



Closing the Gap

Annual Report 2021–22

Community Partnerships and Priorities
Department of Premier and Cabinet





Artwork



Artist statement:

The artwork is representative of the pathway we are all walking together towards Closing the Gap, the lines are all spaced differently representing the progress or lack of progress made towards each of the targets. As we get closer to Closing the Gap, the lines can become one and form a solid connection, representing the gaps being filled.

About the artist:

Caleb Nichols-Mansell is an early career mixed media artist and the Founder of Blackspace Creative Arts and Cultural Hub. He is a proud Tasmanian Aboriginal man with deep connections to country, community, culture, and spirit which all inform his practice and process as an artist and leader.

Caleb has an extensive portfolio in graphic design and digital art and has been commissioned by several leading institutes and organisations both within the State and nationally. Stepping outside of his comfort zone, he is beginning to experiment with large scale festival and public art installations as well as site responsive works which will be developed over the coming year.

Delving into and shining light on the politics of identity, land, and cultural heritage his artwork aims to generate conversation and evoke deep thinking whilst providing the broader community with an intimate look at what it means to be Tasmanian Aboriginal man in modern day Tasmania.

Acknowledgement of Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government acknowledges and pays respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the past and present custodians of this island. We acknowledge and pay respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders, past and present.





Message from the Premier



The Tasmanian Government is deeply committed to Closing the Gap, in true partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their families.

The new National Agreement on Closing the Gap - developed in partnership between the state, territory and federal governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - commits to a new way for our Government and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to work together to improve the lives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Previous attempts at Closing the Gap haven't worked, despite significant funding and the concerted efforts of governments and service providers. The new approach, developed with Aboriginal people, recognises that Aboriginal people are best placed to determine and deliver services to meet the needs of their community members in culturally appropriate and effective ways.

To Close the Gap, my government must ensure that Tasmanian Aboriginal people are empowered to have a say on issues that affect them, and be able to share their experience, knowledge and skills with decision-makers within Government. Only by forming genuine, long-term partnerships with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, will we succeed in delivering better outcomes and Closing the Gap.

This Annual Report shows that there has been some progress, with some areas stronger than a year ago, but there is still much more to do. I am committed that our second year of Closing the Gap will see further genuine co-design of policies and partnerships, and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations delivering more services that Aboriginal people know they need, in ways meaningful to them.

Jeremy Rockliff MP

Premier of Tasmania

Message from the Minister



Closing the Gap is not just a title – it is an urgent imperative and call to action for all Governments to work in true partnership with Aboriginal people to realise a more just and equal future.

This annual report shows how we have taken the first steps - Tasmania has an ambitious and important partnership reform agenda with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

We are committed to working in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and exploring new ways to bring Tasmanian Aboriginal voices into our decision-making and co-design of programs and services. This includes the establishment of a new Aboriginal Partnerships division in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to provide whole-of-government coordination of services and programs for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, including the Closing the Gap framework.

We will continue to focus on our relationships with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations and people to grow our shared understanding of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and how we can work together to make a real difference. In particular, the Tasmanian Government will be working hard to build the capacity of Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations to deliver services that better suit the needs of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and build towards the long-term goal of transitioning the design, delivery and funding of Aboriginal programs and services from Government to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

My thanks to our Tasmanian Coalition of Peaks partner, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and all other Tasmanian Aboriginal people who have walked with us on this journey so far.

Roger Jaensch MP

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



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Summary

The Tasmanian Government is focused on introducing and embedding the four priority reforms in all new and existing programs, increasing levels of Aboriginal self-determination, and supporting the Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled sector to improve service delivery for Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

We are actively working in partnership with our Tasmanian Coalition of Peaks partner and have provided funding to strengthen its capacity to expand its participation in the Closing the Gap process.

To ensure we have the right building blocks in place to oversee the Closing the Gap framework, the Government has created a new Aboriginal Partnerships division within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and established a cross-agency Combined Peak and Government Policy Partnership Working Group that includes the Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Health; Department of Justice; Department for Education, Children and Young People and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

Tasmania is working across all the 17 socio-economic target outcomes under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In Tasmania, data for reporting purposes is available for 14 of the 17 target outcomes. Tasmania has met two of the target outcomes:

- **Target Outcome 3:** By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.
- **Target Outcome 9:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.

For these two target outcomes, actions being taken by Tasmania continue to show a positive or sustainable trend. Of the 14 reportable target outcomes, Tasmania is predominantly performing above the national average against 13 targets.

Across all areas, the Tasmanian Government knows there is still more work to do to meet the target outcomes, including a focus on child safety, early childhood development, incarceration rates, and land and sea rights.

What the data tell us

Sector	Target Outcome	Tasmania progress (historical trend)	National progress (historical trend)	Data notes
Health	Target Outcome 1: Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.	Data not available	Improvement but target not on track to be met	Tasmanian data unreportable.
	Target Outcome 2: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.	Improvement	Improvement but target not on track to be met	90.5 per cent in 2019 above national average (89.5 per cent).
Early Childhood Care and Development	Target Outcome 3: By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.	Improvement	Good improvement and on track to be met	104 per cent* target outcome met in 2021 and above national average (96.7 per cent). * Comparing estimates to actual enrolment numbers leads to some jurisdictions recording preschool enrolment rates for Aboriginal children of over 100 per cent.
	Target Outcome 4: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.	Improvement	Worsening	38.3 per cent in 2021 above the national average (34.3 per cent).



Sector	Target Outcome	Tasmania progress (historical trend)	National progress (historical trend)	Data notes
Education	Target Outcome 5: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.	Improvement	Improvement	62.7 per cent in 2016 near to the national average (63.2 per cent).
	Target Outcome 6: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.	Improvement	Improvement	47.0 per cent in 2016 higher than the national average (42.3 per cent).
Training and Employment	Target Outcome 7: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to 67 per cent.	Improvement	Improvement	62.4 per cent in 2016 higher than the national average (57.2 per cent).
	Target Outcome 8: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent.	Improvement	Improvement	59.0 per cent in 2016 above the national average (51.0 per cent).
Housing	Target Outcome 9: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.	No change	Improvement	89.9 per cent target outcome met in 2016 and above the national average (78.9 per cent).



Sector	Target Outcome	Tasmania progress (historical trend)	National progress (historical trend)	Data notes
Justice	Target Outcome 10: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.	Worsening	Worsening	775.8 per 100,000 in 2021 better than the national average (2,222.7 per 100,000).
	Target Outcome 11: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.	Improvement	Good improvement and on track to be met	10.8 per 10,000 in 2020 better than the national average (23.2 per 10,000).
Family Safety and Wellbeing	Target Outcome 12: By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.	Worsening	Worsening	34.4 per 1,000 in 2021 better than the national average (57.6 per 1,000).
	Target Outcome 13: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.	(Single data point)	(Single data point)	8.3 per cent in 2019 almost the national average (8.4 per cent); data not available for trend
	Target Outcome 14: Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.	Data not available	Worsening	Tasmanian data unreportable.



Sector	Target Outcome	Tasmania progress (historical trend)	National progress (historical trend)	Data notes
Land and Sea	Target Outcome 15a: By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests.	No change	Good improvement and on track to be met	0.9 per cent in 2022 below the national average (4m sq km).
	Target Outcome 15b: By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.	No change	Improvement but target not on track to be met	0 per cent in 2022 below the national average (90,000 km ²).
Language and Communication	Target Outcome 16: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.	Data not available	Worsening	Tasmanian data unreportable.
	Target Outcome 17: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.	(Single data point)	(Single data point)	85 per cent in 2014–15 above the national average (73.5 per cent).



Jurisdictional actions

Health (Target Outcomes 1 and 2)

Target Outcome 1: Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031	
<p>National</p> <p>In 2015–17, Aboriginal female life expectancy was 75.6 years - non-Aboriginal female life expectancy was 83.4 years</p> <p>In 2015–17, Aboriginal male life expectancy was 71.6 years - non-Aboriginal male life expectancy was 80.2 years</p>	<p>Tasmania</p> <p>The Australian Bureau of Statistics advises that due to the relatively small number of Aboriginal deaths recorded in Tasmania, it is not currently possible to report reliable Aboriginal life expectancy data for the state.</p>

Additional comments

The Department of Health launched *The Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022–26* (the Healthy Tasmania Plan) on 4 March 2022 that commits to aligning actions with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms to help achieve health target outcomes.

COVID-19

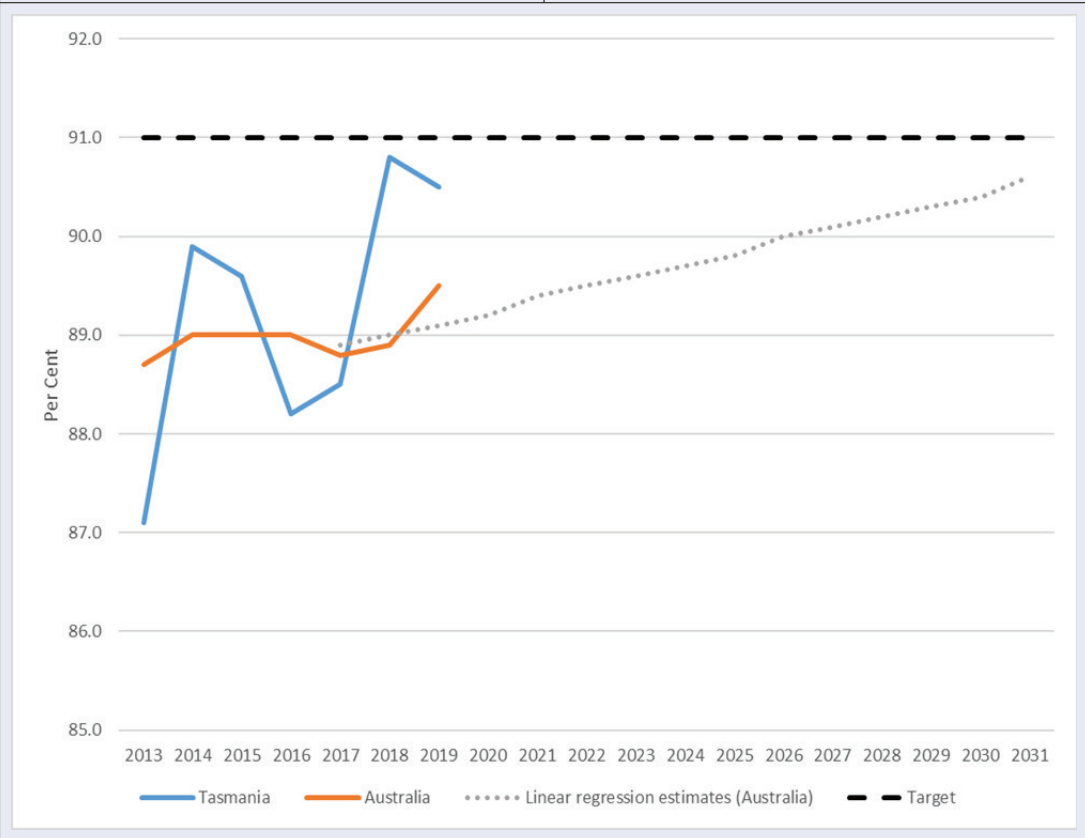
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were a priority group for COVID-19 vaccination and among the first communities able to access COVID-19 vaccines in Tasmania. Vaccinations for Aboriginal people were coordinated and delivered through Aboriginal Health Services, State Community Clinics, and primary healthcare providers. The Department of Health also supported clinics on Flinders and Cape Barren Islands to promote vaccination uptake among Aboriginal people in these areas. As of 31 August 2022, approximately 86.5 per cent of the Aboriginal population in Tasmania are fully vaccinated (based on available information from the Commonwealth Government via the Australian Immunisation Register). This is above the national average and the third highest of all states and territories.



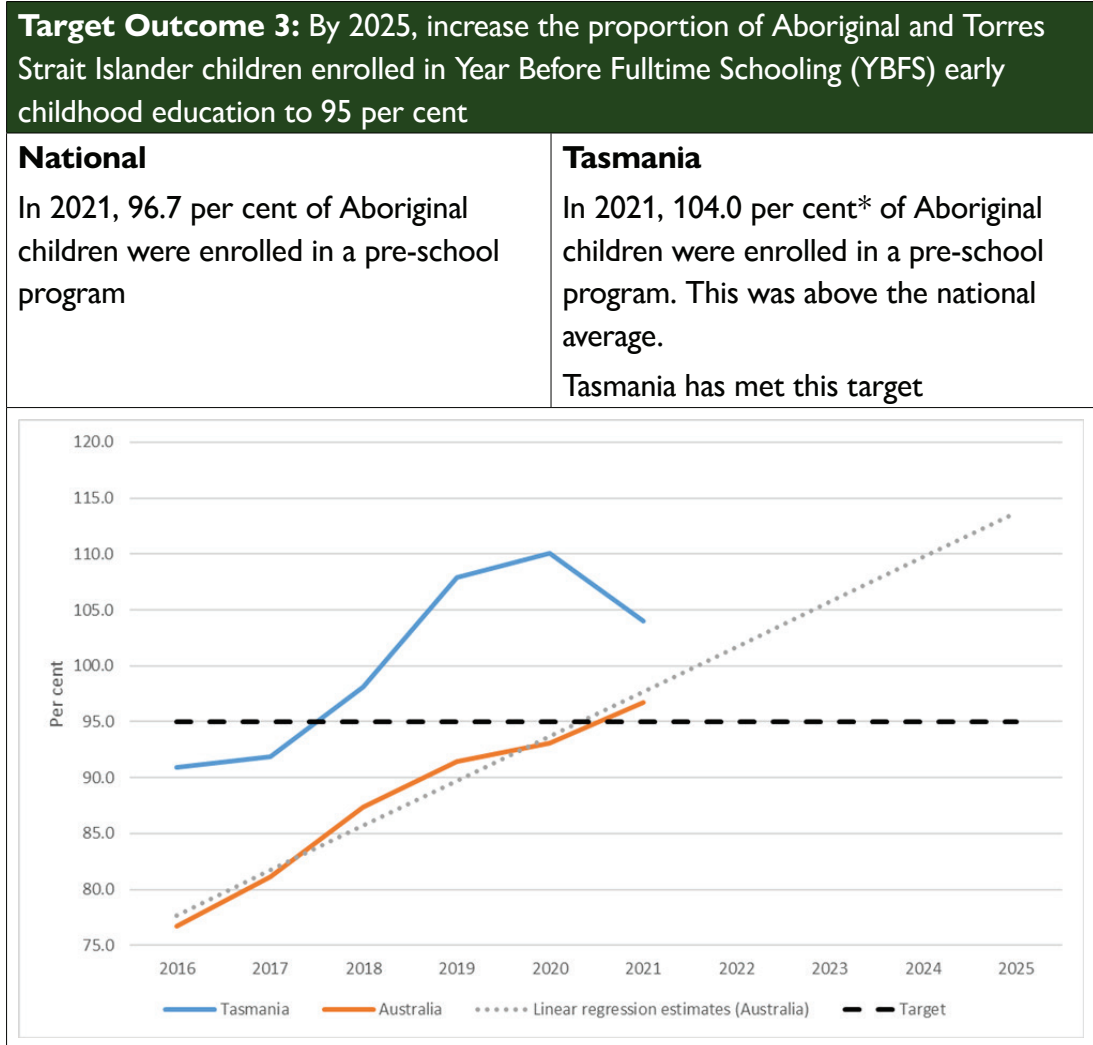
Target Outcome 2: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent

National
In 2019, 89.5 per cent of Aboriginal babies had a healthy birthweight

Tasmania
In 2019, 90.5 per cent of Aboriginal babies had a healthy birthweight. This was the second highest rate reported in any jurisdiction
Current trends suggest this target will be reached in Tasmania



Early childhood care and development (Target Outcomes 3 and 4)



* The current method for calculating the proportion of Aboriginal children enrolled in preschool involves Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates of the number of preschool-aged Aboriginal children in Tasmania compared against actual preschool enrolment numbers for children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. There are evidently discrepancies between these datasets as the reported pre-school enrolment rates for Aboriginal children in Tasmania have been above 100 per cent since 2019.



Additional comments

Through the Department for Education, Children and Young People, Child and Family Learning Centres (CLFC) have a focus on increasing access, participation, and engagement by Aboriginal families with CLFC services, programs, and activities. Aboriginal Education Services supports the Centres with multiple workshops and targeted training for the CLFC teams including staff from across agencies and volunteers that provide services to the CLFC. A team of Aboriginal Early Years Education Workers meets regularly with CLFC staff to strengthen their skills, helping them engage Aboriginal families more effectively and provide learning opportunities for their children. CLFC's regularly engage with Tasmanian Aboriginal people in their local areas to ensure they are providing a culturally safe environment.

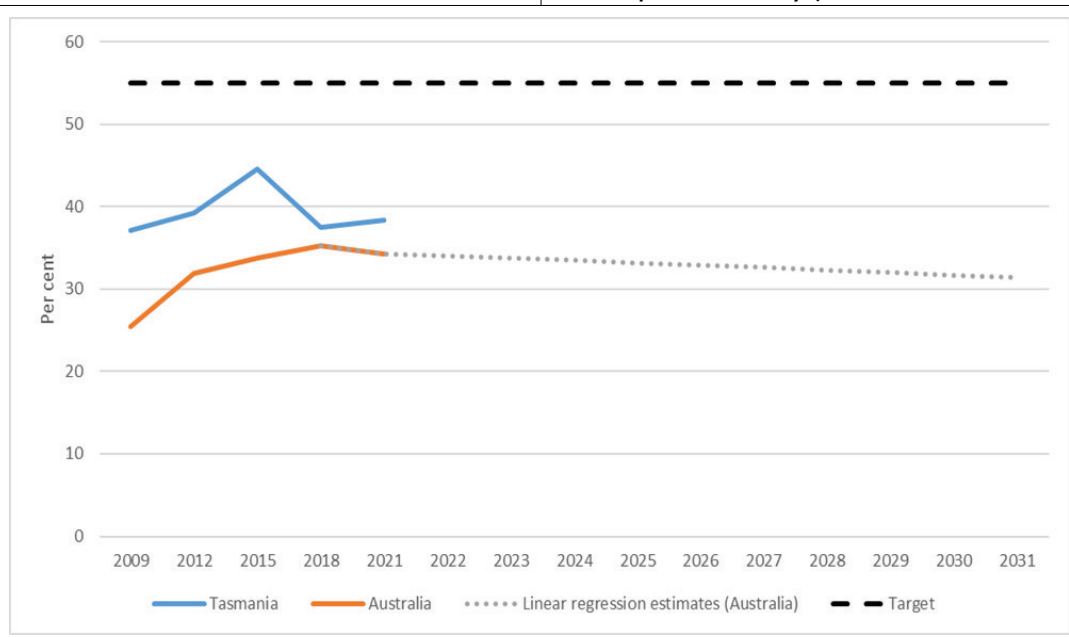
Through the universal Access to Early Learning initiative, improving access to early education, regardless of where Tasmanian children live or their family circumstances, continues to be a priority for the Government.

Co-design of universal access to early learning with parents, community members and service providers, through workshops is a first step in this process. The workshops are an opportunity for families and stakeholders to have a say on the future of quality and affordable early learning for three-year-olds.



Target Outcome 4: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent

<p>National</p> <p>In 2021, 34.3 per cent of Aboriginal children were on track in all five domains</p>	<p>Tasmania</p> <p>In 2021, 38.3 per cent of Aboriginal children were on track in all five domains. This was the second highest rate reported in any jurisdiction</p>
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6.74 per cent, up from a rate of 72.04 per cent in 2020. Aboriginal Support Officers provided support to 738 Aboriginal students and prospective students during the reporting period. At the University of Tasmania there were 850 Aboriginal students enrolled during 2021, with 119 Aboriginal students completing courses over the year.





Training and employment (Target Outcomes 7 and 8)

Target Outcome 7: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent

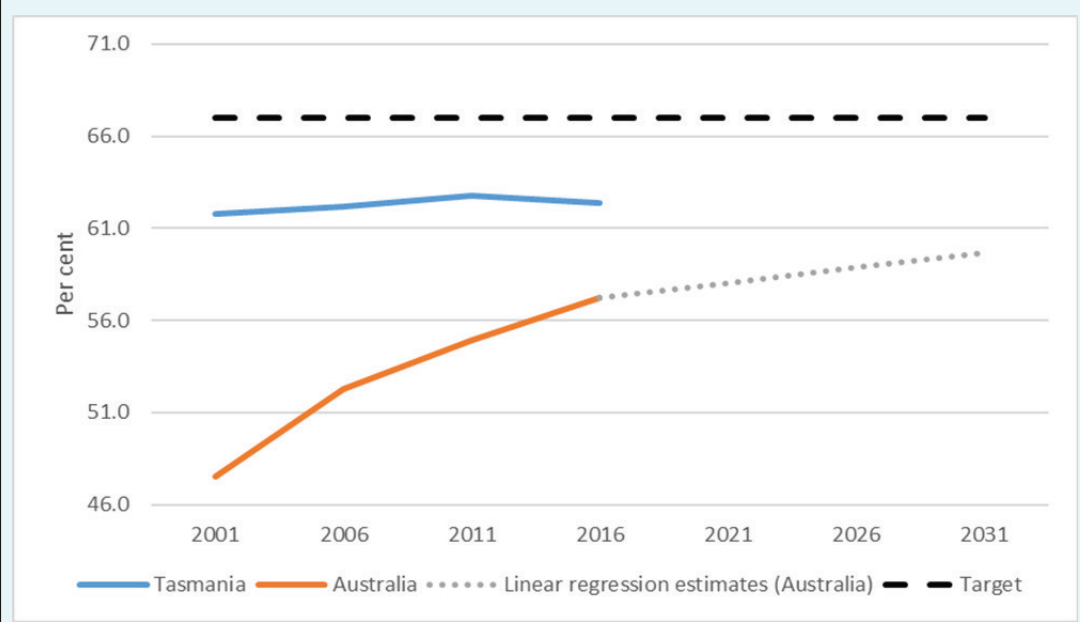
National

In 2016, 57.2 per cent of Aboriginal 15 to 24-year-olds were fully engaged in work or study

Tasmania

In 2016, 62.4 per cent of Aboriginal 15 to 24-year-olds were fully engaged in work or study. This was above the national average

Prior trends suggest little change against this target in Tasmania



Additional comments

Tasmania's health workforce strategy released in 2021, Health Workforce 2040, contains actions to increase the employment rates of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the health workforce, including funding for Aboriginal Health Worker traineeships. The traineeships will result in a recognised qualification in Aboriginal primary health care from a registered training organisation. The funding will be provided to Aboriginal community controlled organisations to deliver the traineeships. The traineeship structure has been shaped following strong collaboration between Department of Health and Aboriginal Health Service providers across the state.



The Health Workforce 2040 strategy also includes the expansion of the Ida West Aboriginal Health Scholarship program to offer seven additional scholarships per year, increasing the number of available scholarships from three to ten. These scholarships provide financial support for Aboriginal students undertaking tertiary and vocational study in health-related disciplines, in recognition of the under representation of Aboriginal people in health professions in Tasmania.

TasTAFE continues to provide a range of supports for Aboriginal people to achieve their training goals. TasTAFE Aboriginal Support Officers are well connected to local Tasmanian Aboriginal people and draw on a wide range of Aboriginal and broader networks to support Aboriginal students. These supports and connections can have significant positive outcomes for Aboriginal people. TasTAFE has increased opportunities for Aboriginal applicants and students to connect with Aboriginal Support Officers and modified the timing of communications to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to ensure they convey relevant information to their members well in advance of TasTAFE application intake periods.

Target Outcome 8: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent

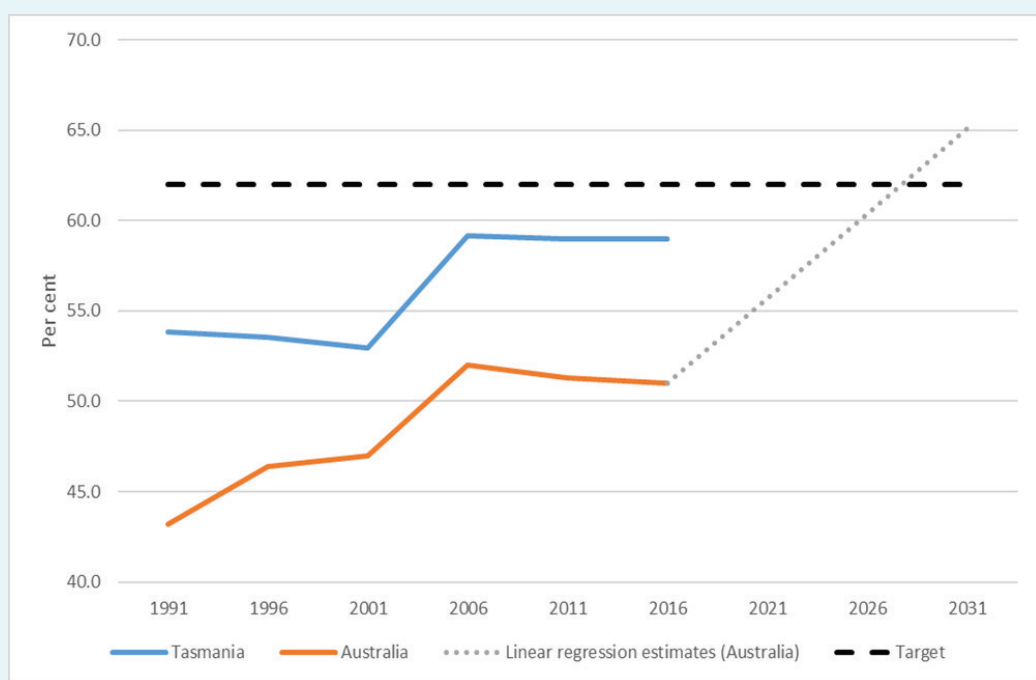
National

In 2016, 51.0 per cent of Aboriginal 25 to 64-year-olds were employed

Tasmania

In 2016, 59.0 per cent of Aboriginal 25 to 64-year-olds were employed. This was the second highest rate reported in any jurisdiction

Prior trends suggest improvement against this target in Tasmania





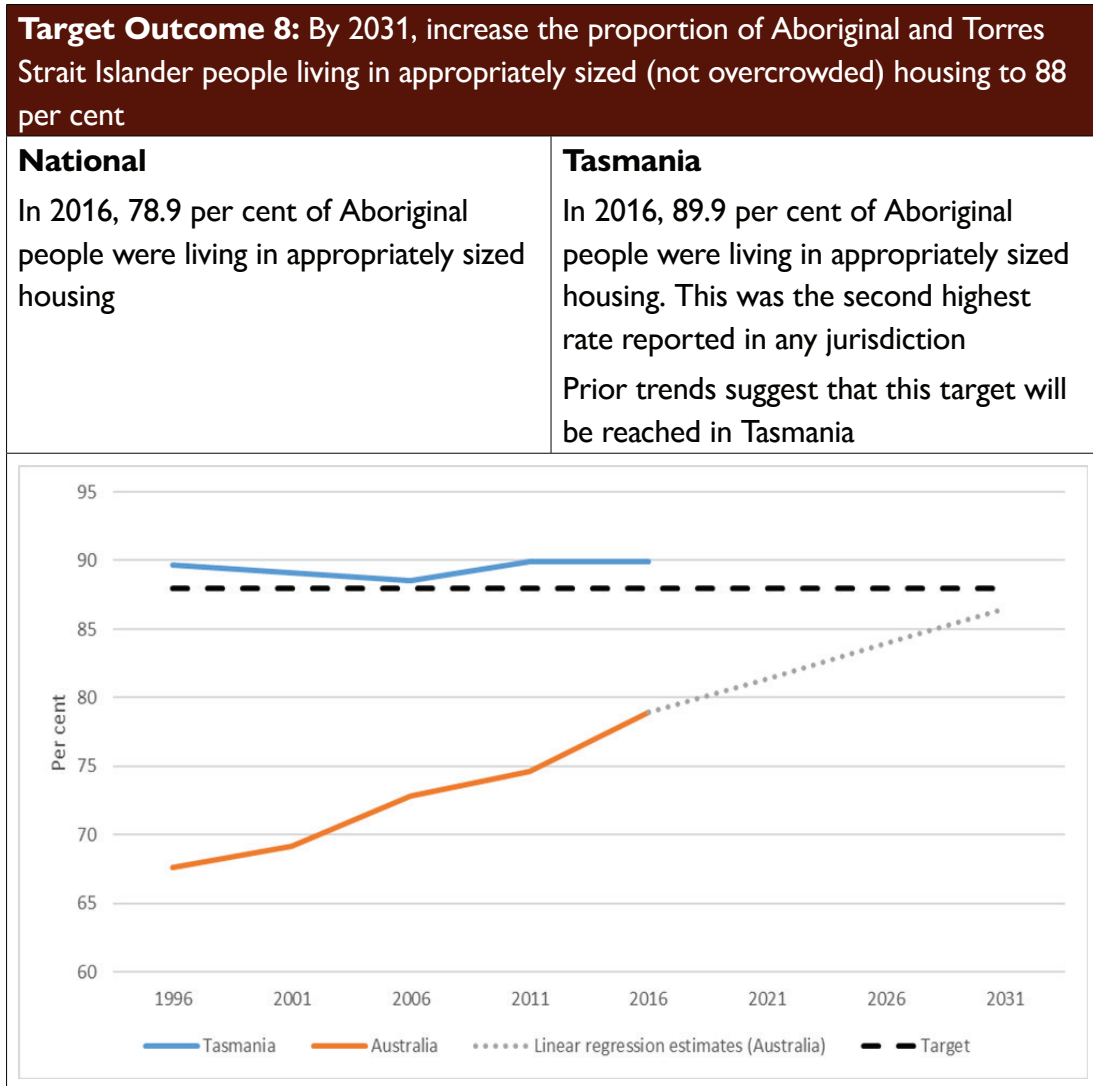
Additional comments

Jobs Tasmania in the Department of State Growth was established in July 2021, to lead the delivery of the Working Tasmania and Local Jobs for Local People agenda. Through the Regional Jobs Hub Network, Jobs Tasmania has connected services across Tasmanian communities including the Reconciliation Tasmania Employment program with the Regional Jobs Hub Network and have engage with various Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations. The West/North-West and Southcentral Regional Network Jobs Hubs include Tasmanian Aboriginal representatives. The West/North-West hub also has connections with the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation and Brumby Hill Aboriginal Corporation through employment programs. The Assistant Aboriginal Heritage Adviser program, run through Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, supports the employment of four Assistant Aboriginal Heritage Advisers in Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas who gain and share knowledge, experience, and skills to promote the recognition, protection, and management of Tasmania's unique Aboriginal cultural heritage.

In 2021, Marine Resources in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania appointed an Aboriginal Fisheries Officer to increase cultural literacy, increase engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations and people, and promote consideration of Sea Country in decision-making. The officer played a critical role in facilitating the Land and Sea Aboriginal Corporation Tasmania Abalone Deed Agreement, led consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations and people on the review of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*, and held regular sessions with Marine Resources staff to expand cultural knowledge and literacy and encourage Aboriginal engagement in Sea Country business.

In March 2022 the Minister for Primary Industries and Water signed a three year agreement with the Land and Sea Aboriginal Corporation Tasmania providing access to fish 40 State owned abalone units. The agreement provides Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance organisations with the basis for long-term access to an abalone fishery to develop cultural and commercial fishing activities subject to the same conditions of use that prevail for commercial abalone fishing operations. The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation provided funding to support the establishment of fishing operations by the Land and Sea Aboriginal Corporation Tasmania. At a local level, the agreement will create nine full-time equivalent direct and indirect jobs.

Housing (Target Outcome 9)



Additional comments

The new Tasmanian statutory housing body, Homes Tasmania, has a portfolio of properties that are only available for Aboriginal applicants.

The Homes Tasmania Board will deliver the Government’s commitment of \$1.5 billion for 10,000 new homes by 2032. This includes being able to use its \$3.5 billion balance sheet to drive more investment to create more housing solutions.

In addition to building houses, Homes Tasmania will deliver housing and specialised homelessness services for Tasmanians in response to needs, with a focus on providing safe and affordable dwellings, including support available to prevent homelessness.

This will ensure that Tasmania will have the most integrated and cohesive housing and homelessness system in the country.



As part of the Tasmanian Government’s Stronger Remote Aboriginal Services investment program, a review of long-term options for the provision, maintenance, and funding of municipal and essential services for the community on Cape Barren Island is currently underway. The review has engaged Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association to understand its ability to provide safe and reliable essential services while preserving the independence and self determination of the community.

Justice (Target Outcomes 10 and 11)

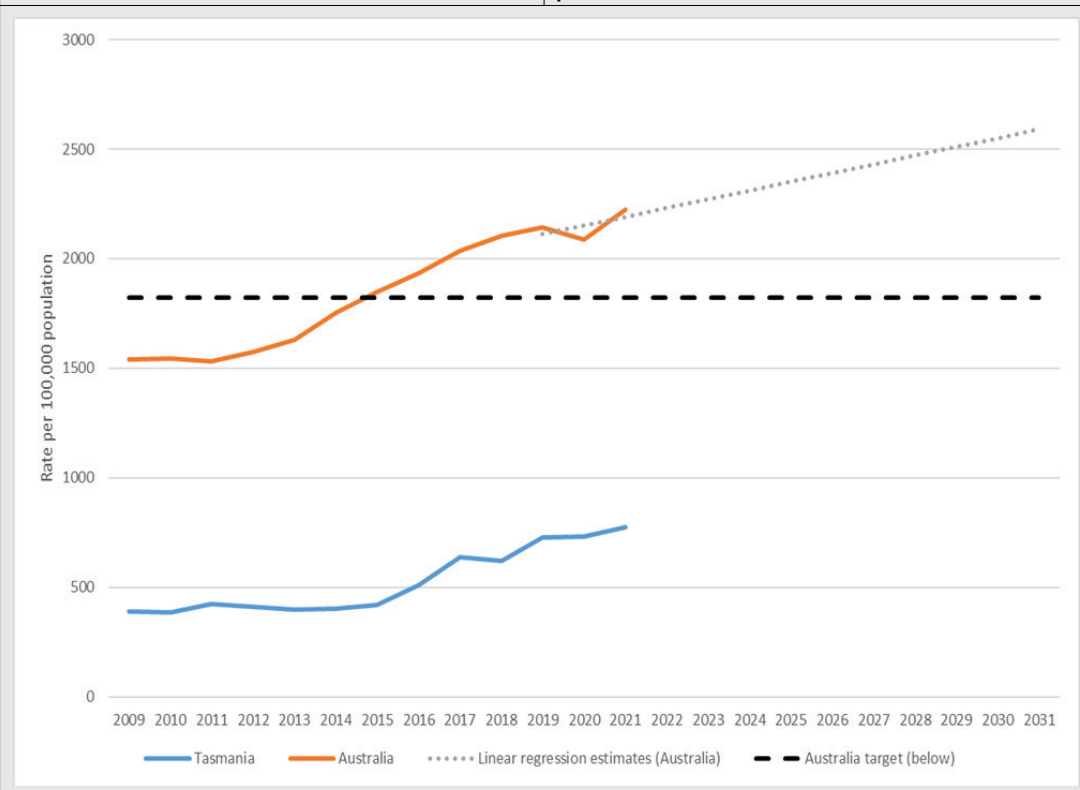
Target Outcome 10: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent

National

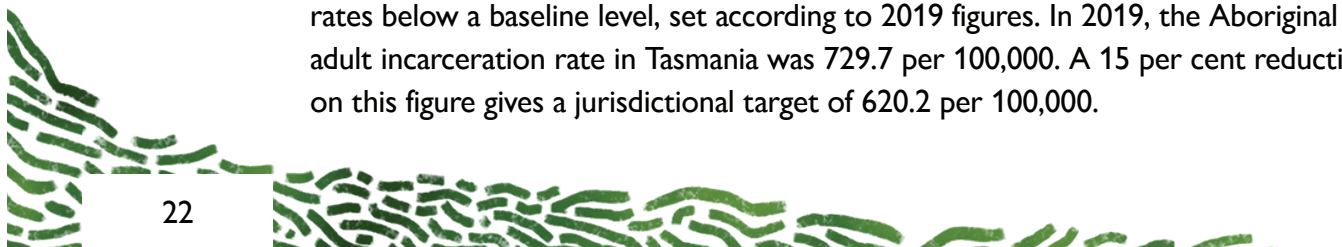
In 2021, 2,222.7 per 100,000 Aboriginal adults were incarcerated

Tasmania

In 2021, 775.8 per 100,000 Aboriginal adults were incarcerated. This was lowest rate reported in any jurisdiction, and better than the national average. Current trends suggest worsening performance



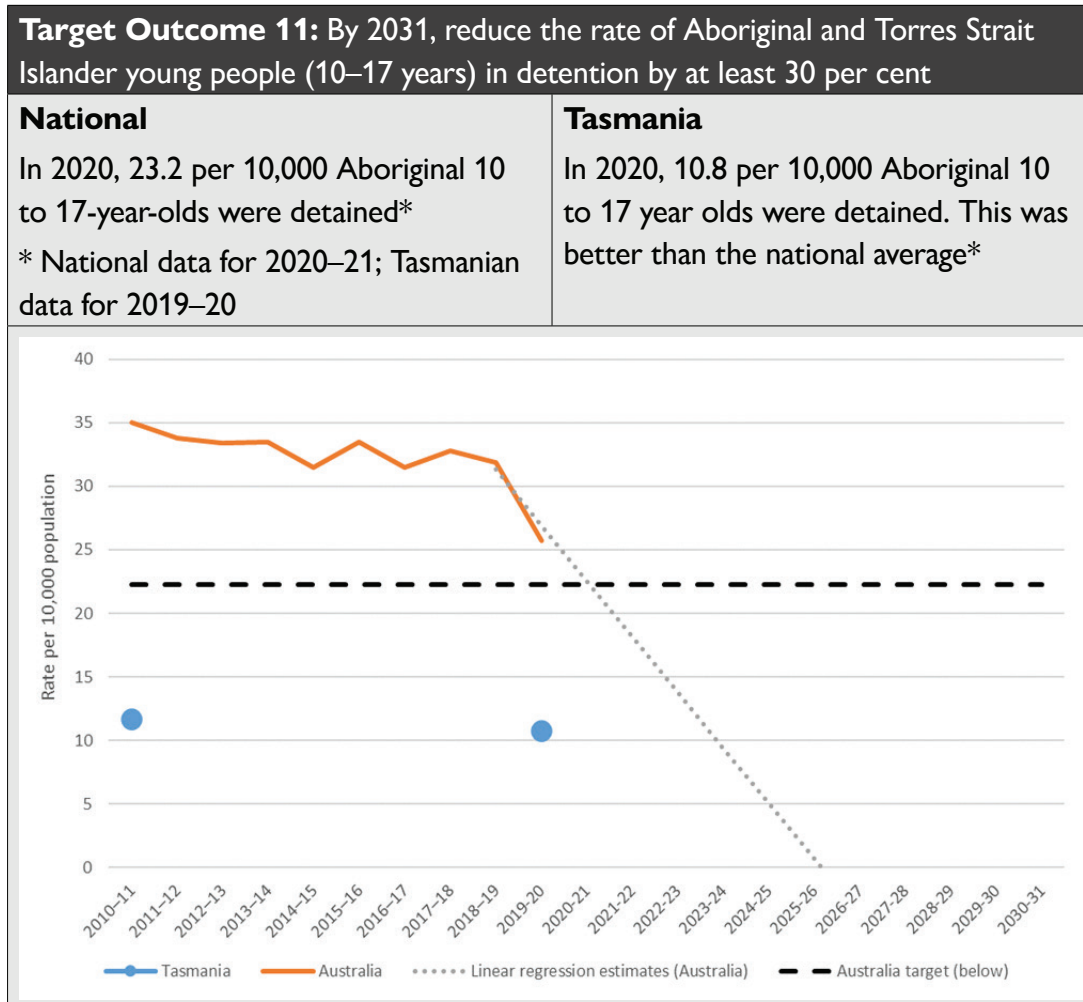
This target outcome specifies a percentage reduction in Aboriginal adult incarceration rates below a baseline level, set according to 2019 figures. In 2019, the Aboriginal adult incarceration rate in Tasmania was 729.7 per 100,000. A 15 per cent reduction on this figure gives a jurisdictional target of 620.2 per 100,000.



Additional comments

The Department of Justice considers the needs of Aboriginal people in new infrastructure projects, in regard to access for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to facilities and for offenders within these facilities. For example, the new Southern Remand Centre has accommodation options for ‘Buddy Cells’ and includes a reflective space for Aboriginal detainees.

Aboriginal prisoners in Tasmania sentenced to six months or greater are assigned a Planning/Interventions Officer and receive regular case management visits from the time of sentencing until they are released (this case management can include referrals to Aboriginal community-controlled service providers at the prisoner’s request).



This target outcome specifies a percentage reduction in Aboriginal youth detention rates below a baseline level, set according to 2018–19 figures. Tasmanian data against this target outcome is often unreportable due to small sample sizes, and there is no 2018–19 figure available to provide a jurisdictional target.



Additional comments

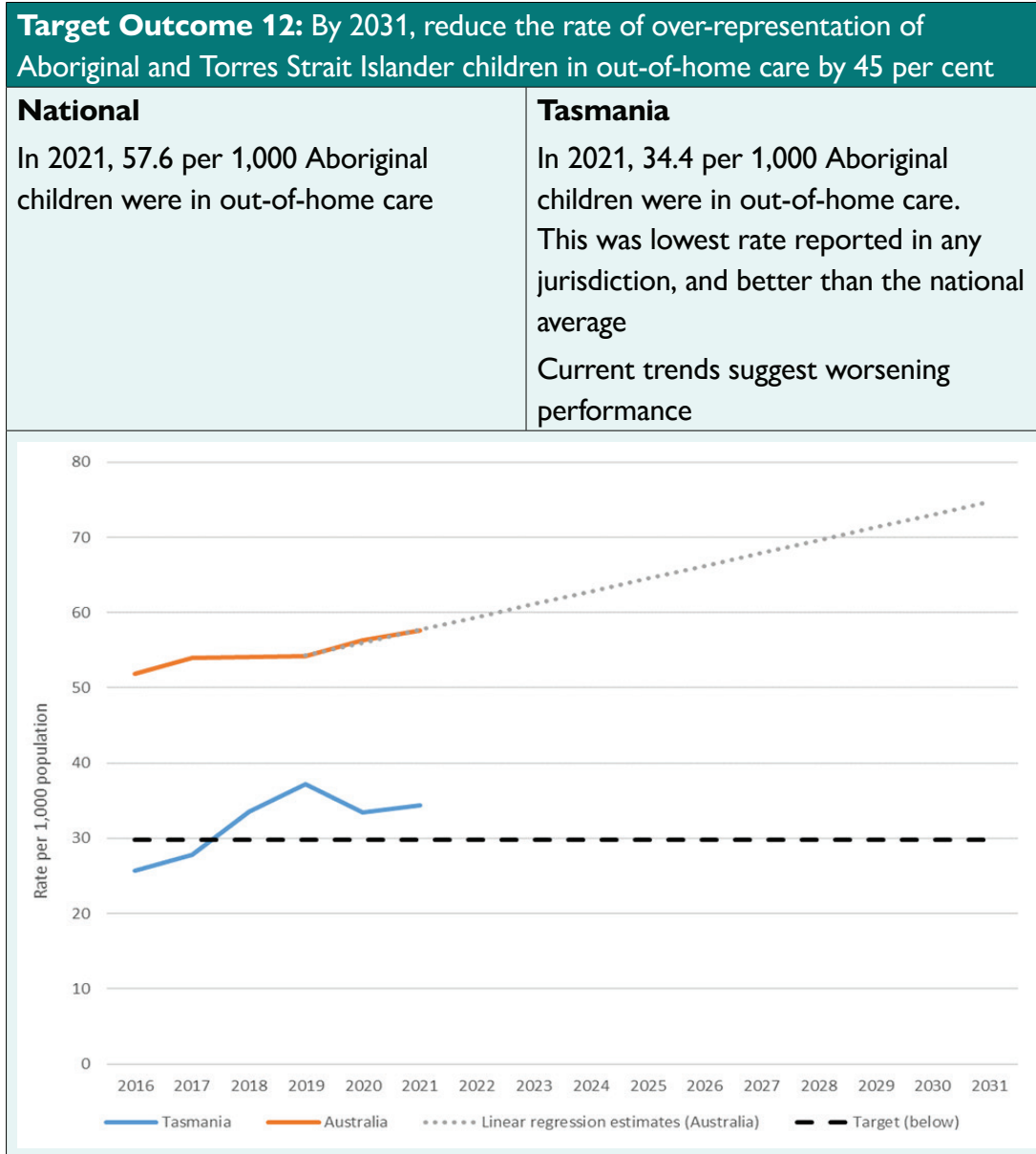
While the reliability of trend analyses of Tasmanian Aboriginal young people in custody can be affected by low numbers, our Youth Justice Reform is setting new directions for how we respond to Aboriginal young people across our Youth Justice System. This includes:

- o a greater focus on prevention and early intervention;
- o additional options to divert young people away from the formal court system;
- o a broader range of community-based sentencing options available to courts; and
- o trauma-informed, therapeutic and restorative interventions for high-risk young offenders, including new youth justice facilities.

A key priority under the Tasmanian Youth Justice Blueprint will be to reduce offending by improving formal partnerships with Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and people, and focusing on shared decision-making, service provision and governance. In June 2022 the Tasmanian Government also announced that it will raise the minimum age of detention from 10 to 14 years, noting that early exposure to a detention environment can further traumatise young people, expose them to problem behaviours of older detainees, and increase criminal networks.



Family safety and wellbeing (Target Outcomes 12, 13, and 14)



This target outcome specifies a percentage reduction in Aboriginal children in out-of-home care below a baseline level, set according to 2019 figures. In 2019, the rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care in Tasmania was 37.2 per 1,000. A 45 per cent reduction on this figure gives a jurisdictional target of 20.5 per 1,000.

Additional comments

Under our Strong Families, Safe Kids Child Safety Reforms the Tasmanian Government continues efforts to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. Our reforms have seen a steady decline in the overall numbers of all children and young people entering out-of-home care in Tasmania.



Our reforms also promote enhanced partnerships with Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to address the social determinants that lead to contact with the child safety system, to provide early supports for Aboriginal families at risk of entering the child safety system, and achieve better reunification outcomes. Aboriginal Liaison positions are now established in each region to support and work closely with Aboriginal organisations and people to facilitate increased participation in decision-making.

Child and Family Services in the Department for Education, Children and Young People, also partners with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre to ensure that Aboriginal children and young people who are receiving a service, or potentially entering care, are identified as early as possible so that they can be connected to an appropriate support organisation. Services delivered by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre include Intensive Family Support and Family Preservation Services.

The Tasmanian Government’s revised care teams and care planning approach aligns with the six domains of the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework. This will allow for reporting on additional indicators relevant to the target outcome in future.

Provisions to formalise information sharing arrangements are being progressed through a comprehensive review of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*.

Target Outcome 13: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero

National	Tasmania
In 2019, 8.4 per cent of Aboriginal women over 15 had experienced domestic physical or threatened physical harm	In 2019, 8.3 per cent of Aboriginal women over 15 had experienced domestic physical or threatened physical harm. This was almost at the national average With only one data point available, no trend can be determined

This target outcome specifies a percentage reduction in Aboriginal women experiencing family violence below a baseline level, set according to 2019 figures. In 2019, the rate of Aboriginal women experiencing family violence in Tasmania was 8.3 per cent. A 50 per cent reduction on this figure gives a jurisdictional target of 4.2 per cent.

The Tasmanian figure is based on small survey samples and with a relatively high standard of error.



Additional comments

The Tasmanian Government has delivered actions tailored to support Tasmanian Aboriginal people affected by family and sexual violence through Safe Homes, Families, Communities: Tasmania's Action Plan for family and sexual violence 2019–22 (Safe Homes, Families, Communities).

Through Action 10 of Safe Homes, Families, Communities, the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation was allocated funding of \$50,000 to deliver the Bark Hut Project - a primary prevention and early intervention project designed by the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation and local Aboriginal people using the building of traditional bark huts to explore the purpose a home serves for Aboriginal people, what makes a safe Aboriginal home, and what values are required to create a safe space and culture of respect for Aboriginal family members.

Action 17 of Safe Homes, Families, Communities responds to stakeholder input calling for integrated and multi generational responses to family violence and was developed in collaboration with Child and Family Learning Centres, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and community groups. Aboriginal Family Safety Worker positions have been established to act as conduits between Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and Child and Family Learning Centres to ensure Aboriginal women and children experiencing or affected by family violence are supported as they navigate the service system.

Tasmania's third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022–2027, Survivors at the Centre, was released in 2022. It includes actions specifically addressing Target Outcome 13, including working with Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to develop and deliver actions to decrease the number of Aboriginal women and girls in Tasmania experiencing family and sexual violence.

Target Outcome 14: Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero	
National In 2020, the suicide rate for Aboriginal people was 27.9 per 100,000	Tasmania The Australian Bureau of Statistics advises that due to the relatively small number of Aboriginal deaths recorded in Tasmania, it is not currently possible to calculate reliable Aboriginal causes of death rates for the state.

There is no headline data available against this target outcome for Tasmania.



Additional comments

Tasmania's Bilateral Agreement for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention was jointly released by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments in May 2022. The Agreement includes initiatives to increase delivery of mental health support to children and young people, with a focus on ensuring the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are addressed and services are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

Through Rethink 2020, Tasmania's mental health plan, the Department of Health works in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, Primary Health Tasmania, and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania to identify and deliver actions that support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people in Tasmania through Aboriginal Health Service providers. Under the new Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy, consultation and engagement through Aboriginal community controlled organisations will continue to ensure the adoption of targeted actions to reduce the risk of suicide among Tasmanian Aboriginal people.



Land and sea (Target Outcome 15)

Target Outcome 15a: By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests

National	Tasmania
In 2021, 4,027,232 km ² of land was subject to Aboriginal legal rights or interests	In 2021, 631 km ² of land was subject to Aboriginal legal rights or interests Prior trends suggest no change

Unlike interstate jurisdictions, in Tasmania Native Title issues, including legal rights and interests, are progressed through the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995* and the granting to Tasmanian Aboriginal people certain parcels of land of historic and cultural significance.

Additional comments

Consultation on reforms to the legislative mechanism for returning land to Tasmanian Aboriginal people - the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995* - has occurred, and legislative amendments are currently being prepared. The amendments have been informed by previous and ongoing consultations, and long consideration of the issues. The Tasmanian Government proposes to address issues including:

1. Extending the scope and intent of the Act to meet community expectations;
2. Enabling broader and more inclusive representation on the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania electoral roll;
3. Simplifying the process for land return by creating a new instrument of transfer for significant parcels of Crown land;
4. Expanding provisions for local or regional Aboriginal community organisations to play a role in land management;
5. Creating transparent processes and clear criteria for proposing and assessing land for return; and
6. Clarifying the role of the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania and require reporting of administrative and land management activity.

The amendments are expected to be introduced to Parliament by the end of the 2023. In parallel, the Tasmanian Government will progress consultation on specific land parcels so that return of land can occur as soon as possible after the legislation is amended and the improved model is operational.

Through the Interpretation and Presentation of the Aboriginal Cultural Values project, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania is finalising a Guide to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area in collaboration with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The Guide for government land managers and other agencies, tourism operators and industry, is designed to increase Tasmanian Aboriginal access to Country and involvement in



decision-making in the TWWHA. Implementation of the Guide will also provide related training and employment opportunities and will result in improvements in the authenticity and quality of interpretation available.

Through the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Heritage Awareness project, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania has developed and implemented two high-quality Aboriginal cultural and heritage resources in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and people. Aboriginal cultural respect training is delivered through a partnership between the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and the Tasmanian Government. An Aboriginal Heritage awareness online training module is publicly available via the Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania website.

The Management of At-Risk Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sites in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area project identifies at-risk Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and landscapes to determine and implement appropriate actions for their effective ongoing management, including fire management. The project involves the development of a Geographic Information Systems model for coastal and inland areas that identifies natural and cultural hazards, and field work undertaken by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage specialists, to validate the model and develop more baseline data which will inform effective management of sites and landscapes in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

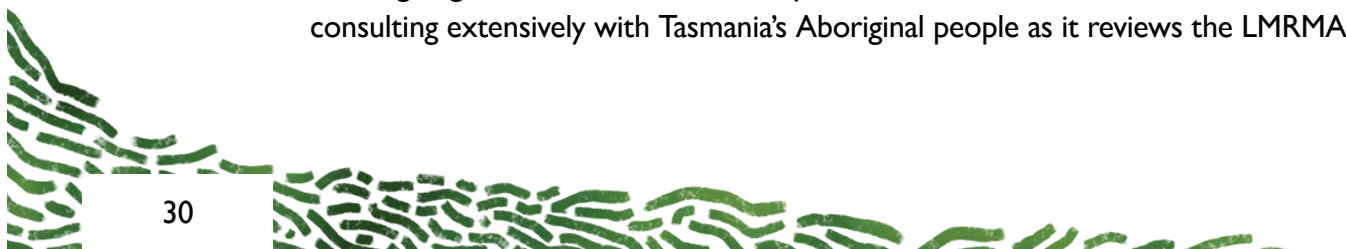
Target Outcome 15b: By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interests in the sea

National	Tasmania
In 2022, 90,555 km ² of sea was subject to Aboriginal legal rights or interests	In 2022, 0 km ² of sea was subject to Aboriginal legal rights or interests Prior trends suggest no change

Additional comments

The Tasmanian Government, through Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, is currently progressing reforms to the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995* that will specifically reference ‘Sea Country’ within the Act.

Access to living marine resources in all Tasmanian State waters is managed under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* (LMRMA). The LMRMA provides for legal access by Aboriginal people to living marine resources and to practice culture. The LMRMA is currently under review, which will include consideration of further strengthening of Aboriginal access to fisheries, involvement in management frameworks and acknowledgement of Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional and ongoing custodians of Sea Country in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government is consulting extensively with Tasmania’s Aboriginal people as it reviews the LMRMA.



Language and communication (Target Outcomes 16 and 17)

Target Outcome 16: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken

National	Tasmania
<p>In 2018–19, 123 Aboriginal languages were being spoken</p> <p>In 2018–19, 14 Aboriginal languages were classified as strong</p>	<p>Data against this target is currently reported at a national level only and not by jurisdiction.</p>

Additional comments

The Tasmanian Government’s Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy (ADNP) was first introduced in 2013 and revised in 2019. There are now 34 Aboriginal or dual names approved which are displayed on official maps, online resources, and street and road signage around the state. The revised policy establishes a five member Reference Group of experts on Aboriginal naming matters.

The Tasmanian Government also recognises the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre’s palawa kani Program which is the result of over 30 years researching and reconstructing language from historic records.

Target Outcome 17: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion

National	Tasmania
<p>In 2014–15, 73.5 per cent of Aboriginal people aged over 15 accessed the internet from home</p>	<p>In 2014–15, 85.0 per cent of Aboriginal people aged over 15 accessed the internet from home. This was the third highest rate reported in any jurisdiction, and above the national average</p> <p>With only one data point available, no trend can be determined</p>

The Closing the Gap Information Repository has no baseline data for non-Aboriginal people to compare the above data against.



Additional comments

The Tasmanian Government action plan for digital inclusion, Our Digital Future, will help increase digital inclusion for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, providing access to new options for work, education, and community connection.

Following the recommendation from the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council Final Report that 'the State Government should take an active role, working with the Australian Government, telecommunication carriers and other providers, to improve Tasmania's digital infrastructure, as a priority', the Department of State Growth is collaborating with the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Digital Strategy and Services Division, and the Department for Education, Children and Young People, to identify digital infrastructure gaps and appropriate opportunities for exploration. This work will particularly benefit Tasmanian Aboriginal people living in rural and remote areas.

In March 2021, the Government reconfirmed its commitment to build Tasmania as a confident, better connected digital economy by providing \$700,000 to extend the Digital Ready for Daily Life program to June 2025. Four Digital Ambassadors will promote the range of free digital assistance available around the State, as well as provide small group training sessions directly to our communities. The Tasmanian Government is committed to improving digital inclusion for all Tasmanians and ensuring the more vulnerable in our community are not left behind in the digital revolution.



How Tasmania is embedding the priority reforms

Priority Reform One – Formal partnerships and shared decision making

The Tasmanian Government is strengthening its working relationships with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to meet the elements of strong partnerships identified in Clauses 32 and 33 of the National Agreement.

Health

Oral Health Tasmania is working to improve its partnerships with local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in the kotalayna/Jordan River area. The healthy mukwi healthy me initiative has been developed under the guidance of the local Our Community - kotalayna Collective to help support Aboriginal children pre-birth to five years, and their families, in the kotalayna, Bridgewater, and surrounding areas. kotalayna Health Service, run by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and kotalayna Learners (a team of Department for Education, Children and Young People Aboriginal educators) are key partners. The work includes:

- Building the oral health knowledge and understanding of kotalayna Learners staff.
- Supporting kotalayna Learners staff to share information on how to prevent early childhood tooth decay.
- Supporting kotalayna Learners staff to develop healthy mukwi healthy me resources that support parents to make healthy oral behaviour choices at home.
- Planning to promote Oral Health Tasmania in local schools and supporting local Aboriginal families to access the service.
- Working with kotalayna Health and kotalayna Learners to improve referral pathways. A 'warm referral' uses the support of safe relationships that families have with other Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and the broader community to provide families with the confidence and encouragement to access services.

The healthy mukwi healthy me initiative continues to provide a safe and respectful pathway for families to access dental care and build relationships in the kotalayna/Jordan River area.

Oral Health Tasmania is collaborating with other local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations through the Connected Beginnings Program in the North and North-West to identify opportunities to introduce the healthy mukwi healthy me initiative in these communities.



Justice

Under an Australian Government grant for a Remand Prison to Work program, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service is delivering a two-year pilot program in partnership with the Tasmania Prison Service to support Aboriginal people on remand or serving short sentences. Under the program, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service works with community organisations to develop individualised case management and transition plans for Aboriginal people on remand or serving short sentences, facilitating access to post-release support services, as well as providing links to place-based culturally appropriate services.

Education

Aboriginal Education Services has engaged Tasmanian Aboriginal artists in a variety of projects including photography for the Explore Sea Country project, graphic art for Years 9–12 projects, kutalayna Collective and Explore Sea Country project logo design, and large murals for the We Love Country children’s book project. The We Love Country book project is a collaboration between Aboriginal Education Services and the Early Years team members in the Department for Education, Children and Young People, a Tasmanian Aboriginal artist, and a staff member from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. The We Love Country team of authors, artists, project managers, and early years experts worked for about a year on this resource as equal partners. A road show will celebrate the book and artwork created. The Tasmania Reads event in March 2023 highlighted the book as a ‘hero read’.



Priority Reform Two – Building the community-controlled sector

Early childhood care and development

When the Connected Beginnings program at Bridgewater was first established, funding for the program was provided via a contract between the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the (then) Tasmanian Government Department of Education. When this contract became due for renewal in late 2020, the Department of proposed that, consistent with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, the next iteration of the contract should deliver Australian Government funding directly to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre.

A new funding contract for the Bridgewater Connected Beginnings program has therefore been established between Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. The (now) Department for Education, Children and Young People remains committed to working in partnership with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre both in Bridgewater and in the new Connected Beginnings sites in the North and North West of Tasmania.

Training and employment

The Tasmanian Government made a commitment to support the development of Aboriginal Tourism Products through the allocation of \$750,000 over four years. Of this, \$450,000 was committed to continue the support for wukalina Walk and establishment of a sustainable business model.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Arts Mentoring Scheme aims to develop the capacity of young Tasmanian Aboriginal artists and cultural practitioners (25 years and under, or in their first five years of artistic practice) to undertake activities that enable them to further their careers, enrich their artistic practice and contribute to Tasmania's arts sector. This program offers four \$10,000 grants per year totalling \$40,000 per year.

The Aboriginal Arts Program supports arts activities by Aboriginal artists and organisations. Arts Tasmania's grant programs are assessed by an expert panel constituted in compliance with the *Cultural and Creative Industries Act 2017*.

Applications to these programs are assessed by Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Screen Tasmania has provided financial and non-financial assistance to the newly created Tasmanian Aboriginal production company, kutikina Productions. Emerging Tasmanian Aboriginal filmmakers have also been supported through the attachments and traineeships program, and Aboriginal writers supported through the Project Development Program.

Season 4 of 'Little J & Big Cuz' is now in production with Screen Tasmania support, with a Tasmanian Aboriginal writer having contributed several episodes for the series. Screen Tasmania has also sponsored the Nayri Niara Good Spirit Festival to provide film mentoring to attendees.



Family safety and wellbeing

On 1 July 2021, an Aboriginal Community Liaison Service was established as part of the Tasmanian Government Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line. Funding has been allocated to two Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation. The Service provides liaison positions in all three regions and aims to support and work closely with Aboriginal people to facilitate increased participation in decision-making for children and families at risk. Funding for this service has been allocated for a four-year period, enabling greater certainty.

Land and sea

The Working On-Country Ranger Program funding agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments has been renewed with a focus on working towards building greater Aboriginal-led decision making in land management and conservation. This focus guided the development of a Healthy Country Plan for the Recherche Bay region, a collaborative effort between Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, the Parks and Wildlife Service, and Tasmanian Aboriginal people, including representatives from the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation and the Karadi Aboriginal Corporation.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania is working in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and the private sector to identify opportunities for access to Sea Country fisheries investments.

The Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania Post-contact Aboriginal Heritage and Shared Values project is increasing the contribution of Tasmanian Aboriginal people's perspectives and overall involvement in managing the values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. This is being achieved through the identification of post-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage and shared values within specified areas of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, determination by Tasmanian Aboriginal people on appropriate management actions for these values, and collaboration with land managers, owners, stakeholders, and interest groups to implement management actions. Training for Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their involvement in the development of Healthy Country Plans are a key part of the project.



Priority Reform Three – Transforming government organisations

As part of recent machinery of Government changes, a new Aboriginal Partnerships division has been established in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to provide whole-of-government coordination of programs and services for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

The new division comprises Aboriginal Partnerships and Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania business units. This new division supports Closing the Gap, as well as the Tasmanian truth-telling and treaty processes, the ongoing administration of legislation to protect Aboriginal heritage and govern the model for land return, as well as leading the Aboriginal heritage and land legislative reform initiatives.

The Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy includes a target to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Tasmanian State Service to 3.5 per cent. In the TSS Employee Survey 2020, 3.2 per cent of respondents (210 people) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The result suggests that there are approximately 1,113 Aboriginal people working across the Tasmanian State Service at present.

The State Service Management Office is working on a Whole-of-Government Engagement and Support Guideline to help Aboriginal employees and managers clarify, inform, and promote leave entitlements for Aboriginal people. The proposal includes Aboriginal Cultural Leave and Aboriginal Family Relationships provisions.

During 2021 and 2022, Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal Cultural Respect Training, specifically designed and delivered by Tasmanian Aboriginal people for Tasmanian State Service employees as a consistent whole-of-Government approach, was delivered state-wide, covering 16 agencies and 357 Tasmanian State Service employees.

The State Service Management Office maintains a Calendar of Aboriginal Significant Dates and Events and promotes significant local and national Aboriginal events and commemorative days across Tasmanian Government agencies. The State Service Management Office encourages and supports the consistent delivery of Acknowledgements of Aboriginal People and Country in the workplace across Tasmanian Government agencies.

Health

The Department of Health Improving Aboriginal Cultural Respect Across Tasmania's Health System Action Plan aims to transform the Department to create culturally safe health services, environments, and workplaces for Aboriginal people. A Steering Committee co-chaired by representatives of the Department of Health and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has been established to implement the Plan. A Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group has been established to oversee and review implementation actions.



Notable progress against key actions in the plan include:

- The Launceston General Hospital established rana rrala payngana rrala/Strong Body Strong Mind Aboriginal Action group with representation from Aboriginal Elders and people in Northern Tasmania.
- The Royal Hobart Hospital developed its cultural respect action plan – waranta tunapri/Everybody’s Business – and has established an identified Aboriginal Social Worker position.
- Aboriginal Elders developed a First Nation People’s Health Needs Protocol and a Cultural Capability Checklist for the Tasmanian Health Service North.
- Public Health Services developed a suite of resources to help health services and staff become more culturally respectful, including a video series sharing experiences and advice from Tasmanian Aboriginal community members.
- An identified Aboriginal Health Policy Officer position has been appointed in the Public Health Services.
- Senior management staff have completed face-to-face cultural competency training on Country.
- 8,000 Departmental staff have completed an updated cultural respect eLearning module.

The Health nayri (Good Health) Art Project recognises that culturally respectful communication and environments are the foundation for delivery of accessible, culturally responsive and safe health care. The project engaged an Aboriginal artist to create artwork depicting Tasmanian Aboriginal people’s good health for display in health facilities; and enabled the development of a suite of corporate templates displaying elements of Health nayri for Department of Health business units to use as health promotion materials.

In re-negotiating funding agreements with non-government organisations delivering alcohol and other drug services and mental health services in the community, the Department of Health has added a requirement that each organisation must demonstrate that its workforce is suitably qualified and trained, in culturally sensitive and inclusive practices.

Disability

The Disability Services unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet is collaborating with National Disability Insurance Agency-funded disability service providers to encourage and support culturally safe and responsive approaches to the needs of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people with disability, and to better understand locally relevant data about access and accessibility to disability support services for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Education

Aboriginal Education Services in the Department for Education, Children and Young People is undergoing a restructure to ensure Aboriginal staff are better supported in regional teams to provide culturally responsive programs and support for learners of all ages.


A variety of professional learning opportunities have been designed and delivered by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of Aboriginal Education Services staff, these have been made available to staff across Department for Education, Children and Young People, Catholic and independent schools. Invitations are open to Tasmanian Aboriginal people with several people attending and providing feedback. When presenting the workshops Aboriginal Education Services staff ensure that Aboriginal voices are heard. Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre language policies and naming conventions are used if questions are raised about palawa kani during professional learning sessions. The Department has developed a clearer career pathway providing Aboriginal people within Aboriginal Education Services with greater support to progress within the Tasmanian State Service, and to increase employment opportunities.

Training and employment

TasTAFE Executive members completed an Aboriginal Cultural Capability (Trauma Informed) Development Program during 2022, ahead of plans to expand the program and make it broadly available to TasTAFE managers and staff.

The Cultural and Creative Industries Recovery Strategy: 2020 and Beyond commits to developing continued relationships with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations and people, offering capacity building opportunities and providing support for specific arts, screen and tourism programs and events. Under the guidance of Tasmanian Aboriginal representative organisations and practitioners, the Strategy will work to develop a range of initiatives, which may include:

- Provision of identified funding opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal artists through grants and residency opportunities;
- Continuing to support and uphold the Indigenous Art Code, which supports and advocates for First Nations to self-determine and control their own art and culture;
- A review of Respecting Cultures in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal representatives to broaden the scope of the strategy to develop a Cultural Awareness and Practice Plan for use across the Cultural and Tourism Development Division;
- Developing an Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Plan to appropriately and respectfully guide opportunities for investment in cultural tourism.



Reinvigorating the Respecting Cultures resource (Department of State Growth) is expected to provide guidance to the cultural and creative industries in Tasmania, including events, the tourism industry, arts organisations and screen-makers, to help deliver positive and respectful engagement and negotiations with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Justice

Department of Justice divisions are now required to report quarterly to the Agency Executive on initiatives and work relating to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Department of Justice launched broad Cultural Awareness, Unconscious Bias and Trauma Informed Practice Training in 2022. The Department has become a member of the Diversity Council of Australia, which provides access to a range of resources and research on the inclusion of Aboriginal people in workplaces.

The Department of Justice is continuing work to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal people to roles within the Department, and supports Aboriginal employees to attend relevant cultural professional development opportunities such as the State Service Aboriginal Employee Gathering and Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre courses.

The Tasmanian Prison Service participates in a national working group addressing Aboriginal people's concerns with correctional services as part of the Corrective Services Administrators' Council. The Council's Indigenous Issues Working Group is responsible for the development of a strategic framework that identifies common challenges and principles for the management of offenders.

Family safety and wellbeing

Child and Family Services in the Department for Education, Children and Young People has worked with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre to develop and deliver individualised packages of services for Aboriginal children and young people in care, including packages for case management, mentoring, and transport for family visits. Child and Family Services have also been working to ensure that appropriate Aboriginal representation is included in care teams and other decision-making forums to ensure engagement in decision making for Aboriginal children and young people. A Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre staff member was co-located in the Tasmanian Government Child Safety Service in the South for a period during 2021.

Land and sea

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania is identifying ways in which land management planning and conservation can respect Aboriginal knowledge and culture, requiring changes to policy and practice. The Working On-Country Ranger Program is a critical part of building capacity of the Department and of Aboriginal community controlled organisations in culturally informed land management practices.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania is supporting formal partnerships and shared decision-making through development of culturally safe and appropriate guidelines for engaging Tasmanian Aboriginal people on Aboriginal freshwater interests. The Department has partnered with local Tasmanian Aboriginal people and organisations when developing water management plans for individual catchment areas, adding cultural preambles explaining the importance of freshwater to Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Heritage in the Department of Premier and Cabinet has been undertaking extensive consultation and information sharing activities to develop new Aboriginal cultural heritage protection legislation and to amend the legislation governing the return of land to Aboriginal people in Tasmania. The proposed revisions to the Aboriginal Lands Act seek to make the model for land return more inclusive by enabling participation by greater numbers of Aboriginal people, improve transparency and simplify the process for transferring land, increase accountability of the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania to Tasmanian Aboriginal people, provide land management roles for place based Aboriginal community organisations, and clarify that the scope of the Act includes sea and freshwater Country.

Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania has also progressed a suite of projects working with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations and people to better understand and protect Aboriginal heritage in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, for example the Rock Art in the Landscape and Seascape project. This project aims to improve understanding of Aboriginal rock markings within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and determine the associated cultural and natural risks to these sites. Importantly, in recent years Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania has facilitated involvement in cultural values projects – including on country access visits – for more than 100 Aboriginal people, on average, each year.



Priority Reform Four – Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Health

The Department of Health Improving Aboriginal Cultural Respect Across Tasmania's Health System Action Plan identifies data as a focus area and outlines actions to improve recording of Aboriginal identity when accessing health services, recognised as important for measuring improvements in health outcomes, supporting service planning, and connecting Aboriginal clients to relevant and appropriate services.

The Department is investigating ways to improve Aboriginal data sovereignty and access to Aboriginal health data and information by Tasmanian Aboriginal people at a regional level, and is seeking to improve the quality of data it collects:

- In May 2020, a change was made to the Patient Administration System to make the capture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status mandatory at every presentation to a Tasmanian Health Service facility.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Respect in Health Services eLearning module includes activities designed to support staff to ask the identity question consistently and appropriately.
- The Department has developed additional resources to be ongoing reminders of the need for staff to 'Ask the Question' and to encourage Aboriginal people to identify as such when accessing mainstream health services.
- The 'Ask the Question' resources have been distributed across Tasmanian mainstream health services during 2022.

Oral Health Tasmania has strengthened the data collection process within its patient information management program to ensure accurate data is available regarding access to its services by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Disability

The Disability Services unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet participates in ongoing work to develop the National Disability Data Asset which will link data across government allowing a more consistent view of Aboriginal people's access to services. The Unit contributed to national Disability Sector Strengthening Plan Working Group work to establish a national Disability Sector Strengthening Plan, and collaborated with other sectors including health, housing, and early childhood care and education to establish consistent Sector Strengthening Plans across these areas in Tasmania.

Education

Aboriginal Education Services has been using Department for Education, Children and Young People and Australian Early Development Census data to allocate staff to schools with the greatest identified need. Greater efforts are being made to

collect and refine data for Aboriginal students, including attendance, suspensions, wellbeing, curriculum attainment, and kindergarten development checks. Data is shared with principals and Child and Family Learning Centre leaders on request, and work is under way for schools, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and people to have access to this data by default.

Training and employment

Business Tasmania in the Department of State Growth has incorporated a new question in its funding program application that allows the applicant to identify as an Aboriginal business (they can select 'prefer not to say'). Incorporating this question will enable the collection of data and review of funding allocations being awarded to Aboriginal owned businesses.

Justice

The Department of Justice is currently progressing interagency data sharing agreements that will facilitate the sharing of existing data on a more formal basis, including, but not limited to, data relating to Aboriginal people. The Department of Justice expects these agreements will improve data sharing both across government and with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

The Department is also considering options to tailor existing systems as required to capture more qualitative data relating to Aboriginal people and provide the ability to produce reports for analysis and insights. Work has commenced with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service to identify data that would assist in this analysis. Potential improvements to data quality, completeness and reporting relating to Aboriginal identification regarding births, deaths and marriages is also underway.

Family safety and wellbeing

Ongoing data improvement efforts have reduced the proportion of children with an unknown Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status in out-of-home care in Tasmania, increasing the quality of reporting on several indicators relevant to Closing the Gap. Future improvements will increase the accuracy of recording the disability status of children in out-of-home care as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status of carers.

Local Government

The Office of Local Government in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, in collaboration with the Local Government Association of Tasmania, has completed an audit of Tasmanian councils that captures the existing work of local government to ensure alignment with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and Target Outcomes.



Partnership actions

Policy Partnerships

To support and oversee the Closing the Gap Policy Partnership framework, the Tasmanian Government has also established a cross-agency Combined Peak and Government Working Group that includes the Department of Premier and Cabinet; Department of Health; Department of Justice; Department for Education, Children and Young People; and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

Justice Policy Partnership

The Justice Policy Partnership commenced in August 2021 and was the first of the five policy partnerships established under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Combined Peaks and Government Policy Partnership Working Group has assisted with the completion of Justice Policy Partnership work plan actions, including a review of existing partnerships between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and governance arrangements across justice and human services.

The Deputy Secretary Corrective Services is the Tasmanian Government representative for the policy partnership. There are no Tasmanian Aboriginal representatives.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership

The Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership was endorsed by the Joint Council in August 2022. The Department of Health is currently working with Tasmanian Coalition of Peaks representative to determine Tasmania's priorities for the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership.

The Tasmanian Deputy Chief Psychiatrist is the Tasmanian Government representative on the policy partnership. There are no Tasmanian Aboriginal representatives.

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership was endorsed by the Joint Council in August 2022.

The Tasmanian Government representative on the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership is the Deputy Secretary Support and Development from the Department for Education, Children and Young People. One of the Coalition of Peaks representatives on the policy partnership is the Manager of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Child Care Program.

Tasmania has identified that child protection is a high priority and has suggested that the work of the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership be split into two separate policy partnerships, to reflect differences between childcare and early childhood education policy and service issues, and child protection policy and service issues.

Sector strengthening plans

The National Agreement commits Parties to develop plans for strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled service sectors of early childhood care and development, housing, health, and disability.

The sector strengthening plans focus on:

- growing and refining programs and services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- building partnerships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers; and
- transferring the delivery of programs and services from government providers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers where appropriate.

The actions proposed in the sector strengthening plans are structured around four broad workstreams:

- workforce;
- capital infrastructure;
- service provision; and
- governance.

Officials from the Tasmanian Government Department of Health, Department of Communities, and Department for Education, Children and Young People participated in the Working Groups to develop the sector strengthening plans, which have been endorsed by the relevant Tasmanian Government portfolio Ministers.

The Aboriginal Partnerships team has brokered meetings between relevant Tasmanian Government agencies, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and other Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, to identify priorities for Tasmania in the near and longer term, and how they can be delivered in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Data Development Plan

Representatives from the Tasmanian Government and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre participated in the Data and Reporting Working Group that drafted the Closing the Gap Data Development Plan, which was endorsed by Joint Council at its August 2022 meeting.

Preliminary work by Tasmanian Government officers has identified multiple data collections relevant to the data development items identified in the National Agreement that may be suitable for disaggregation, sharing and integration to help improve Tasmania's Closing the Gap reporting capacity. Data has been identified across education, children and young people, housing, police, health, and justice.



Next steps

The Tasmanian Government is committed to implementing the National Agreement in full, taking direct action to close the gap across the socio-economic target outcomes and working in partnership across the four priority reform areas to transform the delivery of Government services and programs.

Our continued focus will be on supporting Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to build their capacity to deliver services that better suit the needs of their local community.

This will involve working with the Tasmanian Coalition of Peaks partner, other Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations, and Tasmanian Aboriginal people to co-design new transitional planning arrangements, grow partnership arrangements, and investigate transformative and sustainable funding opportunities within the sector.

The Coalition of Peaks partner, and other Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, have identified child safety and wellbeing as a key priority for Closing the Gap in Tasmania. Tasmania will therefore focus effort toward improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people, acknowledging that improving outcomes for Aboriginal children contributes toward improving outcomes for all Aboriginal people in the long-term.

The Tasmanian Government looks forward to developing our next Closing the Gap Implementation Plan for 2024–26, in partnership with our Tasmanian Coalition of Peaks representative, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and all other Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations.

**Department of
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