



MEDIA STATEMENT

National Close the Gap Day 2024 marks the opportunity for a refreshed approach in Western Australia

National Close the Gap Day 2024 is being marked by the Western Australian (WA) Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) sector as a key opportunity for all Australian Governments to refocus their efforts to close the gap in outcomes for Aboriginal people in WA.

The Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia (CASWA), the newly established peak body to support and strengthen WA ACCOs, has expressed its support for the Close the Gap Campaign - *Voyage to Voice, Treaty, Truth and Beyond* – and a renewed approach to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement).

‘For thousands of years and across generations, Aboriginal people have looked after the health and wellbeing of our families, communities and Country’, said CASWA’s Interim Chairperson, Ms Vicki O’Donnell OAM.

‘While our people continue to be impacted by the extreme trauma and poor outcomes caused by a legacy of government policies, which has been compounded by the failure of the recent Voice Referendum, we continue to work with governments to close the gap’, she said.

Highlighting the power of the National Agreement to enable the self-determination of Aboriginal people, Ms O’Donnell has today called on Commonwealth, State and Local Governments to be innovative and ambitious in how they partner with Aboriginal people in the future to close the gap.

‘The theme of National Close the Gap Day 2024 reflects the optimism of our people to forge a path to the future. While there have been examples of genuine good will and shared action in Aboriginal policy and program design since the National Agreement commenced, a refreshed approach by our Government partners is required to ensure long term outcomes and reform’, she said.

National Close the Gap Day 2024 follows the recent release of the Productivity Commission’s review of the progress of Australian Governments in implementing the National Agreement.

CASWA’s Chief Executive Officer, Mr James Christian PSM said, ‘while the findings of the Productivity Commission’s review were frank and honest, CASWA is focussed on working with all Australian Governments to implement its recommendations’.

‘Our priority is to ensure that through their ACCOs, the voices of Aboriginal people are elevated and empowered to develop and deliver the services their communities require. Recognising the cultural authority and expertise of our people and ACCOs is fundamental to closing the gap’, he said.

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