATSIP, manages an award-winning cultural heritage database, which is accessible to land users through an online portal, to ascertain whether any cultural heritage sites and places have been previously recorded on the database, with **372 Cultural Heritage Management Plans registered at 30 June 2018**. This easier and more efficient search process enables land users to meet their duty of care obligations established by the Cultural Heritage Acts.

As the Queensland has more than one hundred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, the Queensland Government commemorated International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on 9 August 2018 with a meeting to progress a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language policy.

The Queensland Government is continuing to work with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop a language policy as part of the Reconciliation Action Plan. The RAP identifies that DATSIP, together with the Department of Education, will develop and implement a Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Languages Policy.

The policy will be co-designed and developed in partnership with the Queensland Indigenous Languages Advisory Committee, the State Library of Queensland, the Department of Education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The purpose of the Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Languages Policy will be to:

- Recognise the importance of traditional languages in maintaining cultural identity and building the resilience of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Support measures to reinvigorate and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional languages, and
- Promote Queensland as a thriving, vibrant cultural state that values and embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages.

The Queensland Government continues to appreciate and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language through:

State Library of Queensland – Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) initiative – build sustainable and ethical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts industries.

First 5 Forever – a family literacy program aimed at creating stronger language and literarcy environments for 0–5 year-old children.

Queensland Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework.

The Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), in consultation with its Indigenous Advisory Panel, will:

- present exhibitions to promote the art of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- deliver QAGOMA touring programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and
- develop educational programs which support Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students.

Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021.

Moving forward

This report evidences that in a number of Closing the Gap priority areas significant progress has been made.

Despite progress, there continues to be significant disparity between outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. It is clear that more needs to be done to improve the wellbeing and life outcomes for Queensland's First Nations people by building upon the resilience and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and embracing their strong cultural knowledge to develop solutions.

Partnerships with a range of agencies, such as with the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO), in preparing this report are important contributors to undertaking analysis, identifying successes, and improving outcomes.

It is understood that during the past decade the most profound progress has been in those areas where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have led design and implementation processes from the beginning.

While it has been recognised that trauma and healing, eliminating racism and systemic discrimination, and self-determination are difficult to measure, they impact on all priority areas, are intrinsic to true equality, and link strongly to the achievement of real self-determination. It is therefore critically important to work with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in true partnership to co-design policies and programs that produce real and improved outcomes.

The Queensland Government will continue to build upon mechanisms to not simply include Indigenous representation in decision making but ensure self-determination is at the heart of efforts guided by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Queensland First Children and Families Board (QFCFB) is an important example of such an approach that has been established to provide leadership, guidance and advice to inform the implementation of *Our Way* and *Changing Tracks.* The Queensland Government has worked with Family Matters to develop the shared strategy for *Our Way* and *Changing Tracks* to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland will grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

DATSIP's Policy Leaders Forum (PLF) has been a key body established for Queensland Government to work collaboratively and in partnership with highly regarded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, Elders, policy and program experts, academics and community members to share information, expand expertise and influence outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The PLF provides a process to inform the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy with member's expertise across health, justice, education, training, housing and child protection.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing body, as well as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing action plan, are actions highlighted in the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027.* It will be established to work with Indigenous Community Housing Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils to improve Indigenous housing outcomes in urban, regional and remote communities across Queensland.

We must also continue to advocate for changes in the service delivery system reforms to support thriving remote and discrete communities – as recommended in the Queensland Productivity Commission's Service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities report which is being implemented through the *Thriving Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* reforms. This incorporates: structural reforms, service delivery, and economic delivery underpinned by capacity and capability building, and monitoring and evaluation.

In conclusion, a refreshed Closing the Gap agenda is part of the reframed relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the Queensland Government by monitoring outcomes and developing solid targets and measures of importance to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reframing the relationship and self-determination are essential elements to building a genuine and long lasting partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples that sees individuals and communities move from surviving to thriving.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Special Gathering Statement: Closing the Gap Refresh Building pathways for future prosperity

CLOSING THE GAP REFRESH

SPECIAL GATHERING STATEMENT

Closing the Gap Refresh
Building pathways for future prosperity

February 2018

Purpose and Background

This year is the tenth anniversary of Closing the Gap, a national agenda that created targets to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the areas of health, education and employment. The Prime Minister has acknowledged that six of the seven targets for Closing the Gap are not on track, including the four targets due to expire in 2018. Ahead of the tenth anniversary, COAG have agreed to refresh the Closing the Gap agenda, working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A Special Gathering of prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has occurred to coincide with the first Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting of 2018. Participants have come from across Australia, bringing a range of backgrounds and expertise to the event.

Forty-five participants (up to six from each jurisdiction) were selected by State and Territory governments. The remaining 19 were selected by the Commonwealth. Of these, 10 attendees (one from each state/territory and two from the Commonwealth) will attend the COAG meeting to provide the advice of the gathering directly to First Ministers.

Participants were asked to come together to provide advice on future policy priorities, and how all governments can be held to account for driving change. This will focus the next phase of community consultation and provide COAG with an early exposure to issues that delegates consider important.

Statement

The Special Gathering agreed the next phase of the Closing the Gap agenda must be guided by the principles of empowerment and self-determination as articulated in the 2008 Close the Gap Statement of Intent. We demand from government a community led, strength based strategy that enables us to move beyond surviving to thriving.

The best progress over the last ten years has been in areas where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has led the design and implementation of programs from the beginning.

We call on Governments to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to understand how to enact these principles in the implementation of initiatives to improve outcomes.

The Gathering noted there has been no clear statement of who is accountable for the Closing the Gap targets. We call on governments, in partnership with us, to clarify accountabilities between levels of government, communities and the private and non-government sectors. We offer all governments accountability mechanisms to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a meaningful role in monitoring progress (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led Senate Estimates-style processes). This accountability must be informed by accessible and meaningful data reported by all governments.

Priorities

The Gathering agreed that existing targets should be retained and critically reviewed, and that the following areas are of highest importance for setting additional future targets as part of this refresh:

- Families, children and youth
- Housing

- Justice, including youth justice
- Health
- Economic development
- Culture and language
- Education
- Healing
- Eliminating racism and systemic discrimination

We call on governments to negotiate specific targets in these areas with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our representative bodies.

We recognise this is challenging. We remain committed to the process, and we call on all governments to remain committed with us.

Failure to address these key issues will cause distress and not enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to realise the same outcomes and benefits enjoyed by other Australians.

Appendix 2 – Data Sources and Data Availability

ABS 2049.0 Census of Population and Housing, estimating homelessness, 2016.

ABS 2071.0 Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016.

ABS 3302.0 Deaths, Australia, various editions.

ABS 3302.0.55.001, Life tables, States and Territories 2010–2012.

ABS 3302.0.55.001, Life tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2010–2012.

Source: ABS 3302.0.55.003, Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, various editions.

ABS 4220.0 Schools, Australia, 2017.

ABS 4240.0 Preschool education, Australia, 2017.

ABS 4517.0 Prisoners in Australia, various editions.

ACARA, National assessment program – literacy and numeracy, 2017.

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, Table CPO.1, Table LT.1, Table OHC.1, 2018.

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, unpublished data (youth justice).

Department of Health, *Immunisation Coverage Data Tables: Current coverage data tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children*, Department of Health, 2018.

Productivity Commission, Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, National Agreement Performance Information (various years): National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA).

Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services (various years).

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, unpublished data (QCE and QCIA).

Queensland Health, *The burden of disease and injury in Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2017 (reference year 2011) Main report*, Queensland Health, Brisbane, 2017.

Queensland Health, *Closing the gap performance report 2017*, Brisbane, April 2018.

Queensland Health, Perinatal data collection, unpublished data.

Appendix 3 – List of Acronyms

ATSICHS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
BiOC	Birthing in Our Communities
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
EYP	Early Years Place
IUIH	Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NMS	National Minimum Standard
QATSIF	Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education
QCIA	Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement
QFCFB	Queensland First Children and Families Board
QGSO	Queensland Government Statistician's Office
QIPP	Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
ROGS	Report on Government Services
YEP	Youth Employment Program

Disclaimer

Much of the data included in this report are drawn from nationally collated datasets. Due to the nature of these datasets, there is often a time lag associated with release of this data, in some cases, over 12 months. Where possible, the latest available data for 2016–2017 have been reported.

As data release dates are specific to the dataset in question and spread throughout the year, it is likely that between collation and publication of this report, for some measures, new data may be published.

The Queensland Government Statistician's Office has already commenced preparing the 2019 Closing the Gap report, which will report primarily on the 2017–2018 time period.