



# CLOSE THE GAP

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **New approach to Closing the Gap Strategy welcomed**

**Thursday 13 December 2018**

The Close the Gap Campaign has welcomed the COAG agreement to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the Refreshed Closing the Gap Strategy.

COAG has recognised that in order to effect real change, governments must work collaboratively and in genuine, formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they are the essential agents of change.

The Close the Gap Campaign Co-Chair and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO, said this is a significant and positive development.

“I am pleased to see COAG has recognised that our involvement and participation in the co-design of this important national strategy is vital.

“It is encouraging to hear that a new formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be established by the end of February 2019.

“We know that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are included in the design and delivery of services that impact their lives, the outcomes are far better,” Commissioner Oscar said.

Rod Little, Close the Gap Campaign Co-Chair and Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia’s First People’s also welcomed the COAG commitment.

“I am pleased that governments are finally listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and sincerely hope this will lead to much better outcomes for our people.

“Whilst the Refresh Strategy has been delayed, it is important not to forget why this campaign exists, to close the life expectancy gap for our peoples.

“First peoples and other Australians across the nation will anticipate this very serious and different approach to be more effective in closing the life expectancy gap for our peoples,” said Mr Little.

The COAG meeting agreed there should be further consultation on refreshed targets to ensure they align with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ and communities’ priorities. The draft targets are expected to be finalised by mid-2019.

The Close the Gap Campaign said future negotiations must be robust and include consideration of how disability, culture, racism and trauma and healing are best addressed within the Refreshed Strategy.

The Campaign has also welcomed the commitment to share joint oversight and responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Closing the Gap Strategy.