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# OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

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Australia's Indigenous people experience unacceptable disadvantage. Through the Closing the Gap strategy, the Government is taking action to address Indigenous disadvantage and is focusing on achieving the following targets agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG):

- close the life expectancy gap within a generation
- halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade
- halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade
- halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade
- provide access to early childhood education for all four years olds in remote communities within five years
- halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

The Government recognises that achieving these targets will require sustained action across all levels of government and all sectors.

Some of the key themes that were raised by the Indigenous Stream during the 2020 Summit included formal constitutional recognition of Indigenous people, establishing bipartisan dialogue between Indigenous people and government, valuing the cultural history and knowledge of Indigenous people, closing the gap in all areas and achieving better social and economic outcomes. The issues faced by Indigenous Australians were also a clear priority for many other streams across the Summit. Ideas and aspirations for the future of Indigenous Australia were also raised by the Health Stream, Creativity Stream, Sustainability Stream, Communities Stream, Productivity Stream, Governance Stream and Rural Stream.

The Indigenous Stream developed a broad range of ambitions, themes and ideas that have influenced and guided the Government's policy in this area, including:

- **Indigenous cultural education and knowledge centre** – Indigenous culture is a critical part of Australia's identity and strengthening it is a core element of sustaining a strong and healthy Indigenous community. It was a prominent theme at the Summit and was raised across multiple streams. The Government agrees that the celebration of Indigenous culture in this way will complement and contribute to its core development policies for Indigenous Australia. An Indigenous Knowledge Centre would build on the current role played by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and could:
  - Become a national gathering place for the celebration and discussion of Indigenous culture, in a physical or 'virtual' sense
  - Become a reference point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
  - Engage in research to harness traditional knowledge to support sustainable management of country
  - Support the education and understanding of Indigenous culture and affairs across Australia and preserve Indigenous heritage

As the first step in the establishment of a centre, the community will be consulted on its form.

We are therefore initiating a feasibility study to engage the Indigenous and wider communities and existing institutions to develop options for the most effective way to strengthen and support Indigenous culture.

- **Council of Australian Governments Working Group on Indigenous Reform** – Many of the ideas raised at the 2020 Summit supported the development of reforms recently agreed by COAG at their November 2008 meeting. At this meeting, all Australian Governments backed up their commitment to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage with \$4.6 billion in initiatives across early childhood development, health, housing, economic development and remote service delivery.

The following tables provide the Government's response to the ideas raised by the Indigenous Stream at the 2020 Summit.

## Key ideas being taken forward by the Government

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Indigenous Early Childhood Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on early intervention/prevention for early childhood.</li> <li>• Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Fund to tackle long term problems through the development of services to redress unmet need.</li> <li>• Re-establish and reinvigorate multi-functional childcare centres.</li> <li>• Place a child health nurse in every school, and give young mothers and their babies in the community access to this service.</li> <li>• Develop an education policy framework that provides genuine choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their parents and can integrate health strategies in an early childhood intervention strategy.</li> <li>• Share information about good practices, so as to keep families functioning well and staying together.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. In October 2008, the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) first National Partnership (NP) was agreed, covering Indigenous Early Childhood Development. Through the agreement, the Commonwealth and the states and territories will work together to improve the early childhood outcomes of Indigenous children. The National Partnership comprises \$564.6 million of joint funding over six years to address the needs of Indigenous children in their early years, and reflects many of the ideas raised at the Summit.</p> <p>As part of the initiative, 35 Children and Family Centres in areas of high Indigenous population and disadvantage will be established across Australia to deliver integrated services that offer early learning, child care and family support programs. The funding will also increase access to ante-natal care, teenage reproductive and sexual health services, and child and maternal health services for Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>COAG has agreed to ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood education. In July 2008, COAG agreed to the development of a National Early Childhood Development Strategy during 2009. The strategy will provide the framework for a comprehensive approach to early childhood, including for assisting vulnerable children.</p> <p>Broader issues on family support will also be considered by the Australian Social Inclusion Board and the work on the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.</p>
<b>Health and Learning Compacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Education – introduce individual learning and health compacts (case management) for each Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child to ensure that children who need help receive it promptly and effectively.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. In the 2008–09 Budget, the Government committed \$54 million over four years to expand intensive literacy and numeracy programs in schools. This funding will include support for teachers to enable them to prepare and maintain individual learning plans for every Indigenous student up to Year 10.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Additional Schooling Support</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Productivity</p>	<p>A new education framework should be established. The following could be included in the framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of high quality education, including boarding schools and hostels</li> <li>• Access to away-from-home foster families to stay with at weekends for students away from home</li> <li>• Funding through ABSTUDY, private school scholarships, government funding and community schooling</li> <li>• Encourage high-performing young professionals to work as teachers alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in remote schools</li> <li>• Expand ABSTUDY to all post-secondary Indigenous students to facilitate engagement with education and ultimately the workforce</li> <li>• Introduce 500 'Mabo Scholarships' for Indigenous students in research and higher level degrees similar to the Endeavour scholarships.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. The Government is introducing a range of new support mechanisms for Indigenous education options. In 2008, the Government committed \$20 million over three years from 2009–10 as a contribution towards secondary scholarships for Indigenous students to attend boarding schools. The funds will be managed by the Australians Indigenous Education Foundation, with additional funds which more than match the Government contribution expected to be raised from corporate, philanthropic and private sources over the life of the initiative.</p> <p>The Government is also providing \$10 million to leverage private and state funding for six existing Clontarf Academies, six new academies from 2009–10, and a further three new academies from 2010–11. The additional funding represents the first stage of a long term commitment by the Government to helping the Clontarf Foundation to expand its network of academies throughout Australia. This initial \$10 million investment will enable Clontarf to expand its services in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and other interested states.</p> <p>In the 2008–09 Budget, the Government also committed \$28.9 million over four years to construct and operate three new boarding colleges for Indigenous secondary students in the Northern Territory.</p> <p>The National Education Agreement agreed by COAG in November 2008 includes a focus on outcomes for Indigenous students, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. Enhanced arrangements for teaching and school leadership are being progressed through the Improving Teacher Quality and Low Socio-Economic Status National Partnership Agreements, including increased opportunities to gain qualifications that form part of pathways into teaching for Indigenous education workers.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>National Indigenous Health Equality Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a comprehensive health strategy to eradicate diseases such as trachoma and to tackle alcohol and drugs.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government is strongly committed to achieving health equality for Indigenous Australians. The National Indigenous Health Equality Council was launched in July 2008 to assist in developing and monitoring health-related goals to support the Government's commitments on improving Indigenous life expectancy and reducing child mortality.</p> <p>The National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) is also in the process of making recommendations regarding long term macro reforms to improve Australia's health system (including for Indigenous and rural communities). These recommendations should be finalised in mid-2009.</p> <p>The Government has committed funding to states and territories to provide additional drug and alcohol rehabilitation services to Indigenous communities, and is providing funding to tackle high rates of smoking.</p> <p>COAG is also working to ensure that the Closing the Gap targets are being supported across a range of financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and state governments. The National Healthcare Agreement agreed by COAG in November 2008 includes a commitment to achieving health outcomes for Indigenous Australians comparable to the broader population. The Indigenous Health National Partnership also provides an additional \$1.6 billion over four years to expand primary health care and targeted prevention activities to reduce chronic disease for Indigenous Australians.</p>
<p><b>Eradicate Trachoma in Indigenous Children</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eradicate trachoma amongst Indigenous children within five years through a comprehensive health strategy. This could include a national hand-washing campaign in Indigenous communities</li> </ul>	<p>Trachoma is a preventable and treatable disease which still causes blindness in an unacceptable number of Indigenous Australians. The Government has committed \$58.3m to expand eye and ear health services for Indigenous Australians. This includes \$16m to address trachoma.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Indigenous Economic Development Strategy</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Productivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Strategy – recognise the importance of jobs and make improvements to private philanthropic and business partnerships with Indigenous enterprises, greater corporate participation via incentives such as tax concessions.</li> <li>• Provide tax incentives and concessions to encourage higher levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement in private enterprise and entrepreneurship. Some groups and individuals cautioned that tax incentives and concessions need careful consideration because they do not always achieve the desired results.</li> <li>• Provide incentives to encourage people to move into employment.</li> <li>• Include incentives for self-help and development of skills that support independence in government funding.</li> <li>• Explore options and opportunities for increased employment of Indigenous people in the private sector.</li> <li>• Establish an entrepreneurial fund, Indigenous Business Alliance clusters, corporate partnerships, performance targets and performance indicators in government contracts involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises.</li> <li>• Conduct a national review of Indigenous businesses and an annual survey of them.</li> <li>• Improve the skills of local people, particularly Aboriginal people, before importing labour.</li> <li>• Establish a national awards scheme for organisations proactive in training and employing Indigenous people.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to a five year National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation. The Commonwealth and state governments will invest \$228.8 million to assist up to 13,000 Indigenous Australians in obtaining employment. This National Partnership will contribute to meeting the national target set by COAG in March 2008 to halve the gap in Indigenous employment outcomes within a decade.</p> <p>The reforms to the Community Development Employment Program, the Indigenous Employment Program and the new Job Services Australia (to be introduced on 1 July 2009) include a strong focus on job readiness and skills development for Indigenous people.</p> <p>Under the reforms to the Indigenous Employment Program, a high profile program will be created that recognises and supports significant achievements in Indigenous employment.</p> <p>The Prime Minister has pledged Government support to the Australian Employment Covenant, a private sector initiative to create 50,000 jobs for Indigenous Australians announced by the CEO of Fortescue Metals Group, Mr Andrew Forrest.</p> <p>The Government is also developing a wider Indigenous Economic Development Strategy to provide a framework to guide government investment and to work with Indigenous Australians and the corporate sector to increase Indigenous participation in employment and business. This strategy is expected to be finalised in late 2009.</p> <p>In addition, the Government is currently conducting a wide-ranging review of Australia's tax system, including incentives for workforce participation and skill formation.</p>

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<b>Indigenous Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring options and opportunities for increased employment of Indigenous people in the private sector.</li> <li>• Improving private philanthropic and business partnerships with Indigenous enterprises and encouraging greater corporate participation with incentives such as tax concessions.</li> <li>• Recognising the importance of jobs and encouraging people to move into employment.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. From 1 July 2009, the Government is introducing new employment services called Job Services Australia, and reforms to the Indigenous Employment Program and to the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), that include a strong focus on job readiness and skills development for Indigenous people.</p> <p>On 30 October 2008, the Prime Minister pledged the Government's support to the Australian Employment Covenant (AEC), a private sector initiative to create 50,000 jobs for Indigenous Australians announced by the CEO of Fortescue Metals Group, Mr Andrew Forrest. The AEC reflects the Summit's recognition of the importance of increasing employment opportunities for Indigenous people.</p> <p>Under the AEC the Government will make resources available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and facilitate training to the appropriate job standards of the employing industry</li> <li>• Facilitate post-placement and mentor support for eligible Indigenous Australians in guaranteed AEC jobs</li> <li>• Help with the take up of AEC jobs by eligible Indigenous job seekers through referral, placement and support services.</li> </ul> <p>The Australian Employment Covenant will also be supported by Job Services Australia and reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program and the Indigenous Employment Program, as well as the wider Indigenous Economic Development Strategy to be further developed in 2009.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Indigenous Reform – Remote Service Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better coordination of services between the states and territories and the Commonwealth.</li> <li>• Renewed emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delivery models.</li> <li>• The creation of a ‘clearing house’ in the form of a database that includes all Indigenous programs, to provide a central link in the Indigenous community for the provision of services.</li> <li>• Develop service delivery mechanisms that are people-centred and convenient. For example, a ‘one-stop-shop’ community hub where services are delivered by people who are able to coordinate across governments and agencies and are not confined to their service ‘silo’.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to a new National Partnership on Indigenous Remote Service Delivery to improve the delivery of services in 26 remote Indigenous locations. The Commonwealth and state governments are providing \$291.2 million over six years to improve access to services by Indigenous Australians in remote areas.</p> <p>The employment services being introduced through Job Services Australia from 1 July 2009 include arrangements to enhance collaboration and cooperation across services, including Service Level Agreements between Job Services Australia service providers and Community Development Employment Project program (CDEP) organisations where this operate.</p> <p>To further build understanding of effective Indigenous initiatives, the Government is providing funding in 2008–09 for a Closing the Gap clearing house through agreed joint funding arrangements with the states and territories. The clearing house will operate as a knowledge management service run by research specialists. It will provide a central repository of evidence and links to a range of existing data that can be accessed by interested stakeholders. It will build an evidence base that details effective, successful interventions to address Indigenous disadvantage.</p>

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<b>Government Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New independent mechanisms with teeth and sanctions to monitor accountability of governments, with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement.</li> <li>• Assess senior public sector managers' performance against Indigenous-specific outcomes and indicators.</li> <li>• Build accountability, reporting and monitoring in Indigenous policy initiatives, either through: establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Productivity Commission, involving significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation or building on existing frameworks, such as the Productivity Commission having responsibility to monitor, be a 'watchdog' and report on progress</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. The Government has already accepted and established accountability at the highest level through the annual Prime Ministerial statement on Closing the Gap.</p> <p>On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) which sets out the objectives, outcomes, outputs, performance measures and benchmarks that all governments have committed to achieving in order to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. The COAG Reform Council will report to the Prime Minister on the performance of all jurisdictions in relation to each National Agreement, and independently assess whether performance benchmarks have been achieved before an incentive payment to reward nationally significant reforms under a National Partnership is made.</p> <p>Commonwealth, state and territory treasurers also agreed in January 2008 to the development of a national framework for reporting expenditure on services to Indigenous Australians, including expenditure from all funding sources on both Indigenous-specific and mainstream services, with an emphasis on 'on the ground' service provision. The Productivity Commission acts as the secretariat for this framework.</p>
<b>Senate Estimates Committee on Indigenous Matters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build accountability, reporting and monitoring in Indigenous policy initiatives by establishing a parliamentary committee, possibly a Senate estimates committee, to examine government expenditure directed to the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Such a committee should be able to scrutinise expenditure in the areas of health education, policing law enforcement, and employment services.</li> </ul>	<p>On Friday 24 October 2008 and 27 February 2009, the Senate's Community Affairs Committee held special hearings on Indigenous matters. This followed a Senate resolution on 26 August 2008 where the Senate agreed to provide for future estimates hearings to include a separate time for a hearing on Indigenous matters.</p> <p>The national performance reporting framework being developed by the COAG also aims to increase accountability for and improve reporting and monitoring of Indigenous policy initiatives.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>National Indigenous Representative Body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body. It should be established after considering the nature of its role and relationship with government, the corporate sector and the wider community and the options for its structure.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government is committed to creating a National Indigenous Representative Body to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a voice in national affairs. This will not involve the re-establishment of an ATSIC-style body or the transfer of legislative power. Extensive consultation was held in 2008 with Indigenous and wider communities. A second phase of consultation is being led by an independent steering committee of Indigenous leaders, convened by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. Recommendations from the steering committee to the Government are expected in July 2009.</p>
<b>UN Declaration of Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government publicly stated its support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 3 April 2009.</p>
<b>Indigenous Memorial Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a memorial service to commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who served in or demonstrated exceptional courage in war.</li> </ul>	<p>A commemorative event of this nature has been held annually since 1999. A memorial service was also held on 9 July 2008 at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Memorial in Canberra, as part of the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) celebrations throughout Australia. The service combined Indigenous culture with traditional military culture and honoured the Indigenous men and women who played an active role in protecting Australia in times of war and peace.</p>

## Ideas the Government will consider further

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Indigenous Cultural Education and Knowledge Centre</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Creativity Sustainability</p>	<p>A national Indigenous knowledge and cultural centre should be established. This centre could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the cultural contributions of Indigenous people</li> <li>• A National Knowledge Centre Network should be established to provide support to regional knowledge centres</li> <li>• These centres could be linked to community hubs so that resources can be shared</li> <li>• Use digital technologies to document, record and share knowledge and culture</li> <li>• Establish a national cultural authority for the protection of Indigenous intellectual property</li> <li>• Create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural framework for developing a strategic plan to expand art and other opportunities globally</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to whether people with cultural knowledge should be accredited</li> <li>• A National Indigenous Knowledge Centre should be established and maintained by Indigenous people. This centre could examine multidisciplinary research and program delivery pertaining to climate change, sustainability and water.</li> <li>• Include the creation of a national cultural authority to measure, document and leverage the strengths of culture, articulate roles and improve protection of Indigenous culture, language and heritage</li> <li>• Recognise that creativity is central to Australian life and Indigenous culture is the core to this</li> <li>• Connect to Indigenous knowledge centres.</li> </ul>	<p>Indigenous culture is a critical part of Australia’s identity and strengthening it is a core element of sustaining a strong and healthy Indigenous community. It was a prominent theme at the Summit and was raised across multiple streams. The Government agrees that the celebration of Indigenous culture in this way will complement and contribute to its core development policies for Indigenous Australia.</p> <p>An Indigenous Knowledge Centre would build on the current role played by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a national gathering place for the celebration and discussion of Indigenous culture, in a physical or ‘virtual’ sense</li> <li>• Become a reference point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture</li> <li>• Engage in research to harness traditional knowledge to support sustainable management of country</li> <li>• Support the education and understanding of Indigenous culture and affairs across Australia and preserve Indigenous heritage.</li> </ul> <p>As the first step in the establishment of a centre, the community will be consulted on its form.</p> <p>We are therefore initiating a comprehensive feasibility study to engage the Indigenous and wider communities and existing institutions to develop options for the most effective way to strengthen and support Indigenous culture.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>National Indigenous Cultural Education Scheme</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Creative Communities</p>	<p>Place Indigenous culture and knowledge at the core of our education system by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing in local elders to share cultural practices at schools. Making sure every local school is involved in gathering and learning the stories and culture of their local country (this would also be appropriate to all communities, not just those that have retained their traditional language)</li> <li>• Introducing school exchanges to give Indigenous and non-Indigenous children an experience of living in each others' worlds, so there is a deeper mutual understanding among future generations</li> <li>• Building, developing and rewarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational workforce, and introducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison staff into schools and childcare centres</li> <li>• Cultural awareness – Change lexicon of public discourse and public education – continuation of bipartisan commitment to inform national dialogue in order to change ethos through which Aboriginal affairs and interests have been constructed, including public education campaign</li> <li>• Developing a mentor system based on the role elders play in Indigenous communities</li> <li>• Including Indigenous arts and culture in the school curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government supports developing cultural understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, as well as the important role that elders play in Indigenous education.</p> <p>In consultation with the Indigenous community, the Government will further consider how to best progress the role of Indigenous cultural education as a future phase of the Closing the Gap strategy – once the first phase of policy priorities in health, education and economic development have been completed.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Indigenous Targets in Government Contracts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous targets and KPIs in Govt contracts.</li> <li>Include Indigenous business, employment or outcomes targets in government contracts.</li> </ul>	<p>On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to a new five year National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Development. As part of this initiative, public-sector Indigenous employment and career development strategies will be reviewed, with the aim of increasing Indigenous public sector employment to reflect national Indigenous working age population share by 2015. Through the National Partnership, governments will also strengthen current procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment.</p> <p>In 2008, a consistent performance indicators framework across government agencies involved in funding Indigenous services was agreed to. This will help service providers to better focus their activities on addressing clear targets, streamlining government funding agreements and enabling governments to promote a more transparent and effective approach to measuring performance.</p>
<b>Constitutional Reform – Indigenous Recognition</b>  <b>Also raised by: Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians and reconciliation compact.</li> <li>Constitutional recognition, Treaty or Settlement – commence a dialogue leading to Constitutional recognition, Treaty or Settlement – through which the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is defined.</li> <li>That the Constitution be amended to remove any language that is racially discriminatory.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being recognised as First Nations people.</li> <li>Formal legal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Including a national education program to support the dialogue and co-commitment to the agreement from the states and territories.</li> </ul>	<p>Indigenous recognition in the Constitution is a key issue for consideration and the Government is committed to consulting with the community on a range of proposed constitutional reforms. The Government is considering a timetable for this consultation.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Indigenous Policy Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect a better relationship with the Australian government through changes in the machinery of government.</li> <li>• Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led strategic policy unit to develop and drive a long term National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Development Plan. Membership of the unit would be drawn from the public, corporate and non-government sectors and should have a whole-of-government perspective.</li> <li>• Change the policy language associated with Indigenous matters. For example, move from words and concepts focused on disadvantage and dysfunction to strength-based words and concepts such as 'development' and 'capacity building'.</li> <li>• Use the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' people, not 'Indigenous'.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government is committed to the creation of a National Indigenous Representative Body to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a voice in national affairs. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner is currently undertaking consultations with the Indigenous community about its preferences in relation to such a body. The functions of the body may include a role in strategic policy development and the representation of, and language used in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.</p>
<b>National Meeting Place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a national meeting place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and events, a place that could be the centrepiece of Australia's national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander institutions.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government recognises a potential role for a more established national centrepiece. Once the National Indigenous Representative Body has been established, the Government may engage with the body over priorities in this area.</p>
<b>Indigenous Art and Symbols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Aboriginal artwork and symbols as national symbols and at commemorative events. Other suggestions included a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day (with reverence and significance similar to that of Anzac Day), Aboriginal place names, and public artworks created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government is committed to promoting the importance of Indigenous symbols and will consult with Indigenous Australians on any proposals to use Aboriginal artwork or when dealing with symbols.</p> <p>The Australian Government held the first official welcome to country at the opening of Parliament on 12 February 2008. Options for an official 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners' protocol are currently being examined</p> <p>On 24 November 2008, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs officially launched a new art work in Reconciliation Place – Wati Jarra Jukurrpa: two men dreaming by Paddy Stewart Japaljarri – bringing the spirit of the Tanami Desert in the Northern Territory to Canberra.</p>

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<b>Indigenous Healing Foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a National Healing Foundation</li> <li>• Future Fund to build capacity and capital works (including an Aboriginal Healing Fund similar to the Canadian Healing Foundation) – investment to heal and build children’s, families’ and communities’ capacity to participate and function, fund housing and major capital works and invest in innovation.</li> <li>• Establish an equity-based reconstruction fund to build infrastructure and services designed to promote better health, to build housing and infrastructure, and to engage in innovation projects aimed at improving communities’ capacity to function well.</li> </ul>	<p>An Indigenous Healing Forum was held on 16 and 17 September 2008, including a broad range of community, experts and members of the Stolen Generations.</p> <p>On 13 February 2009 the Government announced the appointment of Professor Lowitja O’Donoghue and Mr Gregory Phillips to lead a group to develop a proposal for establishing a Healing Foundation to address trauma and healing in Indigenous communities, with a strong focus on the unique needs of Stolen Generations. The Foundation will provide practical and innovative healing services, as well as training and research.</p> <p>Other significant investments in housing and health are being made in conjunction with states and territories as part of the Government’s broader strategy to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage.</p>
<b>Indigenous Languages in School</b>  <b>Also raised by: Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach Indigenous languages in schools, including in the early school years.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government provides funding to the government school sector through the National Education Agreement and the non-government school sector through the Schools Assistance Act 2008 to support languages education, including Indigenous language learning, at all levels of schooling from kindergarten to Year 12. The teaching of Indigenous languages in schools is included in some state and territory programs. Further review of the success of different local approaches to Indigenous language programs may be considered in the future.</p> <p>The Government also recognises the importance of fluency and proficiency in English for Indigenous children and is pursuing basic literacy objectives as a first step.</p>
<b>Sister Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Sister School arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>The Dare to Lead Project, funded by the Government, already drives change in schools through a coalition of school leaders who influence improvements in Indigenous education. The project’s Partnerships Building Success direction for 2009–2012 has been supported by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The inclusion of collegial reviews in sister school arrangements expect to increase the achievements in Indigenous student outcomes.</p>

## Ideas with no further action at this time

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Superannuation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-appraise superannuation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Their shorter life expectancies mean they have less opportunity to enjoy superannuation after retirement. Explore options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use their superannuation to purchase a home.</li> </ul>	<p>Disagree. The Government does not consider that superannuation is an appropriate mechanism for solving this problem.</p> <p>On 29 November 2008, as part of the National Affordable Housing Agreement, the Commonwealth and states and territories committed to improving access by Indigenous people to mainstream housing, including home ownership.</p>
<b>Native Title / Property Rights</b>  Also raised by: Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fundamentally change property rights to allow for negotiation and establishment of structures for the recognition of prior ownership and future directions relating to native title.</li> <li>Amend legislation to allow Indigenous communal ownership of land to be maintained.</li> <li>Develop clear individual property rights in relation to homes and businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government considers that negotiation is preferable to litigation in relation to native title matters and does not plan to fundamentally alter property rights. However, the Government has released a discussion paper which sought submissions on how to make better use of benefits that can flow to Indigenous Australians from native title agreements. The Government has also introduced a Bill into Parliament to bring about institutional changes to improve the operation of the native title system.</p>
<b>Economic Zones</b>  Also raised by: Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of economic zones that are underpinned by tax incentives, including measures that allow for accelerated depreciation, income splitting and allowances for access to education, health and housing.</li> </ul>	<p>Disagree. The objectives this idea seeks to pursue are likely to be addressed through the review of Australia's Future Tax System. However, creation of 'economic zones' may prove unconstitutional as they may favour one region over another.</p>
<b>Business Ownership Target</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include an Indigenous business ownership target in the Closing the Gap annual report.</li> </ul>	<p>Disagree. The Prime Minister will report to Parliament on the first working day of every parliamentary year on the progress in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous employment is the best overall measure of Indigenous economic development.</p>
<b>Guaranteed Indigenous Representation</b>  Also raised by: Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entrenched and guaranteed Indigenous representation in federal parliament.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seats in Parliament as in New Zealand; or greater support to stand as candidates.</li> </ul>	<p>Not supported at this time.</p>