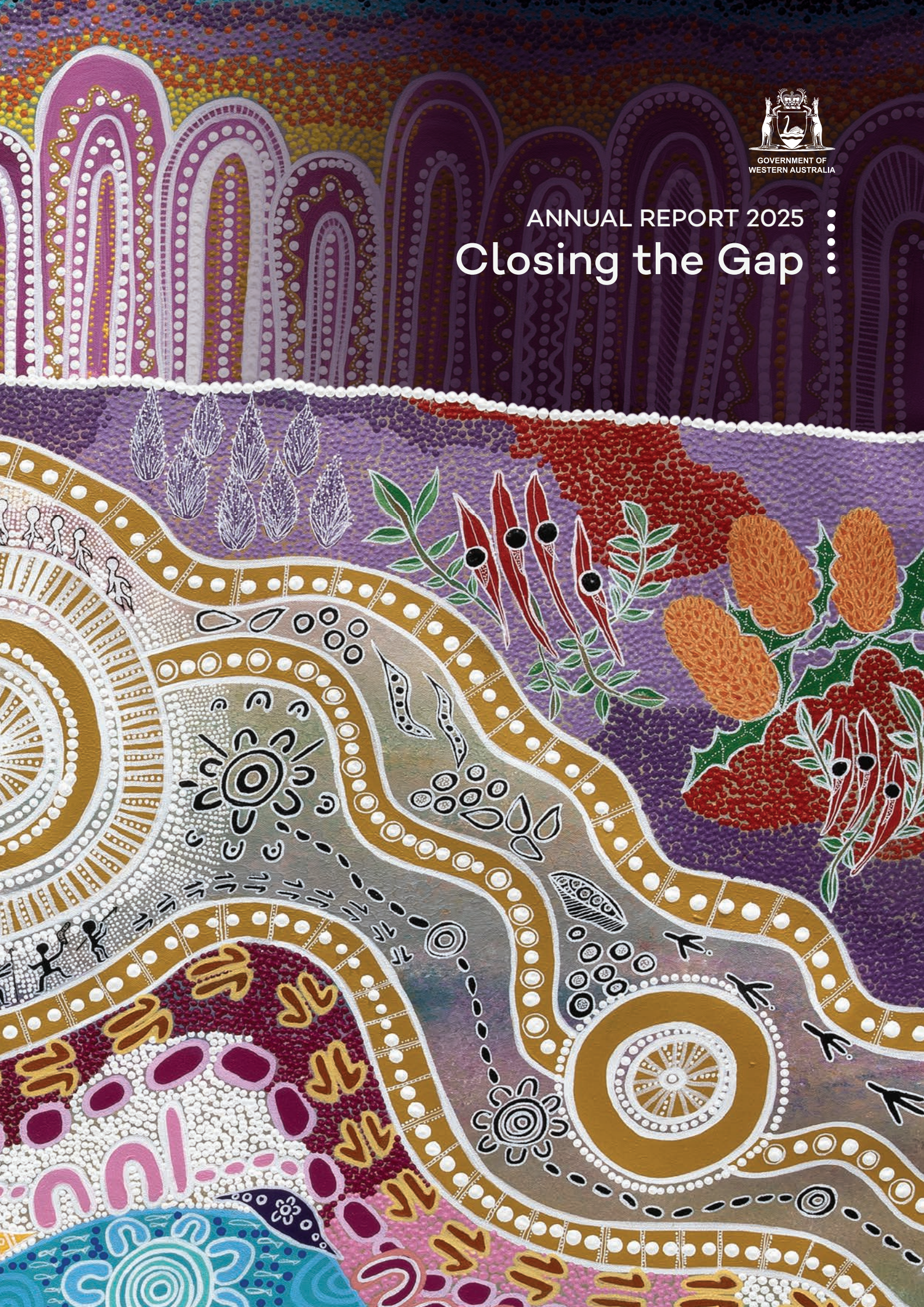




ANNUAL REPORT 2025 :  
**Closing the Gap** :





## Acknowledgement of Country

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of Western Australia's Aboriginal Communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

## A note about language

In this document, the term Aboriginal people is used in preference to "Indigenous" or "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" people, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia.

Together, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up the First Nations of Australia; however, Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia have unique cultures, identities and histories, distinct from those of Aboriginal people. On average, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have different socioeconomic profiles and face different challenges, despite sharing several common experiences, including a history of racial discrimination. Some families have both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, and this rich diversity is acknowledged and celebrated.

Please be aware this publication may contain the names and/or images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may now be deceased.

# Malga Garrimanha

## Standing Strong

This painting is about teaching our future kids about their Culture before they take the path of Education, Employment, Lifestyle and fitting into Community.



This painting also represents going back to bush, On Country and practising our culture. It's about taking our kids back to the rivers on a fishing trip and having a big cook-up together as a family.

### **About the artist – Leeann Kelly-Pedersen**

I am a Wajarri/Nhanda woman from the Midwest of Western Australia. My parents are Wajarri woman Dawn Flanagan/Hamlett, who is a recognised artist of the Midwest & has won

many Art Awards that was exhibited in the Morawa/Mullewa/Geraldton/Perth Galleries. My father is Steven Kelly who is a Nhanda man from Carnarvon. His family are from the Kalbarri/Northampton area whose ancestors lived along the Murchison River near Kalbarri. My father has worked on most Midwest Cattle/Sheep Stations & Farms as a Labourer.

My love of Art came to me quite early as a child. My favourite subject at school was Art. I am known in the Geraldton community for my artwork and my past position in the Irra Wangga Language Centre involved in reviving & maintaining Aboriginal languages in the Midwest Region. I tell my grandchildren my stories & teach them about my culture. They are turning into excellent little artists with their artwork being sold in the Gwoonwardu Mia Cultural Centre Carnarvon where I currently have some artwork for sale. My artwork consists of my life experiences, places I have been to, things I have seen during my lifetime and my cultural experiences. I love collecting quondong & the bush pear. I make jewellery from the quondong seeds. My inspiration from my artwork comes from my mother who is a recognised artist. She tells stories about “old aboriginal” stories from her life & stories from her elders about special places and things from what she has experienced during her life. I also am inspired by my sisters Carlene & Vanessa Kelly who are also great artists.



## Public Sector Reform 2025

On 31 March 2025, the WA Government announced targeted Public Sector Reform of ten government departments to align with the incoming Government's priorities. Changes to departmental arrangements took effect on 1 July 2025.

This report outlines the actions taken by departments towards Closing the Gap for the 2024–25 Financial Year, before the Public Sector Reform changes took effect. As a result, naming conventions prior to the 1 July 2025 changes have been used throughout to reflect those in place during the reporting period.



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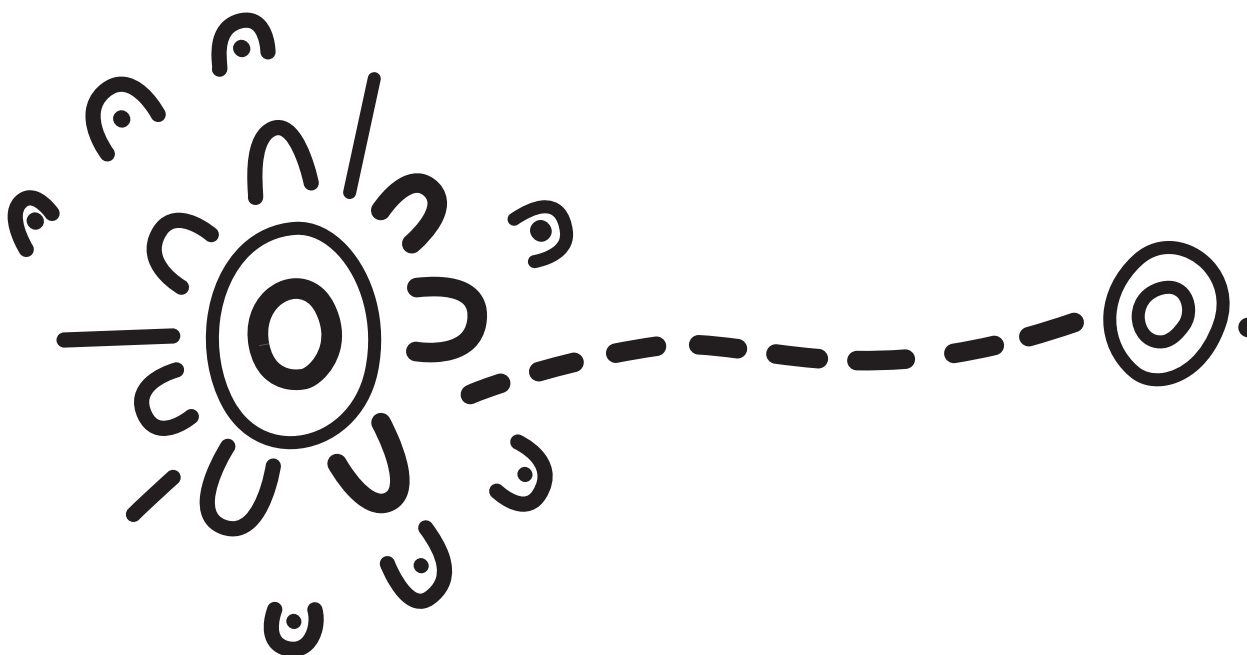
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# Message from the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA

The Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia (AACWA) welcomes the WA Closing the Gap 2025 Annual Report as an important account of the WA Government's progress in implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including the four Priority Reforms and 19 Socioeconomic Targets.

As the WA Government's key strategic partner on Aboriginal affairs, AACWA provides advice, advocacy and guidance to support the effective implementation of the National Agreement and the embedding of the Priority Reforms across the whole of government. Central to this role is strengthening accountability, elevating Aboriginal voices and influencing systemic change so that policies and programs deliver meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities.

This Annual Report reflects a shift in approach. It is more streamlined, outcome-focused and places greater emphasis on the Priority Reforms as the primary drivers of change. This aligns with the findings of the 2024 Productivity Commission Review of the National Agreement and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Review, which made clear that progress will not be achieved without structural reform, genuine partnership and shared decision-making. Transforming government systems to work with, rather than for, Aboriginal people is essential.





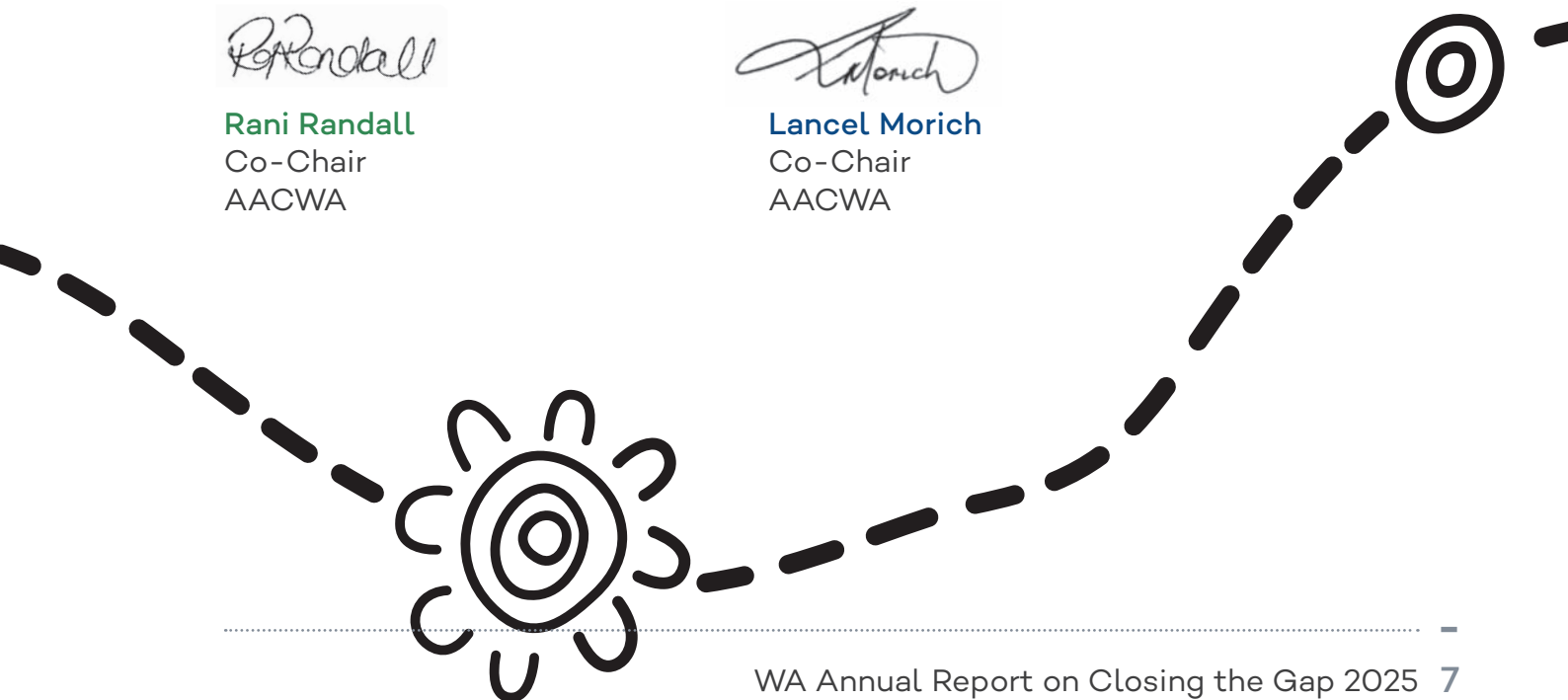
AACWA acknowledges early signs of this transformation, particularly in efforts to strengthen shared governance and support the Aboriginal community-controlled sector. These themes were strongly reinforced at the Culture at the Heart Forum, coordinated by AACWA, where collaboration and Aboriginal-led accountability were central. When Aboriginal advisory groups, peaks and communities are meaningfully involved in setting direction, providing oversight and holding government to account, decisions are grounded in culture, community and local need.


There is clear evidence that outcomes improve when Aboriginal people lead the design and delivery of programs and services. This is reflected in initiatives such as the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership and the Youth Justice Reform Partnership, where Aboriginal leadership is shaping priorities and guiding reform.

While this Annual Report demonstrates progress, it also reinforces that much more must be done, and with urgency. Achieving the Closing the Gap Targets will require sustained commitment to shared decision-making, genuine partnership and adequately resourced reform. AACWA remains committed to its role as an advocate, advisor and collaborator in holding government accountable and supporting the transformation required to deliver equitable outcomes for Aboriginal people across Western Australia.

**Rani Randall**  
Co-Chair  
AACWA

**Lancel Morich**  
Co-Chair  
AACWA





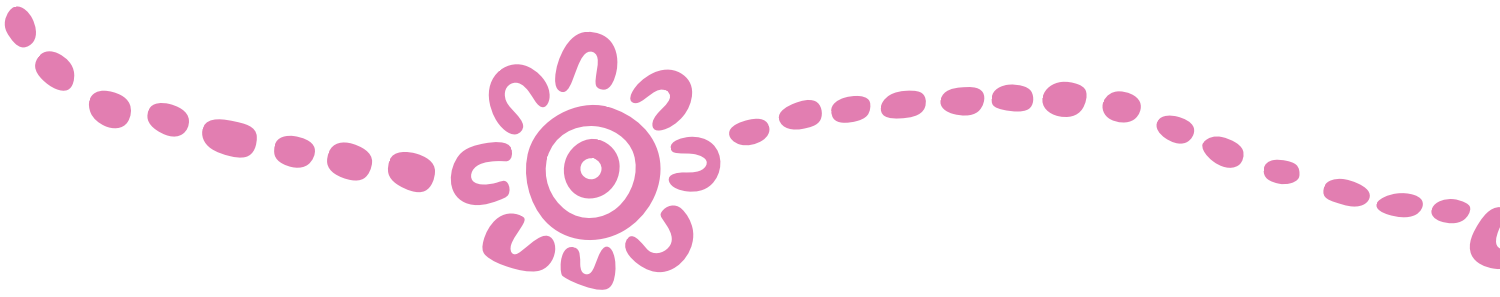
# Message from Aboriginal Health Council of WA and Council of Aboriginal Services WA

The Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) and the Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA) are united as partners in delivering the Western Australian Closing the Gap 2024–25 Annual Report. As peak bodies representing the Aboriginal community-controlled health and broader community services sectors respectively, we remain committed to advancing Aboriginal-led decision making, culturally secure service delivery, and genuine and meaningful accountability in the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Over the past year, there have been some encouraging steps toward strengthening shared governance, including more consistent ministerial engagement, increased visibility of Aboriginal leadership at the Cabinet level, and the establishment of partnership structures intended to recognise the cultural authority and expertise of our sectors. These reforms reflect a growing recognition that Closing the Gap can only be achieved when Aboriginal people drive the policies and systems that affect our communities.

The progress highlighted in this Report demonstrates the value and impact of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) when they are appropriately resourced and empowered to lead. Across Western Australia, ACCOs continue to deliver programs and services grounded in culture, community knowledge and lived experience – from health and healing initiatives to early years, justice, and housing responses. These approaches consistently demonstrate that Aboriginal designed and Aboriginal-led solutions are central to improving outcomes for our people. We welcome the ongoing commitment to strengthening ACCO capability, including investments in workforce development, regional leadership, and transition pathways that strengthen the cultural security of services across WA.

At the same time, the outcomes across many of the socioeconomic targets highlight that progress remains uneven and, in some cases, is moving in the wrong direction. For many Aboriginal people and communities in Western Australia, improvements are not yet being felt. This reinforces what Aboriginal leaders and communities have long articulated: structural reform must deepen,



accountability must be stronger, and government systems must embed cultural authority, equity, and respect at every level. The next Implementation Plan period must therefore focus on accelerating whole of government change, dismantling systemic barriers, and ensuring that the Priority Reforms guide not just policy intent, but everyday practice and decision-making across government.

AHCWA and CASWA reaffirm our shared commitment to holding government accountable, strengthening our ACCO sectors, and ensuring data, decision-making and service design are centred on Aboriginal communities and cultures. Through the establishment of the new Alliance between our peaks and the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA, we look forward to a strengthened partnership that provides clearer oversight, stronger transparency and more consistent influence in shaping Closing the Gap outcomes.

We acknowledge the resilience, cultural knowledge and leadership of Aboriginal people across Western Australia. It is their voices, aspirations and rights that remain at the heart of this work. As we enter the 2026–28 Implementation Plan period, our expectation is clear: progress must accelerate, partnerships must be genuine, and systems must change in ways that honour the strength of our communities and support our children, families and Elders to thrive.

Together, we remain committed to working toward a future where the goals of Closing the Gap are reflected not only in policy commitments, but in the lived experiences for all Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

**Vicki O'Donnell OAM**  
Chairperson of Aboriginal Health  
Council of Western Australia,  
Member Western Australia Coalition  
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Peak Organisations

**Chris Bin Kali**  
Chairperson of the Council of  
Aboriginal Services WA

# Message from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

I am pleased to deliver the 2025 Annual Report on the Cook Labor Government's progress on Closing the Gap. Throughout this year, the WA Government strengthened its approach to the Priority Reforms by deepening shared decision-making with Aboriginal peak bodies; supporting the growth of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector; improving cultural capability across government; and expanding access to data that empowers communities. These reforms are essential to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people in WA across health, education, housing, justice, economic development and cultural wellbeing.

As we enter the new 2026–28 Implementation Plan period, the WA Government remains dedicated to supporting Aboriginal leadership, strengthening regional decision-making and embedding culturally secure, place-based approaches across all areas of service delivery. Our focus is on transformation and on building a future where all Aboriginal people in Western Australia can thrive.

The WA Government will continue to align policy, funding and accountability mechanisms to the priorities identified by Aboriginal people and communities. We recognise that genuine progress requires sustained commitment, transparent reporting and a willingness to engage in meaningful systemic change. Through stronger partnerships, clearer measures of success and a shared focus on outcomes that matter most to communities, we remain resolute in advancing Closing the Gap as a whole of government responsibility.

I acknowledge and thank the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA, and our Coalition of Peaks partners, the Aboriginal Health Council of WA and the Council of Aboriginal Services WA, for their critical role in implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the strengthened role they will have as we embed increased accountability under the 2026–28 Implementation Plan. We will continue to walk alongside Aboriginal people to ensure the Closing the Gap agenda delivers meaningful and lasting change.



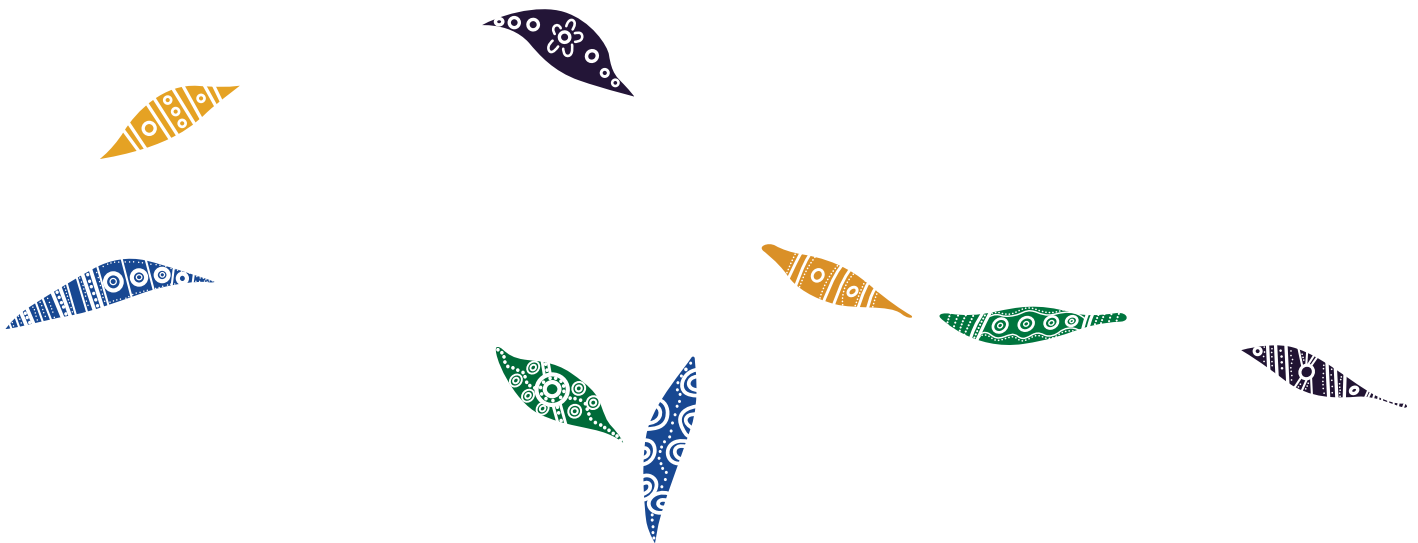
**Hon Don Punch MLA**  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

# Introduction

The Western Australian Closing the Gap 2024–25 Annual Report provides an account of progress under the final year of the 2023–25 Implementation Plan and outlines how the WA Government has strengthened partnerships, accountability and structural reform ahead of the new Closing the Gap 2026–28 Implementation Plan (2026–28 Implementation Plan). As a signatory to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement), WA remains committed to shared decision-making with Aboriginal people and to addressing systemic inequality through long-term, whole-of-Government reform. This Report reflects stronger alignment with Aboriginal peak body advice, more transparent reporting, and a continued focus on embedding of the Priority Reform Areas (Priority Reforms) of the National Agreement.

## Our approach to this Annual Report

This Report adopts a streamlined, outcomes focused approach that consolidates initiatives, reduces duplication and highlights tangible progress achieved in 2024–25. The approach responds to the Productivity Commission’s Review (PC Review) and advice from Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA (AACWA), Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) and Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA), emphasising clearer accountability, clearer strategic direction and improved visibility of the Priority Reforms.





## What we have heard

Reviews undertaken during this period including the PC Review and the Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Review of the National Agreement highlight that governments nationally are not yet delivering the level of structural reform required. Findings point to fragmented progress, inconsistent implementation of the Priority Reforms and limited alignment with the aspirations of Aboriginal people. Feedback from WA Aboriginal peak bodies reinforces the need for more consistent shared decision-making, stronger whole-of-Government coordination and a greater focus on regional priorities.



## The way forward

Entering the new 2026–28 Implementation Plan period, the WA Government has a clearer understanding of the systemic shift required to deliver improved outcomes. Moving forward and working in partnership with the AACWA and Aboriginal peak bodies, the new Plan strengthens formal shared decision-making arrangements, embeds structured whole-of-Government partnership forums and increases regional leadership through place-based governance. Strengthening the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO) sector and supporting the transition to Aboriginal-led service delivery is prioritised, as well as deeper transformation of government systems, improved accountability mechanisms and enhanced data sharing to support place-based decision making. These actions position WA to accelerate delivery of the Priority Reforms and strengthen progress across all Socioeconomic Targets (Targets) of the National Agreement.

# Section One: Priority Reforms

## Priority Reform One – Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

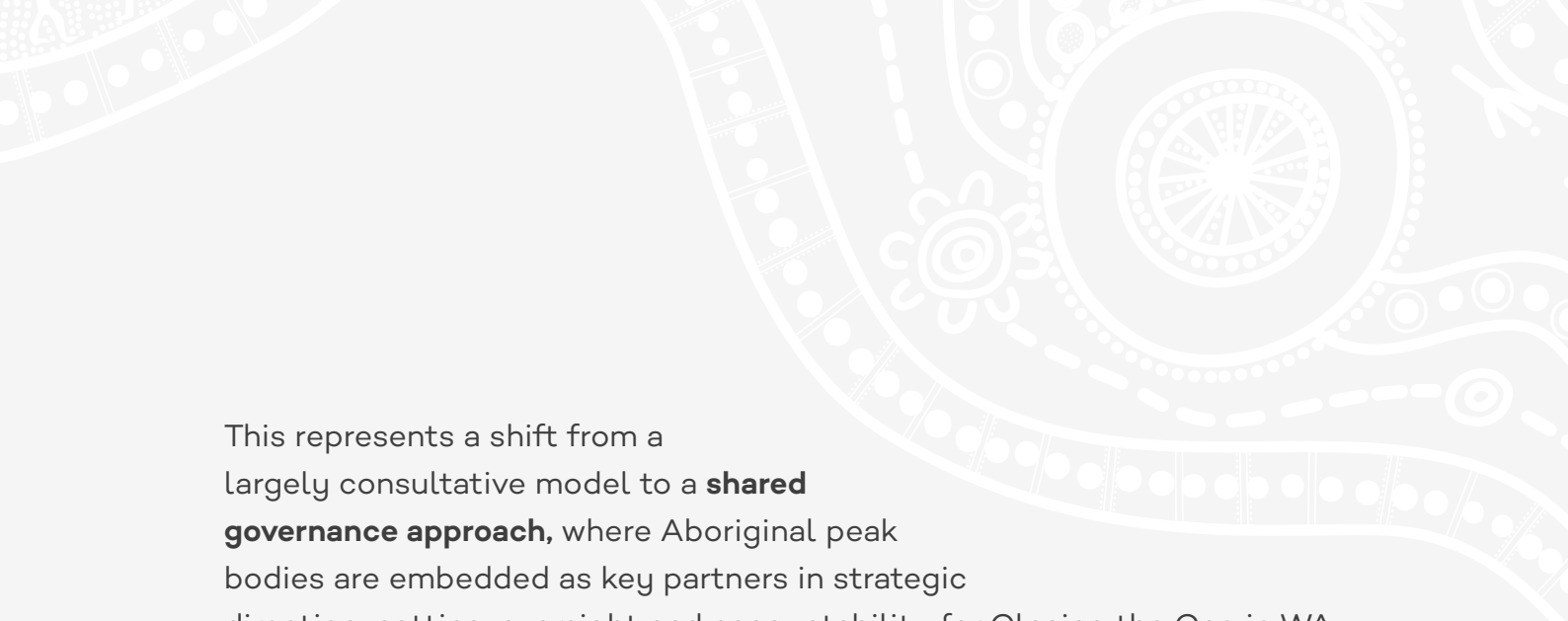
**Outcome:** Aboriginal people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

### 2024–25 progress

Over 2024–25, the WA Government strengthened its partnership approach with Aboriginal peak bodies through significant reforms to governance and engagement structures. These changes were introduced to ensure Aboriginal partners have a more sustained, systemic and influential role in shaping Western Australia's Closing the Gap agenda.

Previously, engagement between government and the peak bodies was largely ad hoc and agency-driven, with limited whole-of-Government coordination. In response to feedback from AACWA, AHCWA and CASWA — and to align with the intent of the National Agreement — these arrangements were revised to establish a more formal, accountable and consistent partnership model, including:

- **Regular, scheduled ministerial engagement** has been embedded across portfolios. Ministers now meet with Aboriginal peak body representatives throughout the year to jointly set priorities, review progress and address systemic issues, ensuring partnership is ongoing rather than episodic.
- **An annual Cabinet-level discussion with representatives of the Coalition of Peaks** has been introduced. This formalises direct engagement between Aboriginal leaders and the highest level of WA Government decision-making, enabling Cabinet to consider strategic issues, barriers, and opportunities raised by Aboriginal partners.
- **Improved coordination mechanisms** including structured engagement with Ministers, Cabinet members and the Premier's Office now support consistent information flow between AACWA, AHCWA and CASWA that is elevated and responded to in whole-of-Government forums.



This represents a shift from a largely consultative model to a **shared governance approach**, where Aboriginal peak bodies are embedded as key partners in strategic direction-setting, oversight and accountability for Closing the Gap in WA.

The WA Government progressed the establishment and formalisation of the **East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership (EKPPB)**, strengthening formal partnerships with Aboriginal organisations to enable shared decision-making at the regional level. As one of six Place-Based Partnerships under the National Agreement, the EKPPB is designed to ensure local Aboriginal organisations lead the identification of priorities and co-design service responses. With secured funding and a jointly developed Framework Agreement, in 2024–25 partners co-designed the Partnership Agreement, confirming the commitment to Aboriginal voices shaping early childhood outcomes in the region. Binarri-binyja yarrawoo’s (BBY) Empowered Communities East Kimberley Partnership Principles underpin the EKPPB.

In response to advocacy from Aboriginal peak bodies after events at Banksia Hill in 2024, the WA Government, CASWA and AHCWA established the **Youth Justice Reform Partnership (YJRP)** in early 2025. The YJRP was explicitly formed under Priority Reform One and reflects priorities determined jointly by Aboriginal partners and the Department of Justice. Through this partnership, CASWA is leading the development of an Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework for youth detention, guided by a Steering Committee and informed by Aboriginal young people, community members and Elders. The trauma-informed Model of Care being implemented across the youth custodial system is also informed by shared decision-making and Aboriginal-led design, demonstrating the strengthened partnership approach.

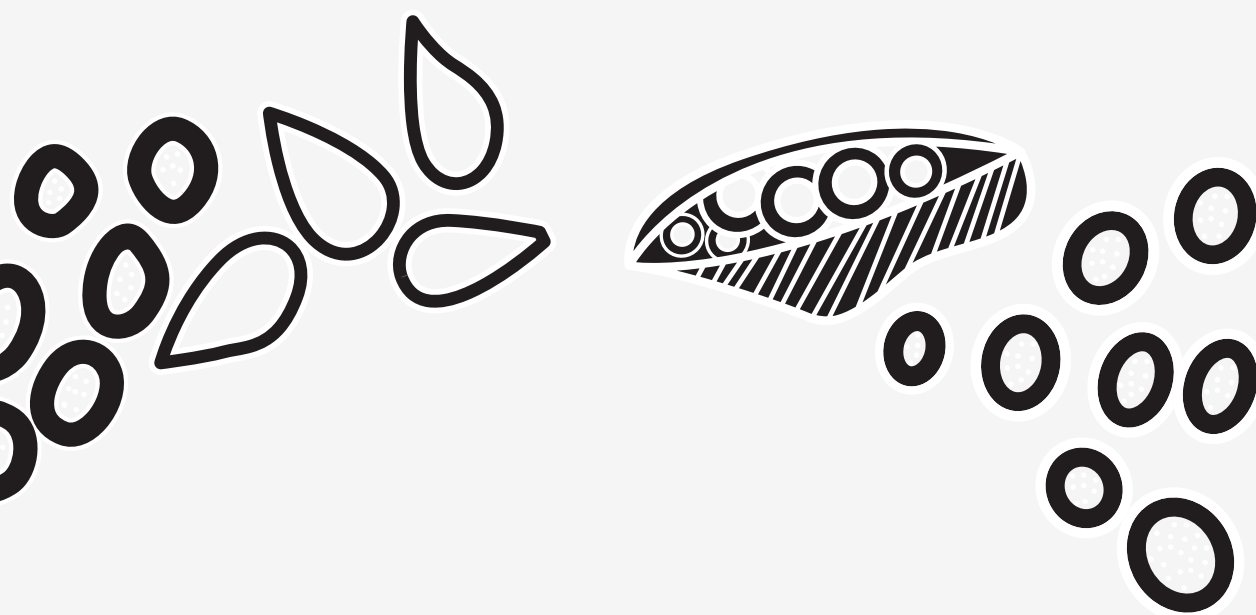
A strong example of Priority Reform One in practice is the co-designed Emergency Ambulance Services Trial. In 2024, AHCWA, its Member Services, St John Ambulance, the Department of Health (WA Health), WA Country Health Service (WACHS) and the Office of the Minister for Health undertook a co-design process to respond to specific recommendations from the

2022 Ambulance Service Review to improve ambulance services and address inequities for Aboriginal people. The resulting shared decisions led to an 18-month trial that waives emergency ambulance costs for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services (AHHCS)-initiated transports and transports from Jandakot Airport to a metropolitan hospital as well as lowering the age for full and partial concession eligibility for Aboriginal people from 65 to 50. These trial settings were jointly developed and agreed through partnership, demonstrating how shared decision-making can improve culturally safe access to essential services.

## Where to next

Through the 2026–28 Implementation Plan, the WA Government is committing to developing the formal partnership structures that are expected under the National Agreement. The WA Government will invest \$1 million to establish an Alliance between AACWA, AHCWA and CASWA to increase accountability and transparency of the WA Government’s progress to implement Closing the Gap outcomes. The WA Government will also invest \$2 million to deliver Closing the Gap Regional Implementation Plans. Each of WA’s regions will be funded to develop a Regional Implementation Plan, co-designed with local Aboriginal people, to ensure self-determination and drive local place-based decision-making and outcomes.

Progress on Priority Reform One in WA will continue to be driven by the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership. Formalising partnerships will also be a focus of the 2026–28 Implementation Plan.



# Priority Reform Two – Building the community controlled sector

## What is Priority Reform Two?

**Outcome:** There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people across the country.

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## 2024–25 progress

Both CASWA and AHCWA continue to play critical roles in strengthening and amplifying the ACCO sector, providing coordinated leadership and advocacy across Aboriginal service providers, in the health and social services sectors. Throughout 2024–25, both peak bodies have supported ACCOs to engage in system-level reforms and contributed to sector-wide insights across government planning and policy development. As the peak body for Aboriginal health for more than two decades, AHCWA continues to play an integral role influencing health policy and increasing equity across the state. As the second, newly established peak body, the growing statewide role of CASWA further demonstrates the need for long-term sustainability investment to ensure both organisations can continue driving ACCO capability, governance support and coordinated sector development.

Despite its development prior to this reporting year, the Whole of Government ACCO Strategy 2022–2032 continues to be a central driver of system change, embedding a structured approach to the WA Government increasing ACCO involvement in planning, design and delivery of culturally secure services. Its phased implementation continues to strengthen ACCO governance, cultural safety and commissioning capability across government, supporting the continued growth and influence of the ACCO sector.

The Aboriginal Business Capability Building Program (ABCB Program) assists Aboriginal businesses to develop skills in tendering, business development, internal governance and contractual compliance requirements. The ABCB Program is delivered by ACCOs to Aboriginal businesses in regional Western Australia, supporting Aboriginal suppliers to secure Western Australian Government contracts. In 2024–25, the ABCB Program provided support to 72 Aboriginal businesses in the regions.

Out of Home Care (OOHC) Reform continued to expand ACCO leadership and service delivery, with ACCOs appointed as new OOHC providers and empowered to manage Aboriginal family carers for the first time in WA through the Family Carer Pilot. These initiatives strengthen Aboriginal-led, culturally secure care models and ensure decisions affecting Aboriginal children and families are informed by cultural authority, community connection and local leadership.

In 2024–25, the WA Government supported the establishment of the Kimberley Remote Aboriginal Community Leaders' Network (KRACLN) through backbone funding to Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation. The KRACLN is the first of its kind in Australia where a community-designed, self-governed and led network has been established to represent the 19 largest remote Aboriginal communities across the Kimberley. The Network provides a structured mechanism for communities to collectively identify priorities, engage with government and influence service planning and delivery. The WA Government, in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and Lotterywest, is funding the strengthening of KRACLN's capacity to negotiate service arrangements, pursue shared initiatives and improve service efficiency, demonstrating progress in sustainable community-controlled regional structures.

## Where to next

The 2026–28 Implementation Plan will support the delivery of Priority Reform Two by investing \$5.8 million to establish an ACCO Transition Pipeline. The Pipeline will include the development of sector mapping and a transition blueprint for efficient, sustainable service delivery and the establishment of an ACCO Strengthening Program. This investment will build and support sector capacity to ensure services are prepared for transition, which secures long-term, sustainable service delivery in human service sectors.

Delivery of Priority Reform Two in WA will also be supported by the implementation of the National Skills Agreement. Under this Agreement, the WA and Commonwealth Governments are jointly investing \$43.9 million to expand investment in the Aboriginal Community-Controlled training sector. The WA Government is also investing over \$8 million into CASWA to sustainably fund operational requirements as an Aboriginal peak body.

## Priority Reform Three – Transforming government organisations

### What is Priority Reform Three?

**Outcome:** Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, including through the services they fund.

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### 2024–25 progress

The WA Government continued to advance Priority Reform Three, recognising that systemic transformation is essential to ensure government organisations are culturally safe, accountable and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people. This work reflects clear and consistent feedback that Closing the Gap outcomes depend on governments, particularly central agencies, addressing institutional racism, improving cultural capability and embedding Aboriginal perspectives into core decision-making processes.

Initiated by the AACWA, the **Culture at the Heart (CATH) Forum** brought together around 40 representatives from AHCWA, CASWA and agency Aboriginal Advisory Groups (AAGs) providing a coordinated Aboriginal-led forum to advance Priority Reform Three across government. Attendance by 14 of the 15 AAGs reflects the high level of system engagement and increasing readiness for reform. The CATH Forum marked a shift from information-sharing to reform collaboration with participants collectively prioritising governance and Aboriginal-led accountability mechanisms as priority areas for action. These outcomes were provided to the WA Government and are informing whole-of-Government reforms under the 2026–28 Implementation Plan to embed culture at the centre of decision-making and service delivery.

The Department of Treasury commenced **reforms to State Budget processes** to identify levers that better embed the Priority Reforms into government funding and accountability systems. This includes work to strengthen alignment between resource allocation and the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people, and to examine how budget settings can more systematically support Closing the Gap delivery. Treasury also progressed work associated with Aboriginal-related expenditure analysis to improve transparency around investment and strengthen whole-of-Government accountability.

The Department of Communities released its **Aboriginal Cultural Framework 2024–2034**, which established a consistent, whole-of-agency approach to cultural safety and cultural capability. The Framework supports the development of a culturally competent workforce and embeds a ‘culture at the heart’ approach across service design, policy development and frontline delivery. It ensures Communities’ staff, systems and decision-making processes are guided by Aboriginal cultural knowledge, values and leadership.

## Where to next

As part of the establishment of the Alliance, an oversight workplan will be developed to support delivery of Priority Reform Three. The Alliance will provide scrutiny of government progress, including strengthened accountability for Aboriginal outcomes and implementation of key policy reforms such as the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the ACCO Strategy. The Alliance will be able to brief Cabinet on an annual basis.

The WA Government is investing \$500,000 to undertake a WA Anti-Racism Project in partnership with the Alliance, AAGs and WA Government agencies, acknowledging the critical role the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector will play in developing this work.

The WA Government is also committed to strengthening relationships between WA Government agencies, including the Department of Treasury and Finance, and the ACCO sector to improve transparency, accountability and strategic alignment of the WA Government’s investment in Closing the Gap outcomes. This includes changes to the Aboriginal Expenditure Review to improve the level and quality of detail in reporting data and the understanding of how investment supports Aboriginal-led, place-based outcomes, as well as reflecting key considerations of the ACCO sector.

The WA Government will also strengthen central agency stewardship to support whole-of-Government implementation of Closing the Gap by developing strategic guidance for public sector staff and agencies and establishing a Community of Practice to improve information sharing and communications.

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

## What is Priority Reform Four?

**Outcome:** Aboriginal people have access to, and the capability to use, locally relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

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## 2024–25 progress

A key achievement in 2024–25 was the development and passage of the Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 (PRIS Act). The PRIS Act introduces safeguards for sensitive Aboriginal information and requires agencies to engage with relevant Aboriginal stakeholders when data sharing projects affect Aboriginal people or communities. It also recognises ACCOs as “external entities” who can request data from government to support community-beneficial research and it empowers the Chief Data Officer to issue guidelines to support both agencies and ACCOs.

The launch of **PeopleWA** in 2023 marked a major step forward in improving access to linked, cross-sector data. PeopleWA brings together life-event data across government sectors to generate insights into complex social, health and economic challenges. Any proposed use of PeopleWA data affecting Aboriginal people must demonstrate an engagement and consultation plan before approval. Partnerships between ACCOs and government agencies now support improved Aboriginal access to PeopleWA, including direct assistance for ACCOs to develop their own linked data applications.

WA Health launched its **Aboriginal Data Governance Policy** in June 2025, developed with guidance from the ACCO sector. The Policy recognises the rights of Aboriginal people to govern the collection, ownership and use of data about their people and communities. Implementation is supported by the WA Health Aboriginal Data Governance Committee, an Aboriginal Data Governance Model, Aboriginal Data Governance Training and an Aboriginal Data Use Evaluation and Declaration Form.

**Regional data access and capability** were strengthened through several initiatives. Notably, the co-location of a Pilbara Aboriginal Health Alliance (PAHA) data analyst within the Office of Digital Government provided PAHA with access to the PeopleWA linked dataset to develop a State of the Pilbara Closing the Gap Report and 26 place-based profiles to inform regional priority setting.

Other regional efforts included data sharing through joint management partnerships, digital inclusion projects, and collaboration between ACCOs and government agencies to improve data-sharing practices and support ACCOs in developing regionally relevant data applications.

## Where to next

The WA Government is investing \$800,000 through the 2026–28 Implementation Plan to establish a Community-Led Data Connection Project in partnership between the Office of Digital Government and CASWA. This Project will provide a culturally responsive single point of contact interface for Aboriginal communities and organisations in WA to request and access government-held data.

Work is underway and will continue across the WA Government to deliver Priority Reform Four including the implementation of the PRIS Act, the Aboriginal Population Project being undertaken by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and the Early Years Community Data Project under the EKPBP. Furthermore, the WA Government will work with the Alliance to explore options to improve Aboriginal data governance and access to data that impacts service delivery and continuity of care, building on the work of WA Health to launch its Aboriginal Data Governance Policy.



## Section Two: the Targets

The National Agreement outlines 19 Targets across 17 socioeconomic outcomes that describe the conditions needed for Aboriginal people to live long, healthy, safe and thriving lives. Progress against these Targets provides more than a statistical picture, it reflects the extent to which Aboriginal people in Western Australia are experiencing improved wellbeing, stronger cultural connection, greater economic opportunities, safer communities and better life outcomes.

While the Productivity Commission's 2025 Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report shows mixed results nationally, the significance of the Targets lies in how changes translate into people's lives: children starting school strong and confident; young people accessing opportunities for education and employment; families living in safe, stable homes; communities exercising cultural authority; and Aboriginal people leading decisions that affect their futures.

















WA has contributed positively to national performance, with ten of the 19 Targets demonstrating improvement at a state level; however, progress remains variable. Some Targets show no change, others are worsening, and several have no available assessment. These variations highlight both the gains made, as well as the substantial effort still required to address entrenched inequities.





The WA Government recognises that meaningful and sustained improvement in outcomes cannot be achieved through program activity alone. Progress on the Targets depends on the strengthened partnerships, structural reforms and system transformations underway across government, particularly the embedding of the Priority Reforms, which provide the foundation for long-term change.

The definitions used in this section to describe WA and national progress on the Targets have been taken from the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Information Repository.

## WA progress on the 19 socioeconomic targets

Socioeconomic target	WA progress	National progress
<b>Target 1:</b> Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.	▲ Improving	▲ Improving but not on track
<b>Target 2:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal babies with a healthy birthweight to 91%.	▼ Worsening	▲ Improving but not on track
<b>Target 3:</b> By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal children enrolled in Year Before Full Time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95%.	▲ Improving	✓ Improving and on track
<b>Target 4:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55%.	▼ Worsening	▼ Worsening
<b>Target 5:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.	▲ Improving	▲ Improving but not on track
<b>Target 6:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.	▲ Improving	▲ Improving but not on track
<b>Target 7:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal youth (15–24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%.	▲ Improving	▲ Improving but not on track
<b>Target 8:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62%.	▲ Improving	✓ Improving and on track
<b>Target 9A:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88%.	▲ Improving	▲ Improving but not on track

Socioeconomic target	WA progress	National progress
<p><b>Target 9B:</b> By 2031, all Aboriginal households:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. within discrete Aboriginal communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard.</li> <li>ii. in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town based reserve”).</li> </ul>	 No assessment available	 No assessment available
<p><b>Target 10:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal adults held in incarceration by at least 15%.</p>	 Worsening	 Worsening
<p><b>Target 11:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30%.</p>	 Improving	 No change
<p><b>Target 12:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal children (0–17 years old) in out-of-home care by 45%.</p>	 No change	 Worsening
<p><b>Target 13:</b> By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.</p>	 No assessment available	 No assessment available
<p><b>Target 14:</b> Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal people towards zero.</p>	 No assessment available	 Worsening
<p><b>Target 15A:</b> By 2030, a 15% increase in Australia’s land mass subject to Aboriginal people’s legal rights or interests.</p>	 Improving	 Improving and on track
<p><b>Target 15B:</b> By 2030, a 15% increase in areas covered by Aboriginal people’s legal rights or interests in the sea.</p>	 Improving	 Improving and on track

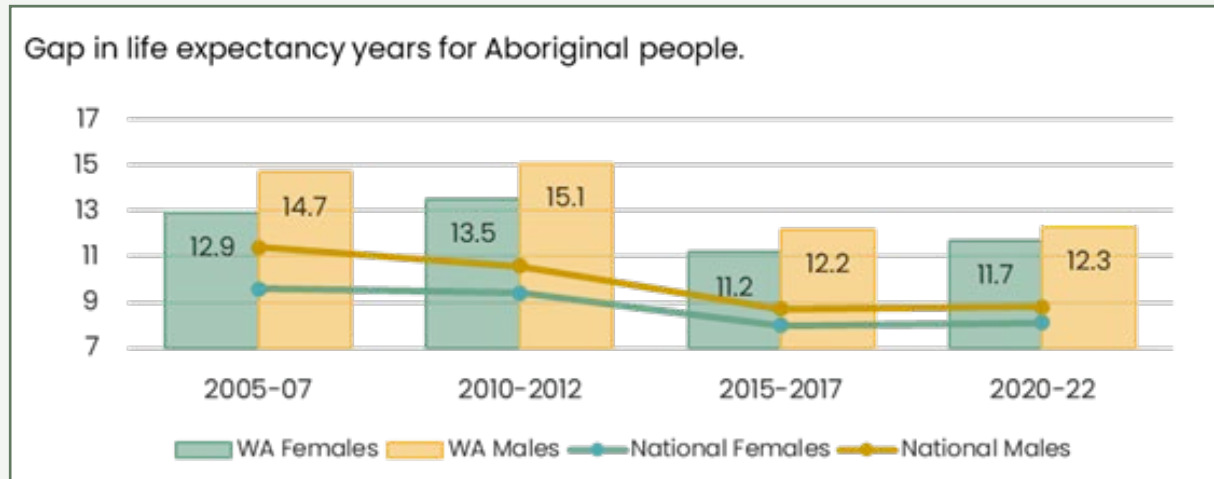
Socioeconomic target	WA progress	National progress
<b>Target 16:</b> By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal languages being spoken.	 No assessment available	 No assessment available
<b>Target 17:</b> By 2026, Aboriginal people have equal levels of digital inclusion.	 No assessment available	 No assessment available



## Health and wellbeing

### Outcome 1 – Aboriginal people enjoy long and healthy lives

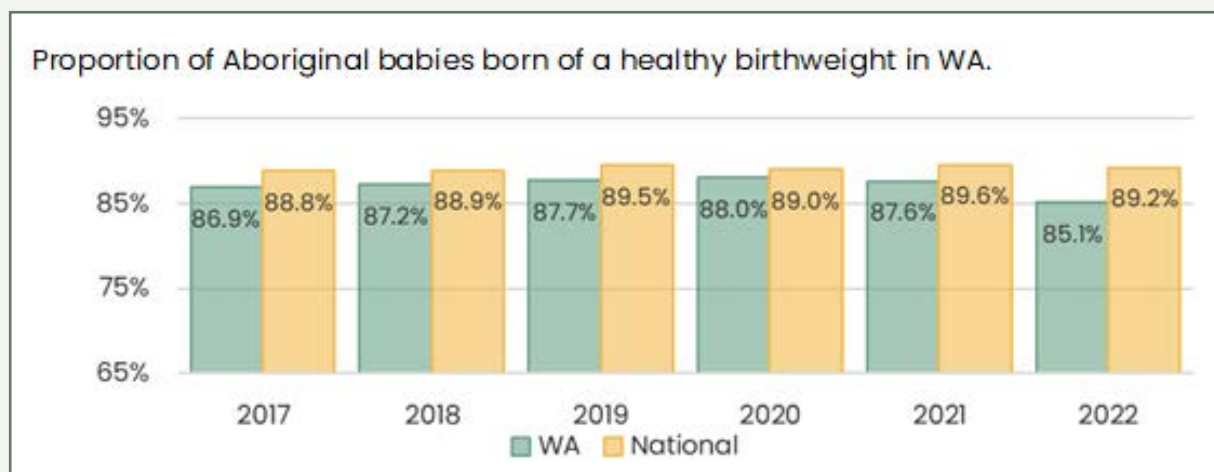
**Target 1:** Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.



In WA, life expectancy for Aboriginal females increased from 70.0 years in 2005–07 to 72.6 years in 2020–22. Over the same period, life expectancy for Aboriginal males rose from 64.5 years to 68.9 years.

### Outcome 2 – Aboriginal children are born healthy and strong

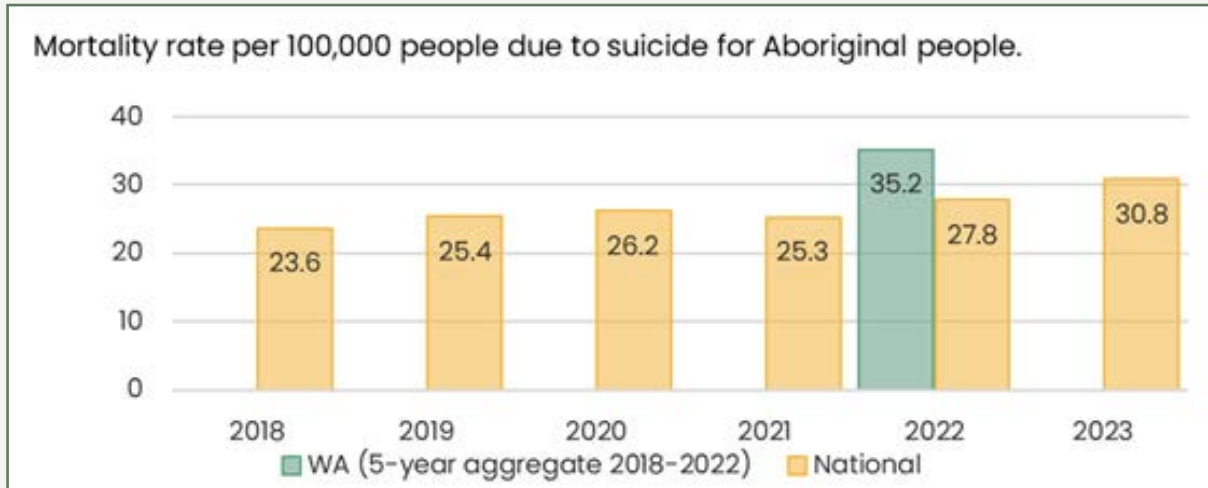
**Target 2:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal babies born with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.



In WA, the proportion of Aboriginal babies born with a healthy birthweight has decreased from 86.9% in 2017 to 85.1% in 2022. Nationally, the proportion has increased marginally and the Target is not on track to be met.

## Outcome 14 – Aboriginal people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

**Target 14:** Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal people towards zero.



The WA rate of suicide deaths of Aboriginal people was 35.2 per 100,000 people during the five-year period 2018–22. Comparatively, the rate of suicide for non-Aboriginal people in WA was 13.1 per 100,000 in the same period. No data is available in the Productivity Commission Information Repository to assess progress since the baseline measurement for jurisdictions.

### 2024–25 progress

The WA Government continued to take a holistic, culturally informed approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. The initiatives below highlight how actions taken during 2024–25 translated into better experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities.

The revitalised **Boodjari Bidi (Pregnancy Path)** program at Fiona Stanley Hospital provides continuity of midwifery care in the antenatal period, transport support, and a culturally safe environment shaped by local Aboriginal voices. During 2024–25, approximately 160 Aboriginal women accessed Boodjari Bidi. By embedding cultural safety in maternity care, the program provided supports to Aboriginal mothers creating a respectful and supported space throughout pregnancy, contributing to improved attendance and engagement with antenatal services and promoting healthier outcomes for Aboriginal babies.

The **Ngangk Maawit Mia** Aboriginal Maternity Group Practice provides wraparound antenatal, birth and postnatal care. In 2024–25, women supported by the Practice attended more antenatal appointments. For Aboriginal babies born at term during the period, 83.3 per cent had a healthy birthweight compared to 52.8 per cent who did not attend the service. This demonstrates how culturally-led, wraparound care supports Aboriginal women to access timely support, strengthens trust in health services and improves outcomes for newborns.

WA Health continues to grow its **Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP)** workforce through culturally safe recruitment, tailored onboarding, strong career pathways and working in partnership with Aboriginal Registered Training Providers. AHPs play a critical role improving culturally safe access to care, supporting Aboriginal patients with health system engagement and navigation. As of December 2025, 22 AHPs were employed across the WA health system.

WA Health worked collaboratively with AHCWA, ACCOs and other key stakeholders to develop a co-designed **Aboriginal Environmental Health Model of Care** (the Model). The Model strengthens culturally safe and community-led approaches to address inequities experienced by Aboriginal people related to environmental health. By supporting local ACCOs and service providers to lead environmental health responses through the Model, Aboriginal families experience healthier housing conditions, better hygiene infrastructure and more responsive local service delivery, which has the potential to profoundly improve outcomes across a range of health indicators.

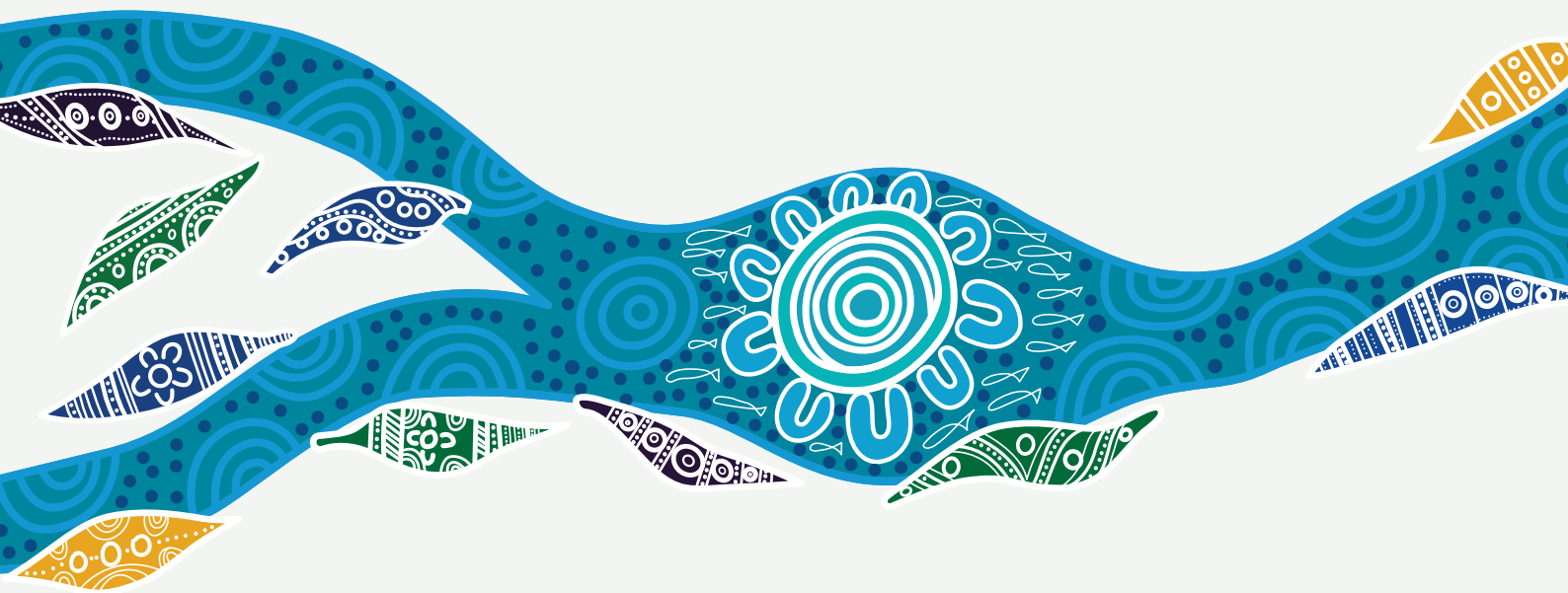
Programs such as the **Martu Healing and Support Program and Wama Wangka (“Talking About Alcohol”)** provide culturally grounded, community-led healing supports for Martu people. These programs strengthen connection to Country, culture and identity — key protective factors for mental health — and support Aboriginal individuals and families to address trauma, alcohol misuse and wellbeing challenges in ways that reflect their culture and values.

**AHCWA** is funded by the Mental Health Commission (MHC) to undertake the **Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Model of Care**, a sector-led, culturally grounded model delivered through five ACCHS across five of WA’s regions — South West, Mid West, Kimberley, Goldfields and Pilbara. Early evaluations and published findings of this pilot program demonstrate the importance of addressing social, cultural and political determinants of health and wellbeing, and showed that the culturally centred, strengths-based SEWB model of service is flexible, allowing for the recognition of place-based needs and the

diversity of Aboriginal people and communities. The success of the program is driven by the sector's workforce and its unique multi-disciplinary approach and application of the ACCHS holistic Model of Care.

In addition, the MHC's development of the **Aboriginal Mental Health Worker Guidelines** will support the increased availability and capability of Aboriginal mental health workers across Western Australia. The ongoing **expansion of the Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce** within the WACHS and Child and Adolescent Health Service has strengthened culturally secure mental health support for Aboriginal children, families and communities, ensuring people can access help from practitioners who understand their cultural, social and emotional wellbeing needs.

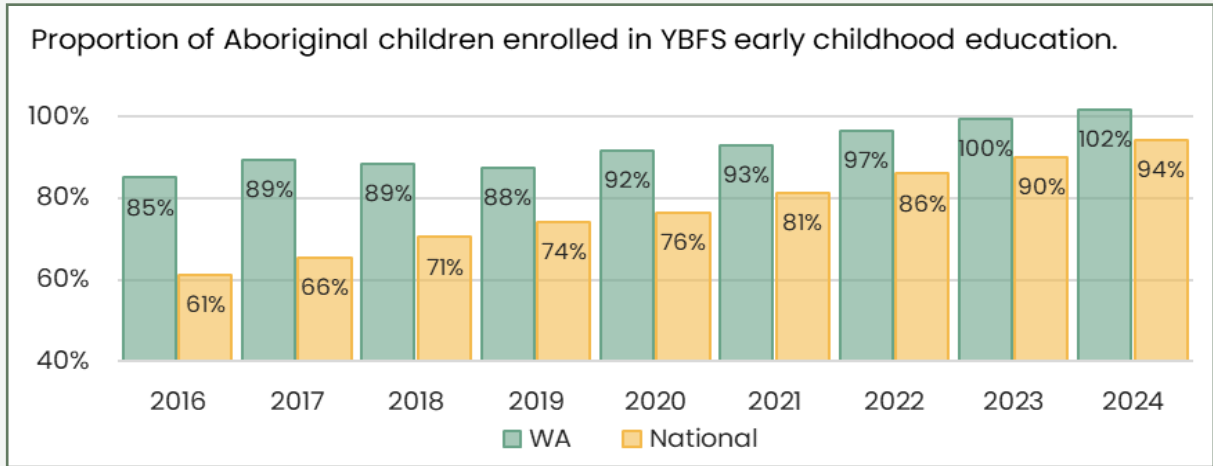
The WA Government has also worked with the Aboriginal Regional Governance Group to develop the **Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee Partnership Agreement** (the Partnership Agreement). The Partnership Agreement aims to implement actions addressing the recommendations identified in the WA Coroner's *Inquest into the deaths of 13 children and young persons in the Kimberley Region*, the Message Stick Report and the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing. The Partnership Agreement reflects Parties shared goal of improving Aboriginal youth wellbeing, specifically a significant and sustained reduction in suicide. Under the Partnership Agreement, which will be formalised in 2025–26, Parties will collaborate to propose policies that positively impact on Kimberley Aboriginal youth wellbeing, including locally-led strategies and initiatives, and implement actions directly linked to better justice outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people.



# Education and early years development

## Outcome 3 – Aboriginal children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years

**Target 3:** By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.

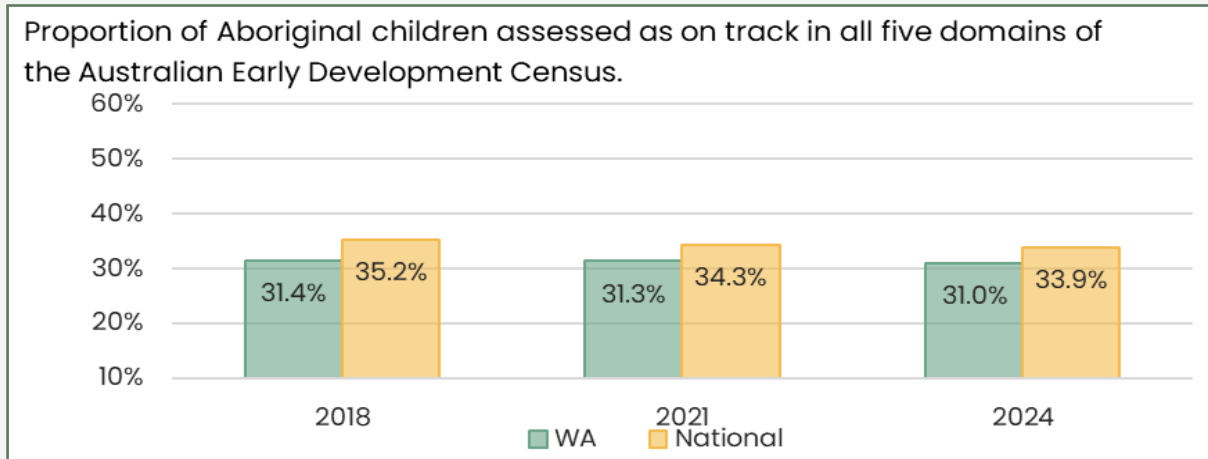


The proportion of children enrolled in YBFS early childhood education exceeded the target of 95 per cent in Western Australia in 2022. The Target is also on track to be met nationally by 2025. Note: The WA proportion in 2024 is greater than 100 per cent because the numerator and denominator are from different sources.



## Outcome 4 – Aboriginal children thrive in their early years

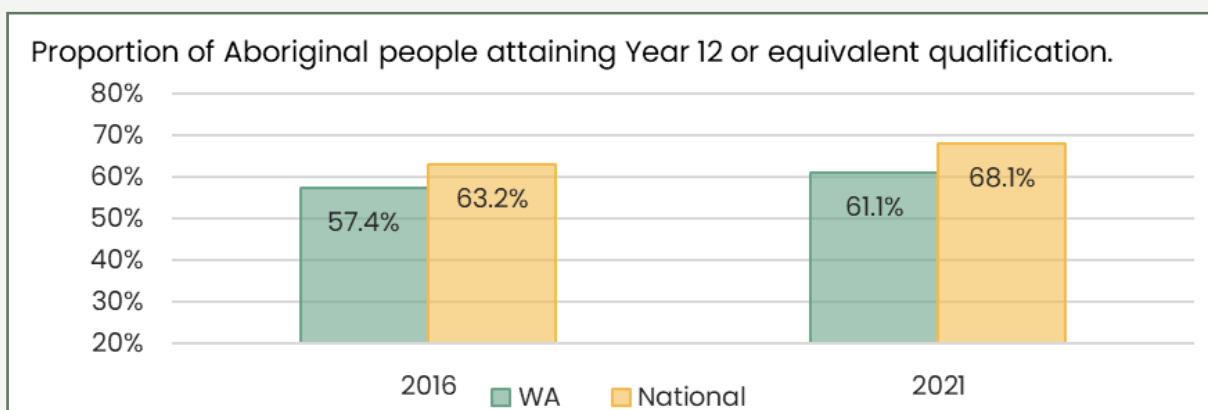
**Target 4:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.



The proportion of children assessed as on track in all five domains of the AEDC has decreased both nation-wide and in WA since the baseline year.

## Outcome 5 – Aboriginal students achieve their full learning potential

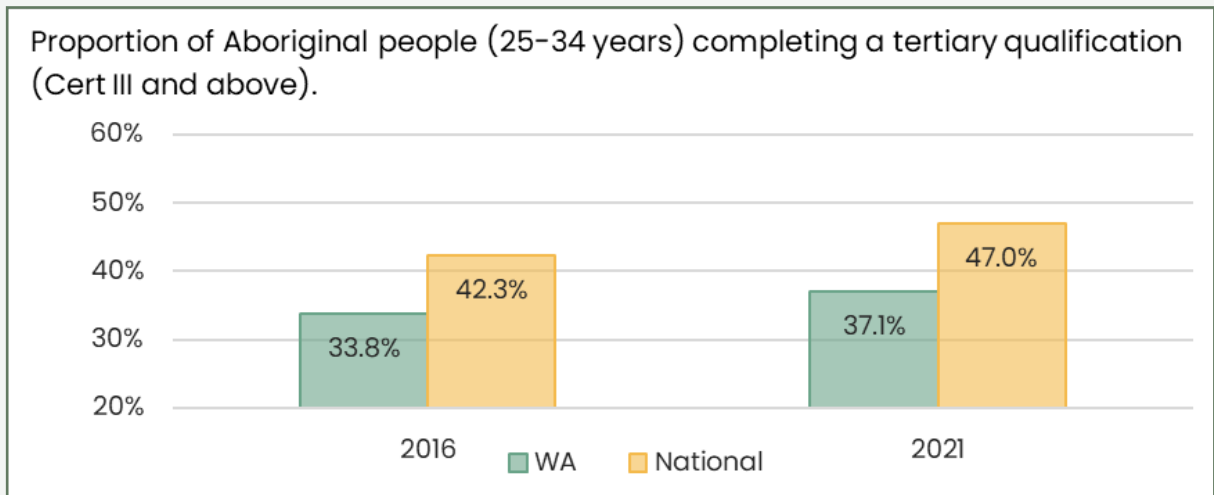
**Target 5:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal people (age 20–24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.



The proportion of Aboriginal students attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification in 2021 increased from 57.4 per cent in the baseline year 2016 to 61.1 per cent in 2021. Nationally, student attainment levels also increased, from 63.2 per cent in 2016 to 68.1 per cent in 2021.

## Outcome 6 – Aboriginal students reach their full potential through further education pathways

**Target 6:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.

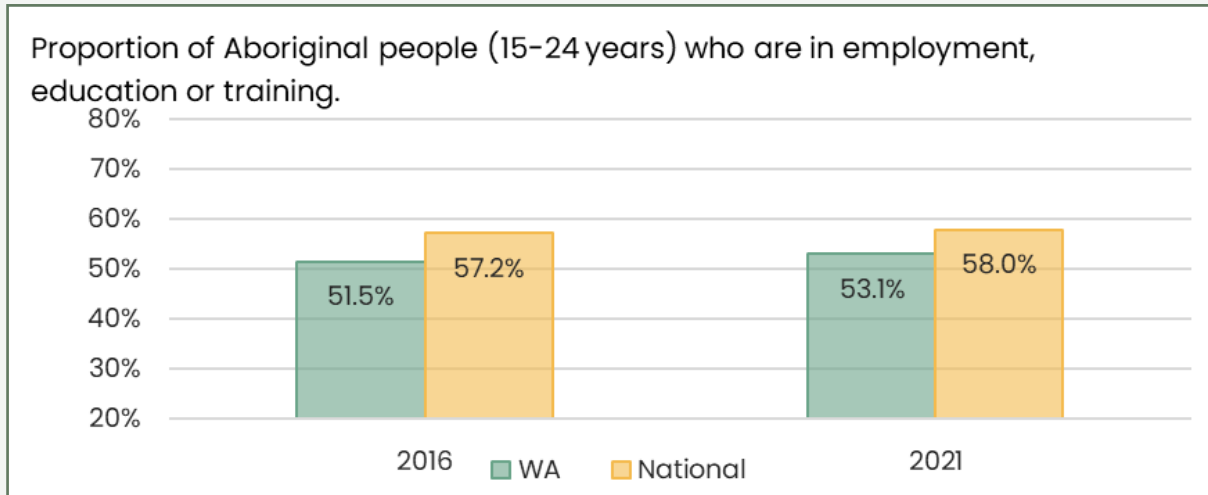


In WA, although the proportion of Aboriginal people attaining tertiary qualification was well below the target of 70 per cent, progress has been made with the proportion increasing 33.8 per cent in 2016 to 37.1 per cent in 2021.



## Outcome 7 – Aboriginal youth are engaged in employment or education

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



The proportion of Aboriginal youth in WA in employment, education or training increased from 51.5 per cent in the 2016 census to 53.1 per cent in the 2021 census. Nationally, the proportion also increased marginally.

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### 2024–25 progress

The **Early Years Partnership** (EYP) strengthens early childhood development by supporting Aboriginal families through community-led, place-based approaches. In Armadale West, Central Great Southern, Derby and Bidyadanga, each community has a plan co-designed with Aboriginal organisations and community members to address their early childhood development needs, relevant to their local context. These EYPs ensure that families receive culturally grounded supports and that young children access services shaped by the strengths and priorities of their own communities.

Health-specific community impacts have been demonstrated with the EYP Dental Health project in the Central Great Southern region of WA where over 85 per cent of children aged 0–4 years have had oral health assessments in just over two years through an innovative dental outreach service model of care. Additionally, the newly established paediatric dental surgery service in Katanning Health Service to address the increased demand has operated on 72 children who would have otherwise had to travel over 300 kilometres to Perth Children's Hospital.

Three Kimberley **Aboriginal-Led Child and Parent Centres** (CPCs) are led and operated by local Aboriginal organisations to deliver early learning, parenting support and health programs that reflect Aboriginal cultural practices and community priorities. These Centres strengthen parents' confidence as first educators, improve access to early childhood services and create culturally secure pathways into schooling. Aboriginal leadership in the CPCs ensures that families engage with services they trust and that children experience culturally affirming early learning environments.

The Department of Education provides **KindiLink** with a strong focus on supporting Aboriginal children and their families. The program has been designed to enhance children's early learning, build the confidence and capability of parents as a child's first educators, establish strong home-school and community partnerships, and contribute to improved long-term school attendance.

Public schools are embedding culturally responsive practices through the **Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework** that strengthens relationships with Aboriginal students and their families, creating learning environments where young people feel culturally safe, respected and supported at school.

Post graduate high school supports for Aboriginal people include the **Certificate III in On Country Management pilot**, which provides culturally grounded training, improving participation in tertiary level study and strengthening local workforce capability. During 2024–25, 18 Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation staff gained accreditation qualifications through the program. Other **targeted tertiary pathways**, including the **Solid Futures Aboriginal Traineeship Program**, provide Aboriginal young people with structured entry into professional and vocational qualifications, supporting long-term progress toward Certificate III and above attainment.

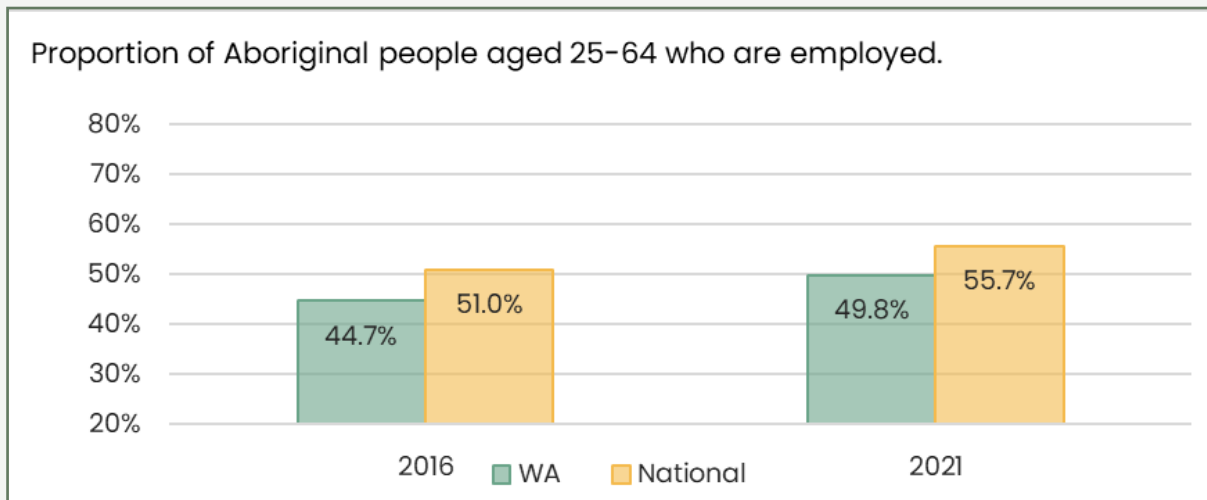
The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) partnership with the **Waalitj Foundation for Aboriginal Employment Enabling Services** provided culturally responsive, wraparound employment support to **124 Aboriginal young people**, helping them overcome barriers and transition into training or employment.

In 2024–25, the **Aboriginal Justice Open Days Program** delivered 123 Open Days to communities across WA, supporting young people to access essential identity documents and drivers' licences, which are foundational requirements for apprenticeships, traineeships and employment to enable immediate access to education and work opportunities. These Open Days were attended by 3,848 people, resulting in 992 Birth Certificate applications, 638 WA Photo Card applications and 734 Concession Cards issued.

# Employment and economic development

## Outcome 8 – Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal people and communities

**Target 8:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 25–64 who are employed to 62 per cent.



Aboriginal employment increased both nationally and in WA from the 2016 to 2021 census records. Nationally, this outcome is on track to meet the target of 62 per cent by 2031.

### 2024–25 progress

The **Aboriginal Business Round** of the **Local Capability Fund** provided support to Aboriginal-owned small to medium-sized enterprises in WA, enhancing their capability and capacity both in Australia and overseas. A total of 18 applications were approved for the 2024–25 Financial Year Aboriginal Business Round with successful businesses sharing \$719,426 in funding to enhance their capabilities. This Round supported a variety of equipment and business enhancements; digital supports including telehealth; and additional investment in technology, data mitigation and integration. Over \$3.8 million has been awarded to 81 Aboriginal businesses since the 2018–19 Financial Year. This has supported 382 new staff, 46 new apprentices and enabled Aboriginal businesses to secure \$319 million in contracts.

The **Aboriginal Pastoral Academy**, a partnership between community, industry and government, aims to support employment pathways for Aboriginal people in the northwest pastoral industry. Partnering with ACCOs who deliver pastoral pre-employment training programs, the partnership has delivered targeted workforce development initiatives in the Kimberley, supporting new industry entrants, leadership support and career progression for Aboriginal employees in the northern pastoral sector.

The WA Government's **Aboriginal Ranger Program** has delivered jobs, training and community development opportunities for Aboriginal people across a range of tenures in regional and remote communities across WA. During 2024–25, the Ranger Program funded 33 new ranger projects and committed to employing 115 full-time employees (FTE) with approximately 95 per cent of those FTE being Aboriginal people.

The **Noongar Economic Participation Framework** in the South West continues to guide the partnership between the six Noongar Regional Corporations (NRC) and Government, resulting in strengthening Noongar peoples' participation in business and economic opportunities. In 2024–25, outcomes included: grant funding for six NRCs; land use development training; Geographic Information Systems workshops for NRC land management teams; and support to develop land strategy scopes for the Noongar Land Estate.

The Transport Portfolio has increased the **attraction and retention of Aboriginal staff**, including the transition to in-house maintenance within Main Roads WA, predominantly in the regions. This has enabled the employment of 113 Aboriginal staff in Main Roads WA as of 30 May 2025. Aboriginal employment across the Transport Portfolio exceeded the WA Government target 12 months early, reaching 3.7 million hours from the 2021–22 to 2024–25 Financial Years.

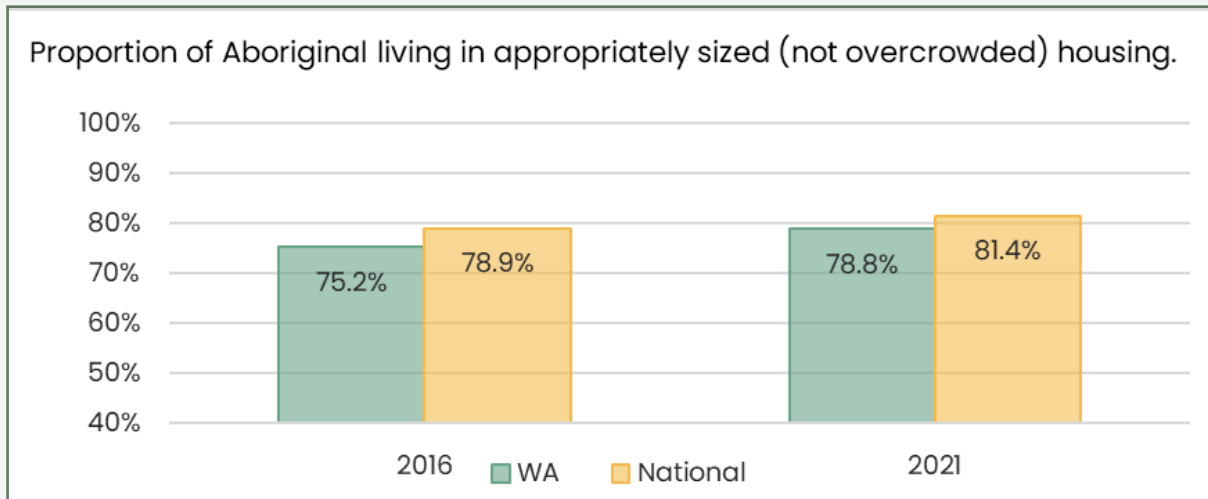
**Procurement with Aboriginal businesses** has steadily increased with a concerted effort being made to improve opportunities for Aboriginal businesses and expenditure. In 2024–25, Aboriginal suppliers secured a record \$442 million in contracts with WA Government agencies. In total, 383 contracts were awarded to 158 Aboriginal suppliers across WA.

The **Aboriginal Governance and Leadership Program** has supported 164 regional Aboriginal businesses and awarded \$39 million in contracts in 2024–25 through its **Aboriginal Procurement Advisory Service**.

## Housing and infrastructure

### Outcome 9 – Aboriginal people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

**Target 9A:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.



From the 2016 census to the 2021 census housing overcrowding decreased in WA for Aboriginal people, in line with the national trend.

**Target 9B:** By 2031, all Aboriginal households:

- i. within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard.
- ii. in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town based reserve”).

There is no data currently available to assess progress towards Target 9B.

## Outcome 17 – Aboriginal people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

**Target 17:** By 2026, Aboriginal people have equal levels of digital inclusion.

There is no data currently available to assess progress towards Target 17.

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### 2024–25 progress

Supporting Aboriginal families with greater choice in safe, culturally secure housing alongside improved digital access is essential to reducing overcrowding and strengthening community wellbeing. In 2024–25, Western Australia advanced a suite of housing and homelessness initiatives that strengthen access to safe, appropriate and culturally secure accommodation for Aboriginal people across urban, regional and remote areas.

The **Common Ground** developments in East Perth and Mandurah provide safe, stable long-term housing with on-site, wraparound supports for people experiencing homelessness, including many Aboriginal people facing complex needs. The model prioritises a housing-first approach, offering permanent, self-contained units alongside culturally informed services that support health, wellbeing and pathways into education, training and employment. Once complete, these facilities will increase access to secure accommodation options that help reduce homelessness and overcrowding for Aboriginal people.

The **Remote Communities Fund** continued to boost housing availability through investment in refurbishing and constructing homes in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Mid West and Goldfields, alongside upgrading essential water, power and wastewater infrastructure to improve living conditions and support healthier communities. The State’s power and water providers continued to transition power and water services in 141 remote Aboriginal communities including phased in upgrades which will bring services into line with comparable communities in WA.

Complementing these efforts, the **North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund** is a \$200 million initiative and has delivered diverse projects across the Pilbara and Kimberley, increasing housing options and supporting wraparound services that improve education, employment and social outcomes for Aboriginal families.

Short-term and transitional accommodation capacity also expanded through additional investment in **Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation**, providing culturally supportive places for Aboriginal visitors who might otherwise face overcrowding or homelessness. This includes the expansion of short stay accommodation in Perth and Geraldton, and support for existing short stay facilities in Kalgoorlie, Derby and Broome.

In Perth, the State continued to strengthen responses to complex homelessness where **Boorloo Bidee Mia** offers culturally grounded, medium-term accommodation options for up to 70 individuals with high and complex needs, supporting recovery, stability and reconnection to community.

The **Kununurra Aboriginal Seniors Complex** now operates under an embedded integrated tenancy management model, codesigned with regional Aboriginal stakeholders to ensure culturally secure, coordinated support for Elders. This model brings together tenancy, property management and community informed support services, strengthening cultural connection, reducing isolation and enabling Elders to age safely on Country. Delivered with local Aboriginal leadership and contractors, the complex demonstrates an innovative, place-based approach that meets the housing and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal seniors.

The WA Government's investment of nearly \$900 million in **response to the Kimberley floods** included restoration of pre-flood conditions and community resilience and economic opportunity through targeted support for Aboriginal people, businesses and communities, shaped through engagement and consultation with affected Aboriginal stakeholders. In addition to the reparation, rebuilding and improvement of community infrastructure following the floods, new initiatives have been delivered to support Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing; to build opportunities for Aboriginal economic participation in recovery activities; and to support cultural and environmental heritage restoration.

The WA Government is strengthening digital inclusion in remote Aboriginal communities through two complementary initiatives. Four communities – Kalumburu, Djarindjin, Lombadina and Warakurna – are participating in **RMIT's Mapping the Digital Gap Study**, which provides detailed insights into the barriers Aboriginal people face in accessing digital services and identifies practical solutions to improve connectivity and capability.

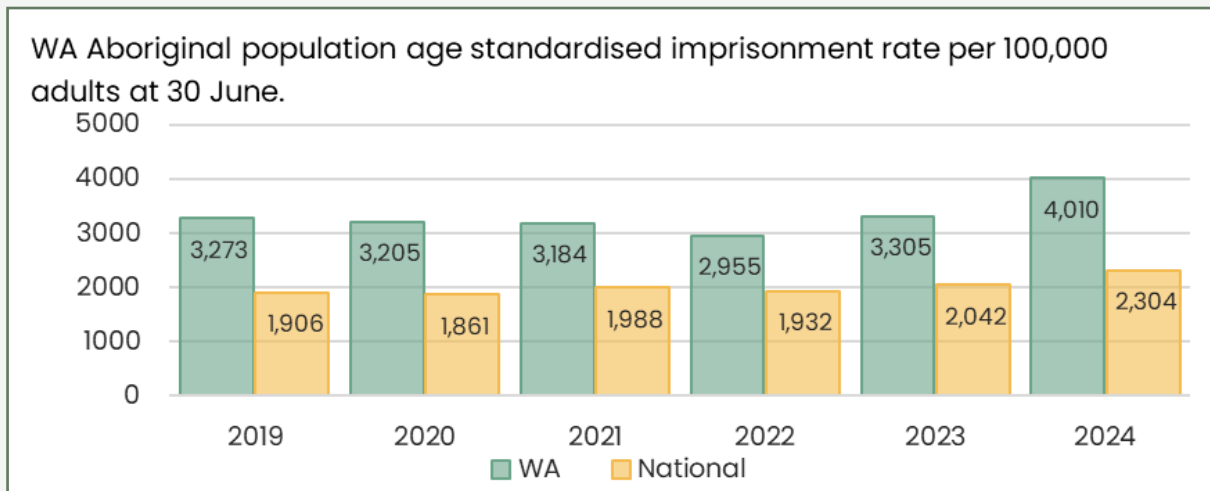
In parallel, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development continues to co-fund and support the roll-out of **Commonwealth telecommunications programs**, which have delivered new and improved mobile base stations in seven remote communities (Koorabye, Koongie Park, Mowanjum, Ardyaloon, Kadjina, Mt Margaret and Embulgran), upgraded National Broadband Network services from satellite to fibre in Halls Creek and installed free community Wi-Fi in Bidyadanga (including 10 outstations) and Burringurrah. Together, these initiatives improve access to affordable, high-quality internet and lay the foundations for stronger participation in education, employment, health and civic life.



# Justice for all

## Outcome 10 – Aboriginal adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

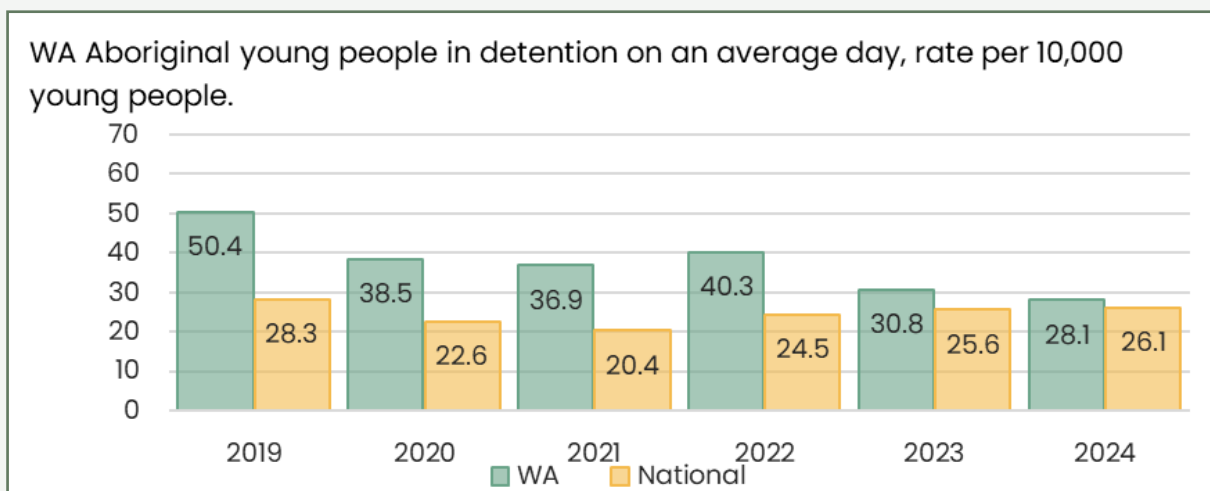
**Target 10:** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.



The incarceration rate for Aboriginal people in WA remains high and has worsened from the baseline year. Nationally the rate has also increased, and the Target is not on track to be met.

## Outcome 11 – Aboriginal young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system

**Target 11:** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.



The rate of youth detention in WA has decreased significantly from the baseline year value of 50.4 in 2016 to 28.1 in 2024. WA's 2024 rate was close to the national rate of 26.1.

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## 2024–25 progress

In 2024, the WA Government committed an initial \$11.5 million to complete detailed planning and commence early works to build a **New Youth Detention Facility** alongside Banksia Hill Detention Centre. The new facility will provide supervision and therapeutic support for young people with complex needs and high-risk behaviours, replacing the Unit 18 youth detention facility at Casuarina Prison. Along with Department of Justice Aboriginal staff, the WA Government has engaged an Indigenous-owned consultancy to develop an Aboriginal engagement strategy for the project. The facility is anticipated to be completed by mid-2028 and will have culturally appropriate fit-out and facilities, with the Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation working with the WA Government.

After years of planning and building a culturally grounded alternative diversion program, the **Wala Kooral-bi Centre**, located in the far north of WA, will officially open in November 2025. Announced in 2022, the **Marlamanu project** was recently completed and will be run by KRED Enterprises offering practical station experience and cultural learning. The on-Country diversion program for boys aged 14–17 is expected to welcome its first cohort of young people in 2026.

The **Carey Bindjareb Project**, a joint venture between Justice and Carey Training Pty Ltd, provides education and mentoring programs for Aboriginal men engaged in the criminal justice system and supports career pathways in mining, civil and related industries. The program includes 12 participants on each course, with a mentor from the previous course attached to each participant in each group. In 2024–25, the course was completed by 152 participants resulting in 79 new job placements post-completion.

The **Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy** supports community-led, place-based initiatives across the Kimberley to engage Aboriginal young people in culturally safe activities to steer them away from the criminal justice system. These include safe spaces for young people, such as **Ngurra Buru (Broome Night Space)** and **Marra Worra Worra Corporation's Youth Connection Night Space** in Fitzroy Crossing, which both provide culturally safe, spaces for

young people at night. In addition, night space services offer immediate triage, outreach, next-day home visits and coordinated supports to connect young people with a responsible adult. Data from the first four weeks of operation at the **Marra Worra Worra Youth Connection Night Space** shows 165 individual children were engaged with the service, with a total of 845 interactions with young people recorded. The WA Government also committed \$5.9 million to provide a safe space for vulnerable young people in Kununnurra. The co-design phase of the project is complete, and the safe space is scheduled to commence operations from July 2026.

Building on this place-based approach, the **Pilbara Safe Spaces Program** led by the Pilbara Development Commission in partnership with Communities, Justice and ACCOs provides temporary safe spaces and culturally responsive outreach for at-risk children and young people across the region. As part of this program, Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Services (PAMS) delivers a new Indigenous Healing Service in Newman, offering culturally informed, child-focused supports for children, young people and families affected by child abuse and family and domestic violence. Together, these initiatives strengthen early intervention; provide culturally grounded responses to youth safety and wellbeing; and expand the pathways available to young Aboriginal people across northern WA.

The **INROADS Therapeutic Court Program** is currently being piloted at the Children's Court of Western Australia. INROADS provides a participant-centric, culturally safe, trauma-informed approach to assess and address the complex unmet needs of 10–17 year old individuals who are facing a term of immediate detention. Participants receive intensive support services including educational support, health assessments and clinical interventions as well as justice-led case management and supervision to ensure community safety is maintained. Successful completion of this Program is considered when the young person is sentenced.

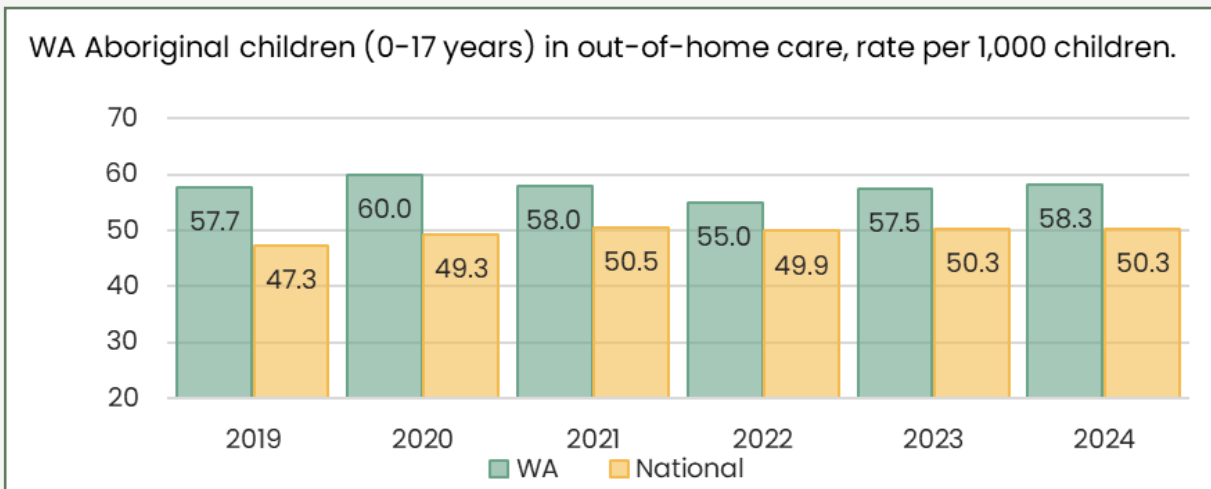
The **Yiwarra Kuju – Western Desert Justice Program** provides on-country mentoring, drug and alcohol services, therapeutic diversion and support with a goal to reduce justice system contact for Martu People. Yiwarra Kuju is defined by Martu as: The Right Way, and is underpinned by Martu cornerstones of Culture, Country and Community and 11 Martu Principles.

Corrective Services continues to partner with ACCOs in the custodial estate, engaging them to deliver Aboriginal culture-based programs developed for Aboriginal people in contact with the justice system. This includes **Local Aboriginal Services Committee** meetings, 58 of which took place in 2024–25, which informed service delivery and the delivery of Aboriginal language and leadership programs across at least four WA detention centres and prisons.

## Families and kin

### Outcome 12 – Aboriginal children are not overrepresented in the child protection system

**Target 12:** By 2031, reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal children (0–17 years old) in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.



In line with national trends, the rate of Aboriginal children in care in Western Australia has remained largely unchanged since the baseline year through to 2024.

### Outcome 13 – Aboriginal families and households are safe

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

There has been no new data provided for this indicator since the 2018–19 baseline year.

## 2024–25 progress

Communities has led significant **Out of Home Care (OOHC)** reform to align services with current evidence-based, trauma-informed child protection case practice to reduce the number of children in care. The key priorities of the sector-wide reform include greater stability for children entering care; improved opportunities for early reunification; greater cultural connection; and a service system that is Aboriginal-led, flexible and needs-driven. As part of the reform program, five new ACCOs have been appointed as OOHC service providers, increased from just one.

The **Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making Pilot (AFLDM)** continues to transform ways of working by government and providers to empower Aboriginal families to make decisions that promote the safety of their children. Through AFLDM, independent Aboriginal Conveners employed by ACCOs support families to make culturally based and family-driven decisions regarding the care of their children through the development of family-led plans. The aim is to prevent children entering OOHC, increase reunification of children with their families and (where reunification is not possible) ensure children in care are connected to culture and community. In 2024–25, 30 families were supported through the AFLDM Pilot, comprising 87 children in total.

**Home Stretch WA** is a flagship program that supports young people leaving OOHC to transition to independent adulthood by providing them with the option to continue to receive support until the age of 21. As of 30 June 2025, more than 725 young people were being supported by the program across the State. Home Stretch WA is being delivered in every region across Western Australia through grant agreements, with 11 agreements across 10 ACCOs and three Community Sector Organisations (CSO). One CSO in the South West has a subcontract with an ACCO to deliver the program to young Aboriginal people in the region.

Grant funding of \$5.75 million has been provided through **Aboriginal Family Safety Grants** for Aboriginal and community-led initiatives that prevent or respond to family violence throughout Western Australia over a two-year period. The 2024 grant recipients represent organisations located across the State including the Perth, Peel, Goldfields-Esperance, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Kimberley, and Pilbara regions.

In partnership with DPC, Communities developed **‘Coercion Hurts’** with insights from victim-survivors, stakeholders, and advocates and informed by the

Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce which was established to focus on system reforms and increased funding for vital services. Communities also created an online information hub to educate people on identifying behaviours, supporting victims, and seeking help, which was translated into 32 languages and included an Easy Read document for accessibility.

To complement the 'Coercion Hurts' campaign, '**Coercive Control – A Story That's Not Ours**' was launched. A first-of-its-kind campaign in WA, it was developed by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people, using cultural storytelling to raise awareness within Aboriginal communities around coercive control.

The **Dandjoo Bidi-Ak Therapeutic Court Pilot** provides a culturally safe and respectful environment to empower and support Aboriginal families who are engaged in formal care and protection matters. Dandjoo operates four days per week in the Perth Children's Court.

Communities and WA Health are working together on the **Health Navigator Pilot Program**, which employs Aboriginal Health Workers to support coordination and communication for families and children to be connected to the right services at the right time. During 2024–25, the program in the South West and Mirrabooka child protection districts accepted 110 referrals, which has led to more timely health assessments, interventions and sustained care arrangements for children with complex health, development and trauma needs.

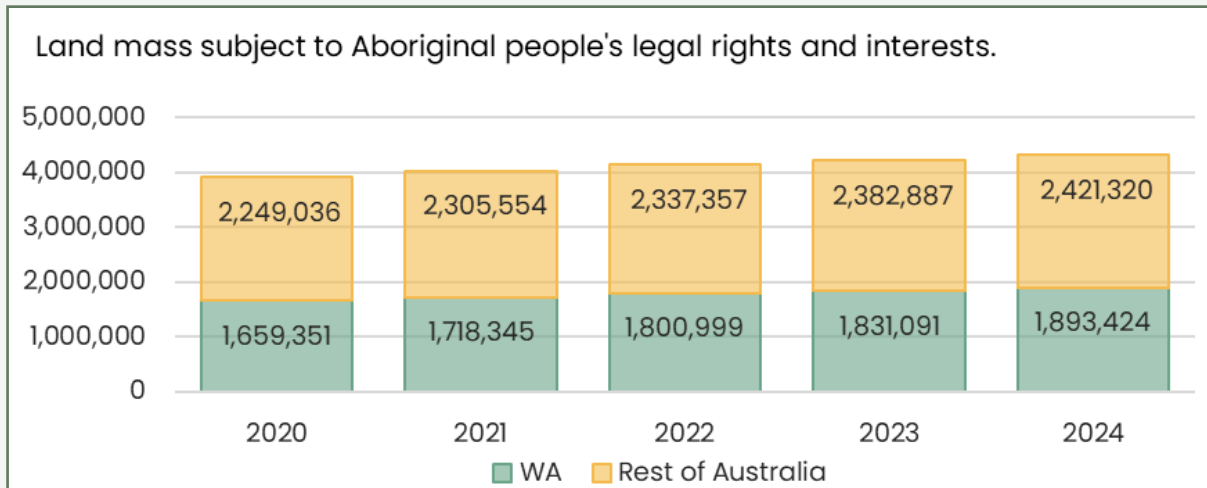
The **Aboriginal Community Connectors Program (ACCP)** delivers essential community services by providing transport to a safe place, diversion from unsafe situations, referrals to complementary services, mediation or de-escalation where safe to intervene for people who are at risk of harm. It also offers assistance to community members to attend local events and activities in the regions. The ACCP is delivered in 13 locations around WA. Currently, 10 ACCOs deliver services in 11 locations, while two service providers are non-ACCOs delivering in their respective locations.

In June 2025, a dedicated space opened for the **Bibimbiya Jan-ga Buru Healing Space** (women and children's healing place), a Family and Domestic Violence one stop hub in Broome. Operated by the Family Outreach Service – working in partnership with Anglicare WA, Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation, Jalygurr Guwan Aboriginal Corporation, Broome CIRCLE and Legal Aid, services include advocacy, counselling, legal assistance, Family and Domestic Violence education, parenting support and dedicated assistance for children.

# Connection to Country, culture and languages

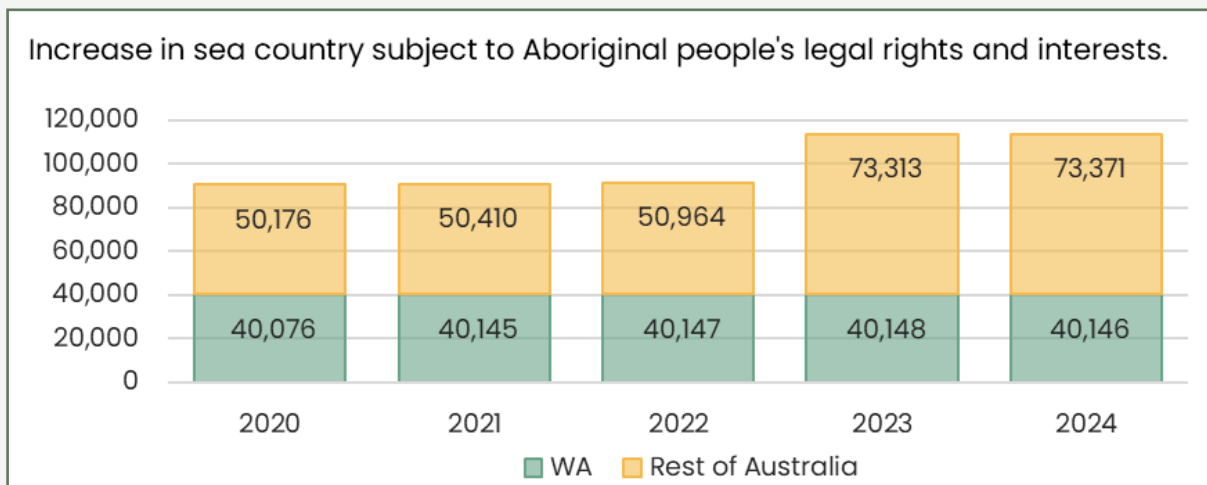
## Outcome 15 – Aboriginal people maintain a distinct cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters

**Target 15A:** By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia’s land mass subject to Aboriginal people’s legal rights or interests.



In WA there has been a 14 per cent increase in land mass subject to Aboriginal people’s rights or interests, with the addition of 234,073 km<sup>2</sup> since 2020.

**Target 15B:** By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal people’s legal rights or interests in the sea.



WA sea country accounted for 35 per cent of the nation’s total sea country covered by Aboriginal people’s legal rights or interests in 2024. The area covered in WA has not changed significantly since the baseline year of 2020 (0.2 per cent increase).

## Outcome 16 – Aboriginal languages are strong and flourishing

**Target 16:** By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal languages being spoken.

No data on progress is available.

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### 2024–25 progress

**Plan for our Parks** has created over 6.5 million hectares of jointly managed conservation estate, providing legal rights, economic opportunities and support for Aboriginal participation in land and sea management. As of June 2025, there have been 20 Indigenous Land Use Agreements executed and registered (or in the process of registration) through Plan for our Parks, including six in 2024–25. As part of Plan for Our Parks, and through the joint management partnership with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the areas of jointly managed conservation estate have increased by 53 per cent in 2024–25.

A total of 28 properties has been transferred to direct Aboriginal control through the **divestment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust estate**, with further divestments in progress. It is anticipated that 22 Aboriginal Lands Trust properties will be divested over the 2024–25 to 2027–28 Financial Years.

With support from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation the **Exmouth Gulf Taskforce** established a multi-stakeholder initiative in 2022 to provide strategic advice on environmental, cultural and social management of the Exmouth Gulf and its surrounds. The initiative delivered its Final Report in mid-2025, which now informs the WA Government’s strategy for protecting Exmouth Gulf’s globally significant cultural heritage and biodiversity. The proposed Exmouth Gulf Marine Park will be jointly vested within the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC) native title determination areas and jointly managed by DBCA and NTGAC.

In 2024–25, the WA Government provided support to progress the establishment of **Aboriginal Languages WA** as a formal partnership providing support to incorporate and establish governance, operational policies and procedures in working towards establishing itself as a peak body for Aboriginal Languages across WA.

To further strengthen and increase the number of Aboriginal languages spoken across WA, Education leads the Aboriginal Languages of WA Reference Group which provides advice and guidance on issues or matters relevant to teaching of Aboriginal Languages in public schools, including the provision of the **Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training**. Education continues to support public schools to teach an Aboriginal language, in consultation with their local Aboriginal community, with 102 schools teaching language to almost 16,000 students.

The State Library of Western Australia's Storylines archive grew by 7.5 per cent in 2024–25 and now holds over **16,000 items relating to Aboriginal history** in Western Australia. The State Library of Western Australia delivered 12 Aboriginal Family History sessions and eight regional training sessions, with more than 7,200 individuals now identified in the archive.





