

About SAACCON

On 27 July 2020, all Australian Governments entered a Partnership with the Coalition of Peaks. This Agreement is referred to as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement). The Coalition of Peaks is comprised of national, state and territory non-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak bodies and certain independent statutory authorities which have responsibility for policies, programs and services related to Closing the Gap, to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Their governing bodies are elected by Aboriginal people or organisations and are accountable to their membership. The South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON) is the South Australian jurisdictional representative on the Coalition of Peaks.

SAACCON is a network of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in South Australia and has been established to provide advice, recommendations and guidance to the Coalition of Peaks, and the South Australian, Commonwealth and Local Governments on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. At the time of publishing, we represent 26 member organisations spanning South Australia.

Summary of Recommendations

1. The Commission should consider opportunities to embed the key themes and recommendations outlined in the *Closing the Gap – South Australia Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Mapping Report 2024* within the Commission’s recommendations.
2. The Commission’s recommendations should advocate for ACCOs and communities to have a leadership role in the development and implementation of data collection and governance strategies that must inform locally led measures to address the prevalence and impact of DFSV.
3. The Commission should consider opportunities to embed the key themes and relevant recommendations outlined in existing reports and policy frameworks, including but not limited to the:
 - *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*
 - *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025*
 - The forthcoming standalone *First Nations National Plan*, and any other interrelated or interim reports from the Expert First Nations Steering Committee to advise on reducing rates of family violence and abuse
 - *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women’s Voices): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report*
 - *Stronger Families, Safe Kids: Family violence response and prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families report.*
 - Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People’s *Holding on to Our Future: Final Report of the Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres*

- Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in the removal and placement of Aboriginal children and young people in South Australia* report
- *Bringing them Home Report*
 - *Report of the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches*
 - Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's 2024 *Yearly Report to Parliament*
 - National Agreement on Closing the Gap *Data Development Plan 2022-2030*
 - *Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031*, and the *Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026*
 - Report of the Family and Community Safety Study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: '*The answers were there before white man come in: stories of strength and resilience for responding to violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*
 - *Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25*
 - *Violence against Indigenous women and girls: Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Reem Alsalem* (UN Document A/HRC/50/26)
 - Productivity Commission's *Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap* reports

Introduction

The existing commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement), the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (the National Plan) and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (the Action Plan) collectively provide a range of actions and initiatives to address domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) that have been informed by the lived experience of women and families, and the contributions of ACCOs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts. We believe it is crucial that the Commission's findings honour these perspectives with recommendations that are complementary to the existing actions and recommendations under these (and other) frameworks. In doing so, the Commission should recognise the finding of the recent [Report of the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches](#)—that 'the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children must be a national priority, urging the strengthening of culturally informed and place-based DFSV responses for [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] communities'.

Solutions must be strength-based, trauma-informed, holistic, family focused, community-led and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forms of language, healing, support and education. Actions must be accessible, strength-based and empower the sector to continue to evolve, strengthening their capacity and capability.¹

¹ Department of Social Services. (2023). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025: Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, p.53.

We welcome the alignment of the Commission’s Issues Paper with the National Plan through recognition that measures to address domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) should not be purely response based but must also incorporate prevention, early intervention, recovery and healing. ACCOs must be supported to have a leadership role in supporting their communities through each of these elements of a holistic and rights-based multidisciplinary approach that is grounded in healing and self-determination.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and organisations, service providers and professionals who work in this space, are expert knowledge holders in understanding the drivers of domestic, family, and sexual violence. Consequently, they must lead the design, delivery and evaluation of prevention intervention, recovery and response initiatives. To do this, governments must listen to, support, build, strengthen and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by working in genuine partnership. Self-determination is key to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ wellbeing, strength and safety across all facets of life.²

In recognition of the representation of SAACCON members on the Commission’s Aboriginal Partnership Committee, and the opportunity this provides to contribute their subject matter expertise on the focus areas within the Commission’s Issues Paper, our submission is focused on:

- The role of commitments under the Closing the Gap framework in guiding and monitoring responses to DFSV; and
- ensuring that existing actions and priorities informed by the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities who have shared their lived experience and expertise through extensive prior engagements are reflected in the Committee’s recommendations.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap: Priority Reforms

As parties to the National Agreement, all governments have acknowledged ‘that strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are fundamental to improved life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’ (clause 20). Parties have agreed to supporting the prioritisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through the Priority Reforms (clause 22). Supporting and prioritising culture via the implementation of the Priority Reforms under the National Agreement must be the foundation of responses to address the impact of DFSV for Aboriginal families.³

The significance of the Priority Reforms to the implementation of effective and sustainable measures to address the prevalence and impact of DFSV for Aboriginal communities is acknowledged in key national frameworks. The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action*

² Department of Social Services. (2023). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025: Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, p.49.

³ In reference to South Australia, we use the term **Aboriginal** to refer to people who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Clans and Traditional Owner Groups whose traditional lands comprise what is now called Australia.

Plan 2023-2025 (the Action Plan) under the National Plan acknowledges that '[s]uccessful implementation of [all] actions will not occur without building the community-controlled sector (Priority Reform Two) and transforming government organisations (Priority Reform Three), to increase the proportion of services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, particularly community-controlled organisations (Closing the Gap Clause 55).'

This Action Plan is designed to make changes to where the decision-making sits with the community and their lived experience. Community governance should equal community control and be culturally appropriate. Such a shift will require government and other decision makers to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their community services at the centre of decision-making and sustainable solutions to enhance their empowerment and self-determination in reducing violence in their communities.⁴

To achieve these objectives, appropriately resourced measures aimed at strengthening and building the community-controlled sector (Priority Reform 2) must be urgently prioritised. Parties to the National Agreement acknowledge that 'community control is an act of self-determination' (clause 44), and that 'community-controlled services are better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, achieve better results, employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are often preferred over mainstream services (clause 43). In recognition of the complex range of determinants of health and social and emotional wellbeing that impact families and communities experiencing and responding to DFSV, Priority Reform 2 measures must support a holistic range of early interventions and community services (including legal support services); in addition to a significant increase in the accessibility of ACCO specialist family safety support services.

Current policy responses to family violence that do not prioritise the need for cultural healing, do not adequately resource Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, and fail to engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will never be successful in reducing or eliminating family violence.⁵

Priority Reform 2 measures must be informed by the six key priority areas identified during consultations to inform the *Closing the Gap – South Australia Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Mapping Report 2024*. These priority areas (and their constituent elements) for the growth and sustainable development of a strong ACCO sector in South Australia are:

1. Funding

- a. Sustainable funding. This should be understood to involve consistent, long-term financial support from federal and state governments. This funding ensures ACCOs can engage in strategic planning, maintain operational

⁴ Department of Social Services. (2023). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025: Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, p.8

⁵ SNAICC, NFVPLS & NATSILS. *Stronger Families, Safe Kids: Family violence response and prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*, p.11.

excellence, and innovate in service delivery, preventing disruptions caused by short-term financial constraints. This approach fosters community development, self-determination, and improved outcomes for Aboriginal communities. Given that DFSV services are predominantly funded by the Commonwealth, improving the sustainability of funding will be best supported by a significant investment in DFSV services by the state government. Funding initiatives should align with (and be complementary to) any relevant current actions and priorities progressing through the South Australian Partnership Committee on Closing the Gap, the implementation of the South Australian Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and any outcomes of SAACCON's partnership with the Department of Treasury and Finance.

- b. Funding models; including block funding, core operation funding, service delivery funding, and a centralised funding body.
 - c. Transparent funding and resource allocation models that prioritise long-term investments and shared decision-making that can create a stable foundation for ACCOs and avoid disadvantaging ACCOs in competitive procurement processes.
 - d. Increased funding and business development support.
 - e. Support programs, such as secondment programs.
 - f. Equitable service delivery across different regions and remote communities via a coordinated approach that includes adequate funding, infrastructure development, and workforce capacity building.
 - g. Funding the additional cultural workload; to provide safe, supportive and empowering work environments that support the retention of Aboriginal staff.
2. *Eliminating racism and enabling a co-creation approach to the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, projects and programs*
- a. Truth telling processes and acknowledgements of historical injustices that centralise the voices and experiences of ACCOs.
 - b. Co-design (or co-creation) and shared decision-making with ACCOs to ensure that services and programs align closely with the community's needs and values.
 - c. Strengths-based co-creation of place-based localised solutions.
 - d. Empowering Aboriginal governance and policymaking. 'This includes the ability for ACCOs to co-create policies, ensuring they are culturally appropriate and meet the specific needs of Aboriginal communities...By shifting towards empowering Aboriginal governance, policies can be more reflective of Aboriginal values and needs. This would also contribute to building trust and stronger partnerships between ACCOs and government agencies.'
 - e. Government policy and regulatory challenges. 'Policymakers should engage with ACCOs to understand their regulatory challenges and develop solutions that enhance, rather than hinder, their operations. The current regulatory framework is seen as overly restrictive, creating significant barriers for ACCOs.'

- f. Land use and lease agreements. A lack of autonomy and decision-making power to exercise control over land use disadvantages communities and compromises their capacity to pursue self-determination via economic opportunities and management of resources in line with cultural priorities and values.
- g. Reforming government engagement with ACCOs. Proactive, strengths-based approaches that recognise the inherent strengths within Aboriginal communities and leverage the cultural capabilities of ACCOs need to replace existing reactive and punitive responses.

3. *Capacity building and workforce development*

- a. Capacity building initiatives such as training and continuous learning opportunities to build a strong workforce is critical to the success of ACCOs. Capacity building must also include adequate supports for ACCOs to develop internal structures to support growth, such as funding that allows ACCOs to focus on developing policies and procedures that are necessary for a sustainable organisation.
- b. Becoming a preferred provider. 'ACCOs expressed a strong desire to be recognised as preferred providers within their communities and by government and called for support in achieving this status. This aspiration reflects a broader ambition to enhance their service delivery capabilities and increase community access and trust.'
- c. Workforce collaboration and development via shared workforce initiatives and joint training and development programs.
- d. The role and expansion of ACCOs. Establishing more ACCOs and expanding the sector to meet the growing demands of Aboriginal communities and address gaps in service delivery via investment in the development and capacity building of ACCOs.

4. *Strategic partnerships and collaboration*

- a. Multi-level strategic partnerships and collaboration that engage communities and incorporate grassroots insights and needs into reforms and initiatives. This should be enabled by:
 - i. Trust and genuine partnerships
 - ii. Collaboration over competition
 - iii. Equal and shared decision-making in collaboration
 - iv. Expanding collaborative structures

5. *Self-determination*

- a. Indigenous Data Sovereignty. Exercising the right to control how data is collected, interpreted and utilised respects the autonomy and cultural integrity of Aboriginal people, and allows communities to manage their information according to their values and priorities.
- b. Community-led and ownership, empowerment, and involvement in decision-making are essential for successful strategic collaborations and partnerships.

- c. ACCOs-driven priorities and government support. ACCOs need to be responsive to local community needs and aspirations, which fosters community engagement and ownership. 'Government support must provide the frameworks and financial resources that empower ACCOs to align their Aboriginal community driven activities with broader social and economic goals.'
- d. Economic self-determination opportunities and growth areas. ACCOs need to be supported to participate in identified industry growth areas for SA.

6. Strengths-based evaluation frameworks

- a. 'Evaluation frameworks should consider cultural factors and community-defined success metrics. Ensuring that data storage and management practices align with community values is crucial for maintaining trust and integrity. Policies supporting Indigenous Data Sovereignty and tailored evaluation frameworks should provide resources and training for ACCOs, enhancing their capacity to collect and analyse data effectively.' Integrated reporting requirements across agencies and streamlined accreditation standards will reduce administrative and financial burdens on ACCOs.

Recommendation 1: that the Commission should consider opportunities to embed the key themes and recommendations outlined in the *Closing the Gap – South Australia Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Mapping Report 2024* within the Commission's recommendations.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap: Shared access to data

It is important that ACCOs and government partners under Closing the Gap have the best chance of success with the support of equal access to appropriate and relevant data that can support evidence-based funding decisions. Under Priority Reform 4, the National Agreement states that shared access to location specific data and information will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to support the achievement of Priority Reforms 1-3 by:

- *Priority Reform 1*: Participating as equal partners with government, with equal access to all processes and information to support shared decision-making.
- *Priority Reform 2*: Driving their own development by making evidence-based decisions on the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs for their communities in order to develop local solutions for local issues.
- *Priority Reform 3*: Measuring the transformation of government organisations operating in their region to be more responsive and accountable for Closing the Gap.

In addition, Government parties to the National Agreement have made the following commitments under the National Agreement [Data Development Plan 2022-2030](#):

- Consider how the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (i.e. Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics) and FAIR Data Principles (i.e.

Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) can inform Government practices relating to Indigenous data.

- Identify opportunities to embed Indigenous priorities and strengths-based approaches into the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous data.
- Understand data priorities, and issues of relevance and importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including through existing Indigenous-led and on the ground projects.
- Identify barriers to improving Indigenous access to and use of government-held data.
- Support the capability building priorities of Indigenous communities related to receiving and utilising government-held data.

The principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance underpin the ability of communities, and Community Controlled Organisations, to engage as equal partners. It is recognised that governments will need to continue to collect and retain data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, this should be done with the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people — in development, stewardship, analysis and dissemination of data.⁶

Monitoring and evaluation of current and future initiatives is reliant on substantial improvements to the quality of the available data and the frequency with which it is collected. We are concerned that the extent to which the National Agreement and other interrelated frameworks can drive meaningful improvements and provide strong accountability measures is currently inhibited by the lack of available data required to measure progress and inform needs-based funding reforms to support holistic Aboriginal-led responses and early interventions. For example, there is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-19 to measure progress towards reaching target 13 of the National Agreement: 'By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.' We are now at the halfway point between the baseline year and the due date to reach target 13, with no data for the agreed indicator with which to determine whether there has been progress since the establishment of the target. This compromises our capacity to progress program development in partnership with the SA Government, or negotiate actions under the SA Implementation Plan that are proportionate to the needs of communities.

Similarly, the first [Yearly Report to Parliament](#) from the national Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission notes that reporting on progress against the targets and outcomes under the National Plan is yet to begin. The report notes that '[f]urther dedicated effort is needed to build the indicators and measures identified in the Performance Measurement Plan.' Of the 74 indicators in the Performance Measurement Plan, 31% have current baseline data, 22% have potential data sources identified, and 50% do not have identified data sources. Of the 34 related sub-outcomes, 16 have one or more indicators that can be measured. The report acknowledges that '[m]easurement planning to date is heavily reliant on data that is

⁶ National Agreement on Closing the Gap [Data Development Plan](#), p.6.

only collected every four to five years', and that '[s]horter-term measures are needed to support timely progress monitoring.'

The result of this barrier to monitoring and evaluation of existing actions and recommendations means that there are significant opportunities remaining to establish suitable data collection and governance practices to progress existing commitments.

Aboriginal communities and organisations should be empowered to lead the determination of the localised needs of their communities and identification of service gaps to inform evidence based, culturally informed and place-based responses. This must be premised on respect and recognition of communities' full sovereign rights over their own community data. Where communities have collected their own data and they consent to it being used to inform measures to address the impact of DFSV on their community, the following principles should be observed:⁷

- Data must be driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and what they consider to be priorities in their community. Whilst this may coincide with the needs and interest of other stakeholders, it is to be driven by the interest of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities are the custodians of the data and they control the narrative that emerges from the data; the story it tells, and who has permission to tell the story; and what outcomes that they want to achieve.
- Community data supports the exercise of self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in place-based decision-making that is responsive to the local communities to which the Community data relates.
- Access to Community data is embodied in place-based and local decision-making agreements.

...it is the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to exercise authority over and govern the creation, collection, ownership and use of their data. Therefore, data created and collated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should maintain a two-way information exchange to ensure Indigenous data sovereignty. This two-way exchange requires that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations be involved in all stages of the design, research, service development and evaluation models through formal and genuine partnership.⁸

Recommendation 2: That the Commission's recommendations should advocate for ACCOs and communities to have a leadership role in the development and implementation of data collection and governance strategies that must inform locally led measures to address the prevalence and impact of DFSV.

Opportunities to implement existing actions and recommendations

⁷ Data Development Plan, p.7. [Data Development Plan – 2022-2030 \(closingthegap.gov.au\)](https://closingthegap.gov.au)

⁸ Department of Social Services. (2023). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025: Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032. https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/10_2023/dedicated-action-plan.pdf

Decades of failures to meaningfully implement the solutions communities advocate for have further entrenched a lack of trust that governments are willing to make decisions and needs-based funding allocations that genuinely support the human rights and wellbeing of communities. Communities cannot keep waiting for governments to respect their lived experience and protect their rights by making substantial progress towards implementing existing recommendations. As stated in the [Report of the Advisory Commission into the Incarceration Rates of Aboriginal Peoples in South Australia](#):

'Commissions such as these are held, research is compiled and analysed, reports and recommendations are made. Each report says the same things. Each time the Aboriginal people involved relive their traumas in telling their stories, hoping to be heard and have the issues addressed, only to see the reports pushed aside until the next one is commissioned.'

It is crucial that the Commission's findings and recommendations acknowledge and support the implementation of actions and recommendations resulting from consultation with communities to inform previous inquiries. There is a wealth of evidence-based actions and responses to address the drivers and impacts of DFSV on Aboriginal families and communities that have already been recommended to governments. This ranges from recommendations now made decades ago (such as those within the 1997 [Bringing them Home Report](#)) to work recently undertaken (such as the Action Plan, the 2020 [Wiyi Yani U Thangani \(Women's Voices\): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report](#), , the 2024 [Report of the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches](#) and the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's first [Yearly Report to Parliament](#) in 2024).

For example, the concerns and recommendations outlined within the 2017 [Stronger Families, Safe Kids: Family violence response and prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families](#)⁹ report that remain relevant and of significant concern today. The Commission's recommendations must be responsive to the concerns raised in Strong Families, Safe Kids:

- Family violence responses have systematically failed to accommodate for the cultural and social contexts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples experience significant barriers to accessing family violence services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are underrepresented in early interventions that prevent family violence, most critically targeted family support services and early childhood education and care
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have been marginalised in political responses to family violence
- Chronic underfunding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled family violence responses

We support the key recommendations of the Strong Families, Safe Kids report to address these concerns. In particular, we wish to highlight and indicate our support for the following recommendations which we believe are strongly relevant to the implementation of the Priority Reforms in this context:

⁹ Authored by SNAICC, First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence (formerly National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (NFVPLS)), and National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS)

1. Whole of government reform to ensure that cultural healing – driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, built on trauma-informed practice and responsive to the diverse needs in different community contexts – is embedded in all elements of family violence response and prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2. All governments commit to a sustained increase in investment for family violence response and prevention, with a key focus on resourcing needs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations. Funding commitments must ensure national coverage of holistic and culturally safe service responses in areas including:

- family support services;
- early intervention and prevention programs – including tailored programs for women, men and young children;
- community-based healing programs, with tailored supports for both victims/survivors and perpetrators of family violence;
- legal assistance for victims/survivors, children and perpetrators;
- programs working with perpetrators;
- trauma counselling and specialist supports for victims/ survivors;
- crisis housing, and access to safe, stable and culturally appropriate long-term housing options for women and their children experiencing family violence; and
- placements with kin for children removed because of violence and culturally safe programs and services to better support non-violent parents (victims/survivors) to safely maintain the care of their children – avoiding child removal and out-of-home care placements.

3. Measures are advanced to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, women, men, families and children to be empowered as active participants in driving policy and practice change in family violence response and prevention, including through:

- resourcing and support for the capacity of community-controlled services;
- resourcing peak representation of community-controlled service sectors through organisations including SNAICC, NATSILS and NFVPLS;
- enabling and increasing the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation to support community-driven healing initiatives
- ensuring equitable representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in decision making forums and bodies relevant to family violence;
- developing reliable place-based and aggregated data that can both inform communities designing responses, and build an evidence base to support the success of best practice community-driven approaches;
- supporting and expanding specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives that prevent and respond to family violence; and
- national leadership and knowledge-sharing gatherings for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men.

5. That a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection notification and referral system be established. The system would provide a nationally consistent mandatory notification and referral system (akin to the Custody Notification System) to refer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in contact with the child protection system to culturally appropriate supports and services, including independent legal advice, at the earliest possible opportunity. Note: An effective referral system relies on the availability of resourced, quality and culturally appropriate services to refer families to, and cannot be successful independent of other recommendations, particularly recommendation 2 above.

6. That family violence response and prevention is supported through national targets and accompanying whole of government strategies to reduce violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates; and, eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, as called for by the Family Matters – Strong Communities, Strong Culture, Stronger Children and Change the Record – Smarter Justice, Safer Communities national campaigns.

Recommendation 3: that the Commission should consider opportunities to embed the key themes and relevant recommendations outlined in existing reports and policy frameworks, including but not limited to the:

- *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025*
- The forthcoming standalone First Nations National Plan, and any other interrelated or interim reports from the Expert First Nations Steering Committee to advise on reducing rates of family violence and abuse
- *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report*
- *Stronger Families, Safe Kids: Family violence response and prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families report.*
- Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's *Holding on to Our Future: Final Report of the Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in the removal and placement of Aboriginal children and young people in South Australia* report
- *Bringing them Home Report*
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