



natsiwa

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Election Platform 2025

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA) was established in 2009 to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to have a strong and effective voice in the domestic and international policy advocacy process.

NATSIWA is one of the six National Women's Alliances funded through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and supported by the Office for Women, which promotes the views of all Australian women.

Our Vision is:

"To protect the health, human rights and fundamental freedoms that are significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women through cultural preservation, health education & coalition building."

NATSIWA is currently funded by a Working for Women Program grant. Therefore, *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality*¹ informs our work and our reform priorities. Our work relates especially to Key Principles 3, 4 and 5 and the priority areas of gender-based violence, health, leadership, representation and decision-making.

Acknowledgment of Country

NATSIWA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

¹ <https://genderequality.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-03/working-for-women-a-strategy-for-gender-equality.pdf>

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Executive summary

Australia currently faces crises in gender-based violence, housing, and the cost of living. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, an already vulnerable population, suffer acutely from these compounding, interrelated problems. As well, our women and children continue to have lower levels of health and education than the general population.

The six big intersecting reform areas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

- Domestic and family violence
- Housing
- Education
- Children in out-of-home care
- Climate change
- Health

Intersectional problems need intersectional policy.

NATSIWA calls for an approach to policy and funding across these issues based on an understanding of all strands in the web of intersectionality, and all their implications. Ultimately, governments must provide supports that are culturally safe, effective, accessible, integrated and timely.

First Nations women need funding certainty.

Government programs, strategies and organisations for First Nations Australians across all issues have been chronically underfunded for decades. They are subject to restructuring and funding cuts with every budget and every election cycle and cannot provide security or consistency for staff or clients.

NATSIWA calls for a dedicated Closing the Gap fund that is enshrined in legislation.

Success depends on genuine self-determination.

Government strategies, policies and frameworks for First Nations women and children must be created in equal partnerships with First Nations women who are paid to do that work. This means that all partnerships with First Nations organisations must include adequate funding for the First Nations partner organisations so that they can afford to resource the work equally to the government partners.

We need monitoring and data.

An interim report² released in July 2024 by the Australian Government Productivity Commission demonstrated that only five of the 19 Closing the Gap outcomes had improved. However, there were major gaps in up-to-date and consistent data³ across all the relevant targets, which means the report makes many assessments based on low-confidence data. Without monitoring, how can governments know which initiatives are working? NATSIWA calls for improved data resources to ensure that funding goes to programs that genuinely benefit our women.

Real change will require systemic reforms, intersectional approaches, and a shift from crisis responses to early intervention and prevention.

It's time for Australia to lift First Nations women out of marginalisation, poverty and illness. Our workforce, economy, communities and families will be better off when our women can thrive and contribute their best.

² <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/annual-data-report/closing-the-gap-annual-data-compilation-july2024.pdf> page iv

³ [ibid](#)

Six big reform areas

Domestic and family violence

- Deliver and fully fund wraparound supports to break the cycle of living with violence.
- Deliver and fully fund crisis-housing models that integrate legal assistance, treatment for alcohol and other drugs, mental health care, financial assistance and employment assistance.
- Ensure these are First Nations led, culturally informed and trauma informed.
- Increase the Leaving Violence Payment to \$7,000 and expand eligibility.
- Expand significantly and fully fund First Nations legal services.

Housing

- Deliver more housing Australia wide urgently.
- Deliver long-term housing support for victim survivors of domestic and family violence and their children.
- Reform tenancy laws to protect victim survivors from eviction and homelessness.

Education

- Offer fee-free study to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce in fields where our women need the most support.
- Support women and girls to study on Country.
- Continue and expand funding for First Nations Girls' STEM Academy

Children in out-of-home care

- Address Closing the Gap Target 12.
- Shift funding to ACCO-led family support services instead of out-of-home care.
- Fully fund culturally informed support for women facing violence, poverty, homelessness and addiction.
- Place children in out-of-home care within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-defined kinship.

Climate change

- Take urgent action to address rising sea levels in the Torres Strait
- Provide free higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to study climate science and related fields.

Health

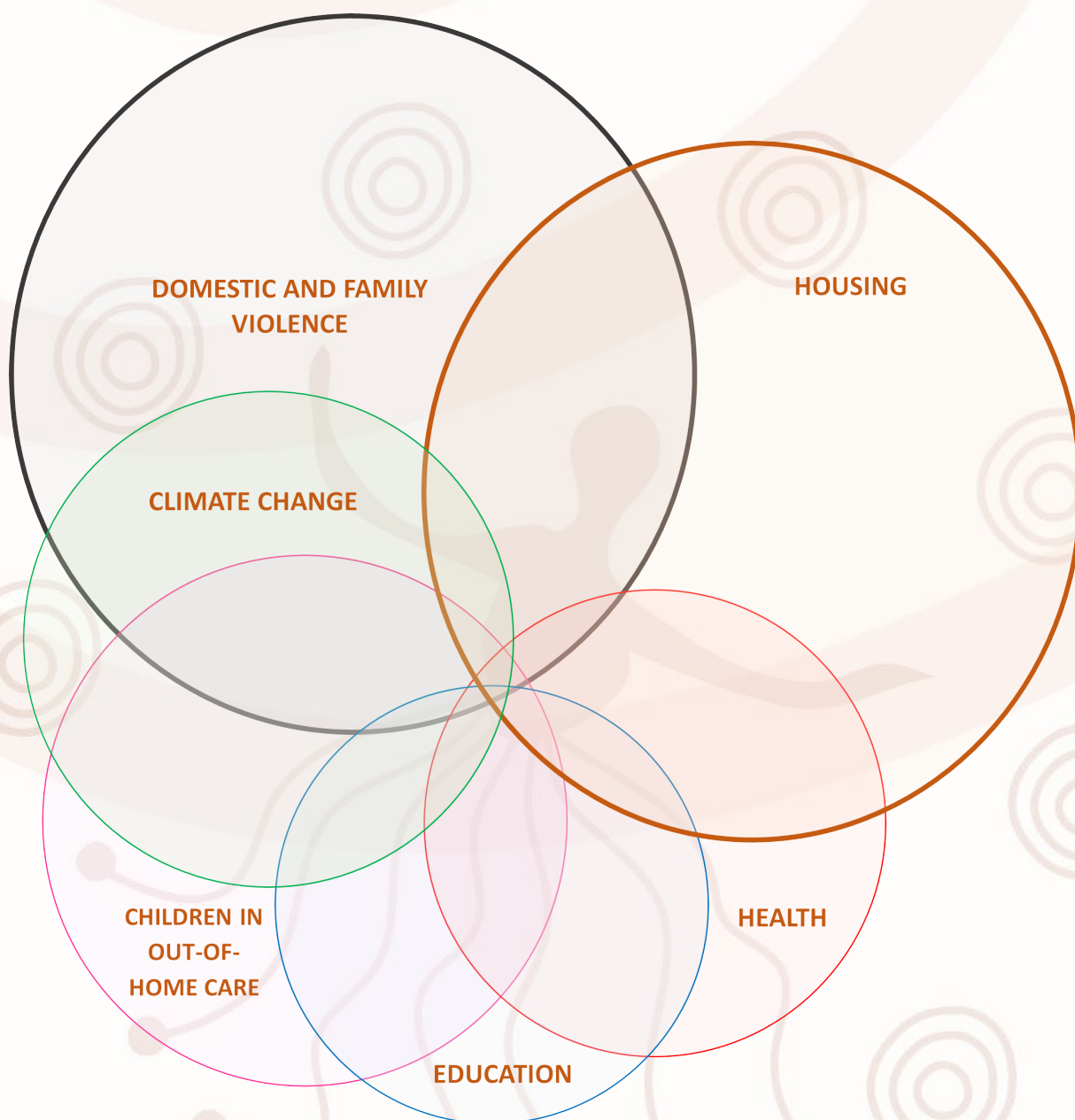
- Establish and fully fund more culturally informed mental health services.
- Tackle First Nations women's disease burden from domestic and family violence.

Intersecting issues

Australia's twin crises in housing and domestic and family violence intersect to devastate the lives of too many First Nations women. Disadvantage in health, education, child welfare and climate change bring more complexity.

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is a public-health disaster that destroys women's capacity for education, employment, independence and contribution to the economy. Cost-of-living and housing stresses increase DFV incidences⁴ and can lead to children entering out-of-home care. Victim survivors with health issues induced by violence need long-term housing support.

But when one issue improves, so will the others.



⁴ [https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/understanding-fdsv/factors-associated-with-fdsv#:~:text=Financial%20and%20economic%20hardship&text=For%20example%2C%20a%20study%20by,FDSV%20and%20COVID%2D19\).](https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/understanding-fdsv/factors-associated-with-fdsv#:~:text=Financial%20and%20economic%20hardship&text=For%20example%2C%20a%20study%20by,FDSV%20and%20COVID%2D19).)

Domestic and family violence

“Domestic and family violence is the number one priority issue affecting the health and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.”—NATSIWA member

First Nations women face shocking rates of domestic and family violence. We number just 3.8 per cent of Australia’s women, yet the Government’s March 2025 Status of Women Report Card⁵ states that one in three murdered women in 2024 identified as First Nations.

Our women are more than 33 times more likely to be hospitalised, and 6 times more likely to die from assault related to domestic and family violence than other women⁶.

“...Unproductive waste of potential” —NATSIWA member

This angry, grieving phrase captures the tragedy of First Nations women whose lives are ruined by the lasting effects of DFV. It limits women’s participation in education, employment and the economy. It stops them being successful members of a family, a community, a workforce and a society. It leads to generational disadvantage.

Closing the Gap Target 13: reducing family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children

NATSIWA members do not want time or money spent on further royal commissions into DFV or child sexual abuse.

The Commonwealth already has well-considered plans and strategies to achieve Target 13 such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–25 under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–32. Those must be funded and implemented now and monitored consistently.

Governments increasingly understand that this hinges on strategy and delivery involving genuine partnerships with First Nations people. But we also need a seismic increase in funding for culturally safe specialist services. This means both frontline services and initiatives that will rebuild our women’s lives in the long term.

Our women need integrated care models for trauma-informed wraparound services including mental health, alcohol and other drugs, physical health, legal support and financial advice. These models require partnerships between justice, health and social services, recognising that all these issues intersect.

It is desperately difficult to leave a violent home permanently – to break the cycle. Too many First Nations women can’t afford to leave.

NATSIWA calls for the proposed Leaving Violence Payment to be increased to \$7,000 and its eligibility expanded so all victim survivors can afford housing deposits, rent, utilities, and essential costs.

⁵ <https://genderequality.gov.au/status-women-report-cards/2025-report-card>

⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-data/contents/responses-measures/hospitalisation-rates-for-family-and-domestic-violence> Family, domestic and sexual violence data in Australia, Hospitalisations for family and domestic violence, AIHW, Australian Government, 9 November 2022; Al-Yaman F, Van Doeland M and Wallis M, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/family-violence-indigenous-peoples/summary> Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, AIHW, Australian Government, Canberra, 2006

Culturally safe services

“Many Aboriginal women don’t report the severity of the violence they are experiencing due to a number of factors: fear of having children removed, losing housing and being isolated from family and/or community as result of reporting it.”—NATSIWA member

These fears are justified. A 2025 Human Rights Watch report⁷ found the most common reason for child protection notifications was exposure to DFV. It’s because authorities are still removing children rather than supporting families at risk or helping victim-survivor mothers to find affordable long-term housing.

Unsurprisingly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely to seek help from First Nations-led organisations that are culturally safe.

However, not all First Nations women need First Nations-specific support services, and some willingly attend mainstream ones if they are culturally respectful and safe. Some women perceive that a mainstream service will offer more confidentiality.

Therefore, as well as increasing funding significantly for First Nations-specific services, Australia must increase and improve cultural competence in mainstream services. NATSIWA members call for continued funding for First Nations-led research into the best ways to deliver safe services for First Nations women, including in mainstream organisations.

Culturally safe legal advice

Legal advice is a key area. NATSIWA calls for more legal centres to be established and fully funded across the nation. The Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) are the only Aboriginal-controlled services across Australia that deliver specialist legal and non-legal DFV prevention programs to Aboriginal people specifically.

There are just 16 FVPLS units nationwide – nowhere near enough while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are so acutely overrepresented in the need for this support.

And despite demand, FVPLS’s are chronically underfunded, with staff paid less than in the better-funded Legal Aid commissions, which are less culturally safe than FVPLS units.

As well, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services rely on very insufficient federal funding despite repeated recommendations from the Productivity Commission for increases.

NATSIWA calls for full, ongoing funding for both these legal services. Funding must be legislated and reliable, not vulnerable to the priorities of different governments.

We also call for consistent domestic and family violence-related legislation across states and territories, including around coercive control.

⁷ https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/mar/27/aboriginal-women-are-scared-to-seek-help-for-fear-their-children-will-be-taken-report-finds-ntwnfb?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Stop misidentifying women as perpetrators.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in incarceration is at a record high and growing⁸. This reflects the failure of Closing the Gap Target 10 (By 2013, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15%).

While the reasons are not fully known, mistaking women who are victims of domestic and family violence for perpetrators is certainly a factor. A key reason that many First Nations women lack trust and of confidence in police is that they are too often misidentified as perpetrators on protection orders⁹, particularly in DFV situations where they have defended themselves.

Domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households is not insoluble or inevitable. Police need to take every incident seriously, and to intervene sooner.

NATSIWA calls for:

- more culturally informed practice among police and correctional staff nationally
- a drastic increase in resources and funding towards Closing the Gap Target 10.

Change perpetrators' behaviour.

Violence against First Nations women will only stop when Australia supports First Nations men.

NATSIWA members call for:

- fully funded First Nations-led behavioural change programs for perpetrators of violence, both in and outside prisons
- financial and legal support for both men and women involved in domestic and family violence matters
- recognition and support for male victims of violence
- secure funding for culturally specific recovery and healing services in communities.

⁸ <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area10>

⁹ Accurately identifying the “person most in need of protection” in domestic and family violence law (Research report) / Nancarrow et al. Sydney : ANROWS, 2020 <https://apo.org.au/node/309729>

Housing

When NATSIWA surveyed our members to inform this election platform, over 50 per cent of respondents nominated access to housing as an urgent reform priority.

Cost of living

Australia's current high living costs disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are among the complex issues that intersect to disadvantage our women. Especially affected are:

- First Nations people in rural, remote and very remote areas where goods and services are most expensive
- women escaping violence, setting up new households and living as single parents
- women paying for healthcare, considering that our women record worse outcomes in most health measures than other women in Australia.

Australia's current and worsening rental crisis leaves too many First Nations women and children without the fundamental human right of adequate living standards.

Rental stress and shortage

Recent research¹⁰ reveals that 13 per cent of First Nations households have unmet housing needs. About 25 per cent of First Nations households depend on social housing, compared to approximately 4 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians.

In 2024, just 42 per cent of First Nations households were homeowners compared with 68 per cent of the general population¹¹. This means First Nations people are especially vulnerable to housing stress.

First Nations and housing organisations welcomed the Federal Government's March 2024 announcement of the \$4 billion remote housing agreement. However, it did not specifically include safe housing for First Nations women.

Domestic and family violence must be treated as a core issue in housing and cost-of-living policies, not purely a social services problem.

Financial abuse

There is a strong and complex intersection between DFV and housing stress. Financial abuse is a frequent element of DFV, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at four times greater risk than non-Indigenous Australians¹².

As outlined in Priority Area 1, many First Nations women who have escaped violence cannot afford to pay rent and set up new homes. Many have a reduced earning capacity from violence-induced injury and illness, or because their partners stopped them participating in employment or education.

We need the Government to think beyond immediate crisis responses and support more victim survivors and their children for longer.

¹⁰ <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/analysis/news/first-nations-housing-crisis-major-study-reveals-huge-gap-affordable-rental-housing>

¹¹ <https://www.indigenoushpf.gov.au/report-overview/overview/summary-report/5-tier-2-%E2%80%93-determinants-of-health/housing>

¹² <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/cases-of-financial-abuse-on-the-rise-in-australia-whats-being-done-about-it/210ieybx0>

NATSIWA calls for the following to be prioritised in policy responses:

- Legislating for compulsory paid domestic violence leave
- Massively increased funding for crisis accommodation and transitional housing, especially in rural, remote and very remote areas
- Expanding permanent housing solutions for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander renters
- Dedicated social and affordable housing quotas for victim survivors of DFV
- Ensuring government benefits are not disrupted for women escaping DFV
- Prioritising victim survivors in other social housing allocations with a fast-tracked process
- Ensuring that housing models include wraparound support services such as alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment, mental health care, legal advice, and employment assistance
- Stronger rental protections to shield victim survivors from eviction and homelessness

Affordable home ownership

Home ownership is out of reach for far too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households. NATSIWA calls for safe, affordable long-term housing projects around Australia to be fast-tracked and prioritised for funding.

Education

Education is crucial to financial and economic security. But today, lower levels of education contribute to poverty and disadvantage for First Nations women and girls.

In 2021, 51 per cent of First Nations women aged 25–35 years nationally had completed Certificate III level education or above compared to 79 per cent of non-First Nations women¹³. In remote and very remote areas, First Nations women averaged lower levels of education.

Free access to higher education

NATSIWA calls for increased fee-free access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to study and graduate in higher education.

Building an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to offer culturally informed multi-disciplinary services is a long-term investment in all areas of Australia.

As such, there is a desperate need for financial incentives for more First Nations people to be trained, recruited and retained, especially in the sectors where our women need them the most. These include treatment for alcohol and other drugs, DFV, psychology, medicine, teaching and all areas of the justice system.

Our women in STEM

We wholeheartedly call for free places for First Nations people in mainstream higher education. But we also note that the innovative First Nations Girls' STEM Academy¹⁴ (led by the National First Nations Australians Agency and CSIRO) is very successful in attracting and retaining girls and women in STEM education. It is culturally informed and delivered mainly by Indigenous female staff.

Crucially, the STEM Academy removes a major barrier to women's education by supporting students in regional and remote locations to remain on Country. Separately, the Youth in STEM survey¹⁵ highlighted that distance from family and Country discouraged some First Nations students from STEM study. It identified that some barriers to STEM are deeply cultural – students feel disengaged, uncomfortable or mistrustful of Western institutions – and some are gendered. Girls were especially affected.

Therefore, NATSIWA calls for the \$25M 10-year STEM Academy investment to be expanded to reach more students, and granted ongoing funding.

¹³ <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area6#downloads>

¹⁴ <https://www.niaa.gov.au/our-work/early-childhood-development-and-education/indigenous-girls-stem-academy#:~:text=The%20Academy%20is%20fostering%20a,Strait%20Islander%20women%20and%20girls.>

¹⁵ <https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/stem-equity-monitor/data-focus/focus-engaging-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-girls-stem>

Children in out-of-home care

There are more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in non-kinship out-of-home care today than during the Stolen Generation decades¹⁶.

Our children make up just 6 per cent of Australia's child population, yet 41 per cent children in out-of-home care are First Nations.

The trend is worsening¹⁷.

Over their lifetimes, removed children are at high risk of poor physical and mental health, violence, imprisonment and substance abuse. They are less likely to have trusting relationships, good parenting models or educational and economic opportunities. Their families suffer great personal trauma, as seen in Australia's health, education, welfare and justice systems.

Cost-benefit analyses show that improving child safety and investing in families to address the reasons children are removed is the right approach for the economy and for people¹⁸.

There are numerous policies and legal frameworks to protect our children's cultural rights, and to prioritise prevention and early intervention for children at risk. Yet 85 per cent of funding still goes to child protection and out-of-home care system instead of towards solutions for children and families¹⁹. Just 6 per cent goes to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations who could help.

This shameful situation must be addressed by:

- massively increasing support for women instead of removing their children, particularly with services for family violence, homelessness, poverty, and alcohol and other drugs
- redirecting funding towards far more solutions led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCOs), which should include integrated early years services that offer families culturally safe supports nationally
- ending the adoption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from out-of-home care
- implementing national standards for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle²⁰, which aims to keep children connected to their families, communities, cultures and country and to ensure First Nations people participate in decisions about their children's care and protection
- a wider understanding among authorities of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices
- better recognising First Nations kinship and placing removed children with kin wherever possible
- implementing the many remaining recommendations from the Bringing Them Home and Aboriginal Deaths in Custody reports, which explore the lifelong harm suffered by many children who are placed in non-kinship care.

¹⁶ <https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/child-and-family-wellbeing/family-matters/the-issue/>

¹⁷ <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area12>

¹⁸ <https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/child-and-family-wellbeing/family-matters/the-issue/>

¹⁹ <https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/child-and-family-wellbeing/family-matters/>

²⁰ <https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/child-and-family-wellbeing/child-placement-principle/>

Climate change

First Nations Australians are disproportionately impacted by the increasing effects of climate change. Renewable energy initiatives around Australia must incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and ways of Caring for Country.

As climate change increasingly affects the environment, Aboriginal communities will be especially affected because of close physical and spiritual relationships with Country and dependence on land and water resources.

Educational barriers and climate change are intersecting issues

First Nations Australians bring tens of thousands of years' experience as custodians of Country. Our environmental knowledge and our land- and sea-management practices remain place specific and relevant.

But to share and make the most of our knowledge, Australia needs more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people trained in climate science and related fields – experts who can lead and partner with Western science on modern initiatives to tackle climate change. For example, CSIRO's research and collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders²¹ pave the way for this work, but more resources and funding are needed to expand and realise its reach.

Again, greater investment and ongoing funding for the First Nations Girls' STEM Academy will support climate-related education.

Sea levels are rising in the Torres Strait.

In the Torres Strait Islands, erosion and flooding threaten homes and damage freshwater supplies, crops, burial grounds and sacred cultural sites. Recent court cases against the Federal Government indicate the urgency for people whose day-to-day lives and cultural heritage have changed tangibly as their island homes shrink.

The Climate Targets Panel, an independent group of the country's most senior climate scientists and policymakers, estimates that Australia's greenhouse emissions need to be reduced to net zero by 2035, not 2050, to avoid irreversible damage to the Torres Strait Islands²².

NATSIWA calls for more focus on sustainability and renewable energy. And with the United States withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, the commitment of Australia and our neighbours is especially crucial.

²¹ <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/indigenous-science>

²² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-15/rising-ocean-threat-to-island-culture-torres-strait-australia/104613496>

Health

For many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, being healthy involves physical, social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the individual and community²³. Governments increasingly understand this, yet First Nations women and girls still have poorer health outcomes than other Australian women. Intergenerational trauma, poverty, and lack of access to culturally safe healthcare are key causes.

A few facts:

- Life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is almost eight years shorter than non-Indigenous women²⁴.
- The burden of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of all genders is 2.3 times that of non-Indigenous Australians²⁵.
- The suicide rate for First Nations women and girls is 2.5 times that of non-Indigenous counterparts.
- Australia knows that mental health support services are best delivered by people from the same cultural background as those they support²⁶ yet culturally safe support remains unavailable to too many First Nations women.
- Domestic and family violence is closely linked with alcohol and other drug use, and mental health issues. Many women experiencing violence do not disclose their substance use because they risk losing custody of their children and they struggle to access trauma-informed AOD and mental health treatment.

NATSIWA calls for:

- a strengths-based approach to all healthcare policy reform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. This means drawing on culture, partnerships and knowledge of communities to inform health initiatives and solutions. It means abandoning deficit models, which tend to place responsibility for health gaps on affected individuals and communities.
- establishing and fully funding more Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) around Australia to implement those initiatives
- fee-free opportunities and incentives for many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be educated and trained in health professions.

Pregnancy and birth

It is heartening to see improvements in vital indicators for First Nations mothers and babies: more babies have healthy birthweights, fewer mothers are smoking during pregnancy, and more mothers are accessing antenatal care.

However, these indicators are not on track to meet Closing the Gap targets²⁷. As well, First Nations mothers are still three to five times more likely to die in childbirth than other mothers, and First Nations babies are almost two times more likely to die in their first year, often because they were born prematurely²⁸.

²³ <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/indigenous-health>

²⁴ <https://humanrights.gov.au/education/stats-facts/statistics-about-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-women-and-girls>

²⁵ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/population-groups/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>

²⁶ https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/A-Guide-to-Culturally-Safe-Practice-in-Mental-Health_FINAL.pdf

²⁷ <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area2>

²⁸ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/mrff-birthing-healthy-and-strong-babies-on-country>

We know that Birthing on Country models, where community and mainstream health services partner with ones, improve crucial clinical outcomes²⁹. Guiding principles for Birthing on Country include respecting and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and traditional practice, women's business, continuity of carer, connection with Country, holistic definition of health, and genuine choice.

Family planning must also be offered in culturally safe contexts. Currently, First Nations people are less likely to use contraception than other Australians largely due to cost, lack of access to information, and cultural preferences. There is also mistrust of non-Indigenous advice due to Australia's history of coercive birth control and sterilisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Currently ACCHOs offer some contraception options, but many cannot offer IUDs and LARCs because of difficulty accessing suitably trained doctors and nurses and Medicare Benefits Scheme arrangements.

NATSIWA calls for:

- expansion and full funding for Birthing on Country services around Australia
- funding and review of MBS schedules so that ACCHOs can make contraceptives and information available in culturally safe ways
- free higher education and training to build the First Nations workforce in reproductive health.

²⁹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/indigenous-mothers-babies/contents/introduction/woman-centred-care-and-birthing-on-country>