

MEDIA RELEASE – 17 February 2023

Lowitja Institute welcomes action, funding on Closing the Gap implementation

Lowitja Institute has welcomed the Australian Government's action to accelerate work on the four Priority Reforms in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and provide additional funding for critical issues, including housing, water and food security that impact on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Australian Government on Monday delivered its second Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, alongside the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks) annual Implementation Plan. It will also restore the Closing the Gap statement at the start of the parliamentary year.

Lowitja Institute CEO Adjunct Professor Janine Mohamed said the implementation plans detail each parties' responsibility towards achieving the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement, which are crucial to meeting Closing the Gap targets.

"We echo the sentiments of Coalition of Peaks lead convenor Pat Turner that full implementation of the Priority Reforms is what is needed by governments if we are to improve our life outcomes and close the gap," she said.

"Accountability for governments and joint decision making are essential to this, particularly Priority Reform 1 (formal partnerships and shared decision making) and Priority Reform 3 (transforming governments)," she said.

"In our work at the Lowitja Institute, we advocate for transforming systems to ensure they are culturally safe. This must be at the heart of systems reform."

Adjunct Professor Mohamed also welcomed the \$424 million additional funding to Closing the Gap, with the focus on addressing access to clean drinking water, new remote housing, food security, On-Country education and family violence.

"We will watch carefully to ensure these measures are, as promised by the federal government, designed and delivered in line with the Priority Reforms and through formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, which are then prioritised for service delivery," she said.

"This is critical to any real hope for meeting Closing the Gaps targets, which have languished for too long at great individual and community cost for our peoples."

Lowitja Institute has led important research on the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including a discussion paper launched at a side meeting at the United Nations COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow in 2021 ([Climate in health \(lowitja.org.au\)](https://www.lowitja.org.au/Climate-in-health)).

“Climate change impacts significantly on health, including food and water security, and the need for safe housing and energy justice is paramount,” Adjunct Professor Mohamed said. “So governments need to be investing heavily in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led prevention, mitigation and adaptation solutions.”

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[Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#) is available on the National Indigenous Australians Agency's website.

[Coalition of the Peaks Implementation Plan](#) is available on the Coalition of Peaks website.

For more information or to arrange an interview with a Lowitja Institute representative, please contact Jo Cackett on 0474 727 506, communications@lowitja.org.au