

Inspector-General's Statement of Commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

I affirm that real improvement in aged care in Australia cannot occur without learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For generations, they have modelled how to honour, protect and care for their Elders in ways that are rich in connection, respect and intergenerational responsibility. If we as a country are to collectively achieve the objects of the new *Aged Care Act 2024* – particularly respect, dignity, and the right to live a life of meaning – we have a lot to learn from the knowledge and cultural strength of the world's oldest continuous cultures.

This Statement is not a symbolic commitment. It must be visible in how we define our work, how we engage, how we listen, how we hire, and how we report.

My Office expresses this statement as something to which we expect to be held to account.

My Office is unwavering in its commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement). We recognise that improving aged care outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires more than consultation—it requires genuine engagement and deep listening that is reflected in action. This means creating space for shared power, time for deep engagement, and embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership at every stage of our oversight – from how we scope and define issues, to how we analyse findings and propose reforms. It means ensuring our Office does not come at issues with a 'we know best' attitude.

The Office of the Inspector-General commits to embedding the four Priority Reforms of the National Agreement throughout our work:

1. Partnership, Engagement and Shared Decision-Making

We will work to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and community-controlled organisations and we are committed to engaging, wherever possible, with people who hold firsthand knowledge and lived experience. Shared

decision-making will be key to our oversight functions wherever possible, including the way we select issues to monitor, investigate and report on, and in how we develop findings and recommendations. When we engage and how we engage will mirror the principles of Priority Reform One. Our engagement will prioritise reciprocity and the concept of ‘Dadirri’ – deep, respectful listening grounded in cultural awareness – to foster genuine understanding and connection. Learn more about our engagement approach at www.igac.gov.au/get-involved/engagement.

2. Building the Community-Controlled Sector

We actively look for opportunities where Government can grow, strengthen and sustain the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled aged care sector; both in line with Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement and the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. We recognise Aboriginal community-controlled organisations are best placed to deliver care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that is trusted, community-led, holistic and culturally safe.

3. Transforming Government Organisations

We strive to ensure our oversight practices are culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we serve. We commit to transforming our own Office into a culturally capable and accountable agency. This includes ongoing development of cultural intelligence and safety for our staff, systems to support Indigenous leadership, and mechanisms for community-informed evaluation of our impact. We are committed to eliminating racism and unconscious bias in the way we conduct our work, and as a distinct outcome of our work. We seek to address colonial load – the ongoing impacts of colonisation – wherever it exists, with honesty, respect and ongoing commitment.

4. Shared Access to Data and Information

We will support open, transparent and community-governed access to data wherever we possibly can. In monitoring and assessing the adequacy of aged care data, we will also strive for recommendations that enable data sharing with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and communities. We will prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership of data relevant to aged care wherever we proactively can. We

ascribe to the principles of Indigenous Data Governance and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. We are aligned to the [Maiam nayri Wingara](#) principles, as recommended for all governments in the Productivity Commission's Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The FAIR and CARE Principles articulated by the [Global Indigenous Data Alliance](#) are vital to our work, as is the "right to create value from Indigenous data in ways that are grounded in Indigenous worldviews" on which they are based.

We also commit to the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's review of the National Agreement, to which all governments have agreed, including:

- Being accountable for outcomes, not just activities, by setting and reporting against measures that reflect the lived experiences of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Resourcing respectful engagement, by allowing adequate time and investment to enable genuine, ongoing participation and dialogue.
- Lifting transparency, by publishing how we are performing against our Closing the Gap commitments.
- Respecting the diversity of lived expertise, by ensuring we hear all voices, including those that have the least opportunity to participate in government processes and consultation.

We will measure our success by the trust we build, the integrity of our partnerships, and the change we help to enable for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families.



Natalie Siegel-Brown
Inspector-General of Aged Care

14 July 2025