
Appendix 1 COAG Communiqués

Extract from COAG Communiqué 3 November 2000

ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION

The Council thanked the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation for its extensive work and contribution to the nation over the past nine years.

Reconciliation is an ongoing issue in the life of Australians and a priority issue for all governments that will require a concerted and sustained effort over many years. The Council acknowledged the unique status of Indigenous Australians and the need for recognition, respect and understanding in the wider community.

The Council agreed that many actions are necessary to advance reconciliation, from governments, the private sector, community organisations, Indigenous communities, and the wider community. Governments can make a real difference in the lives of Indigenous people by addressing social and economic disadvantage, including life expectancy, and improving governance and service delivery arrangements with Indigenous people.

Governments have made solid and consistent efforts to address disadvantage and improvements have been achieved. For example, Indigenous perinatal mortality rates have dropped from more than 60 per 1000 births in the mid-1970s to fewer than 22 per 1000 births in the mid-1990s. However, much remains to be done in health and the other areas of government activity.

Drawing on the lessons of the mixed success of substantial past efforts to address Indigenous disadvantage, the Council committed itself to an approach based on partnerships and shared responsibilities with Indigenous communities, programme flexibility and coordination between government agencies, with a focus on local communities and outcomes. It agreed priority actions in three areas:

- investing in community leadership initiatives;

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- reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people. In particular, governments agreed to look at measures for tackling family violence, drug and alcohol dependency and other symptoms of community dysfunction; and
 - forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

The Council agreed to take a leading role in driving the necessary changes and will periodically review progress under these arrangements. The first review will be in twelve months. Where they have not already done so, Ministerial Councils will develop action plans, performance reporting strategies and benchmarks.

The Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will continue its overarching coordination and performance monitoring roles, including its contribution to the work of the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision.

Extract from COAG Communiqué 5 April 2002

RECONCILIATION

The Council reaffirmed its continuing commitment to advance reconciliation and address the social and economic disadvantages experienced by many Indigenous Australians.

The Council considered a report on progress in implementing the reconciliation framework agreed by the Council in November 2000 (will be available at www.dpmc.gov.au/docs/comm_state_index.cfm). The report shows that all governments have made progress in addressing the COAG priorities of leadership, reviewing and re-engineering programmes to assist Indigenous families and promoting Indigenous economic independence. Ministerial councils have also made progress in developing action plans and performance reporting strategies, although this has been slower than expected.

To underpin the commitment to reconciliation and to drive future work, the Council agreed to a trial of a whole-of-governments cooperative approach in up to 10 communities or regions. The aim of these trials will be to improve the way governments interact with each other and with communities to deliver more effective responses to the needs of Indigenous Australians. The lessons learnt from

these cooperative approaches will be able to be applied more broadly. This approach will be flexible in order to reflect the needs of specific communities, build on existing work and improve the compatibility of different State, Territory and Commonwealth approaches to achieve better outcomes. The selection of communities and regions will be discussed between the Commonwealth, States and Territories, the communities and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and be announced by mid 2002.

The Council also agreed to commission the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision to produce a regular report against key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. This report will help to measure the impact of changes to policy settings and service delivery and provide a concrete way to measure the effect of the Council's commitment to reconciliation through a jointly agreed set of indicators.

The Council noted that it would continue to review progress under the reconciliation framework, and that the next detailed report on progress achieved by governments and ministerial councils would be provided to the Council no later than the end of 2003.

Extract from COAG Communiqué 14 July 2006

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Generational Commitment

COAG agreed that a long-term, generational commitment is needed to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. COAG agreed the importance of significantly closing the gap in outcomes between Indigenous people and other Australians in key areas for action as identified in the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators Report* (OID) released by COAG in 2003.

COAG's future work will focus on those areas identified for joint action which have the greatest capacity to achieve real benefits for Indigenous Australians in the short and long term.

COAG has agreed to establish a working group to develop a detailed proposal for generational change including specific, practical proposals for reform which reflect the diversity of circumstances in Australia.

The working group will consider how to build clearer links between the OID framework, the National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians, the COAG Reconciliation Framework and the bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments. The working group will report back to COAG by December 2006.

Extract from COAG Communiqué 13 April 2007

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Indigenous Generational Reform

COAG reaffirmed its commitment to closing the outcomes gap between Indigenous people and other Australians over a generation and resolved that the initial priority for joint action should be on ensuring that young Indigenous children get a good start in life.

COAG requested that the Indigenous Generational Reform Working Group prepare a detailed set of specific, practical proposals for the first stage of cumulative generational reform for consideration by COAG as soon as practicable in December 2007. National initiatives will be supported by additional bi-lateral and jurisdiction specific initiatives as required to improve the life outcomes of young Indigenous Australians and their families.

COAG also agreed that urgent action was required to address data gaps to enable reliable evaluation of progress and transparent national and jurisdictional reporting on outcomes. COAG also agreed to establish a jointly-funded clearing house for reliable evidence and information about best practice and success factors.

COAG requested that arrangements be made as soon as possible for consultation with jurisdictional Indigenous advisory bodies and relevant Indigenous peak organisations.