

Policy Concordance: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health, Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention

NATIONAL



The Centre of Best Practice in
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Suicide Prevention



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention, government policies are critically important because they influence what services are available and how they are delivered – with enormous consequences for people’s lives.

This Concordance is a collection of guides to policy and decision-making at national and State/Territory levels. It includes:

- profiles of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government departments and agencies and other organisations with an important role in policy processes
- formal policies that describe governments’ commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how they intend to deliver on them
- other essential documents – for example community submissions to policy processes and the most influential research reports.

The Concordance is for anyone seeking information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention policy in any part of Australia, including government and ministerial policy staff, researchers, service providers and community organisations. The focus is on current

policy documents. However some older publications are included where they have been particularly influential, and policies and strategies are included after their intended finish date if they have not yet been replaced and are still guiding practice.

Social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention are complex and multi-faceted and do not fall neatly into a single policy domain. This Concordance focuses on the organisations, processes and policies most directly related to these issues, acknowledging that important policy work also takes place in other domains – including education, justice and family services. The Concordance is a living resource and the CBPATSISP welcomes suggestions for additional inclusions.

This section of the Concordance focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention policy at a Commonwealth and national level. Chapters on the States and Territories can be found at cbpatsisp.org.au.

Key organisations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Organisation	Purpose
Coalition of Peaks	<p>The Coalition of Peaks is made up of more than 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak and member organisations across Australia, that represent around 800 organisations. The groups came together as an act of self-determination to work in partnership with Australian governments on Closing the Gap. The coalition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consists of national, state and territory non-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and independent statutory authorities that have responsibility for policies, programs and services related to Closing the Gap. • Has governing boards elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and/or organisations that are accountable to that membership. • Supports the vision for a genuine partnership between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and National Cabinet in developing and implementing efforts to close the gap. • Has formal Terms of Reference, making decisions by consensus, agreeing positions jointly, and we determine its own representatives to talk to governments. • Has an elected Lead Convenor and comes together in a fortnightly teleconference to review work, debate issues, and agree positions to take to governments.
Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia	<p>Gayaa Dhuwi (GDPSA) is the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and suicide prevention. As a community-controlled organisation, it is governed and controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and peak bodies, working in these areas to promote collective excellence in mental health care.</p>
Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy Partnership	<p>The SEWB Policy Partnership, established in 2022, brings together First Nations and government representatives to develop policies that improve social and emotional wellbeing and mental health and reduce suicide rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> <p>It operates through shared decision-making and is one of five policy partnerships established under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. (The others are justice, housing, early childhood care and development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages).</p>
Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention	<p>The Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP) was established in 2017 at the University of Western Australia to develop and share evidence about effective suicide prevention approaches for Indigenous people and communities.</p> <p>Building on the foundation of the earlier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP), the CBPATSISP influences Indigenous suicide prevention policy, practice and research by promoting access to evidence and resources and through advocacy. It operates under Indigenous leadership and governance and is funded through the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care under the National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program.</p> <p>The work of the CBPATSISP is centred on the rights of Indigenous people and communities to self-determination, and the critical importance of cultural responses to distress alongside clinical approaches.</p>

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)	<p>The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) is the national peak body representing 145 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) on Aboriginal health and wellbeing issues.</p> <p>Tracing its history to the 1970s Indigenous rights movements, NACCHO provides advice and guidance to the Australian Government on policy and budget matters while advocating for community-developed health solutions that contribute to the quality of life and improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It works through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy development and advocacy – giving voice to the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples around health and wellbeing issues. • Representation – speaking in all matters as the leadership body on behalf of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector and supporting the effective delivery of comprehensive primary healthcare services. • Raising awareness through focussed programs and projects – to address key issues around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health priorities. • Building partnerships – between governments and other essential alliances and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to deliver improved health outcomes. • Information dissemination to the sector/community – sharing of government information to ensure the sector is informed about changes and policies relevant to them.
Healing Foundation	<p>The Healing Foundation amplifies the voices and lived experience of Stolen Generations survivors and their families, working with communities to create safety and providing an environment for Stolen Generations survivors and their families to speak for themselves. It promotes trauma-aware, healing-informed practice to help government, policymakers, and workforces understand the trauma that was caused by colonisation and actions like the forced removal of children and their role in intergenerational healing.</p>
Reconciliation Australia	<p>Reconciliation Australia was established in 2001 as the lead body for reconciliation. It is an independent not-for-profit organisation which promotes and facilitates reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, focusing on influencing organisations, people and policies in based on five interrelated dimensions: race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance.</p>

Government

Organisation	Purpose
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	The Department works with stakeholders to develop and deliver policies and programs and advises the Australian Government on health, aged care and sport. It includes suicide prevention and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health branches.
National Indigenous Australians Agency	The National Indigenous Australians Agency was established in 2019 to recognise and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, working with them in partnership to enable self-determination. It leads and influences change across government to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a say in the decisions that affect them through the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to lead and coordinate Commonwealth policy development, program design and implementation and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;• to provide advice to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Australians on whole-of-government priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;• to lead and coordinate the development and implementation of Australia's Closing the Gap targets in partnership with Indigenous Australians; and• to lead Commonwealth activities to promote reconciliation.
National Mental Health Commission	The Commission monitors and reports on investment in mental health and suicide prevention initiatives, provides evidence-based policy advice to Government and disseminates information on ways to continuously improve Australia's mental health and suicide prevention systems, and acts as a catalyst for change to achieve those improvements. This includes increasing accountability and transparency in mental health through the provision of independent reports and advice to the Australian Government and the community. It works with stakeholders, particularly people with living experience of mental health, their families and other support people to ensure mental health reforms are collectively owned and actioned. It works across all areas that promote mental health and prevent mental illness and suicide – not just government and not just health, but education, housing, employment, human services and social support, towards the best possible mental health and wellbeing for all Australians.
National Suicide Prevention Office	In response to recommendations in the National Suicide Prevention Adviser's Final Advice and the Productivity Commission into mental health and suicide prevention, the Federal Government announced the creation of a National Suicide Prevention Office in May 2021. The Office is a critical national driver of the work towards zero suicides by ensuring a whole-of-government approach that is informed by lived experience and creates opportunities to respond early and effectively to distress.
Productivity Commission	The Productivity Commission is a Commonwealth Government agency established to provide independent research and advice to Government on economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. It publishes extensively on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program and governance issues.

Policy documents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Date	Title	Organisation	About
2020	National Agreement on Closing the Gap	Coalition of Peaks/ Commonwealth Government	<p>The objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.</p> <p>In July 2020 the agreement was signed by Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (the Coalition of Peaks). It was developed as a partnership, between Indigenous organisations and the Commonwealth, State and Territory and local governments, and comprises 17 targets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing • Target 14: Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.
2024	Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap	Productivity Commission	<p>The first review of progress on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap found fundamental changes are required to deliver on the Agreement. In its strongly-worded introduction the Commissioners wrote:</p> <p><i>“The four Priority Reforms in the Agreement rely on a bedrock of trust, but trust is lacking and will only grow when decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are shared with communities.</i></p> <p><i>The gap is not a natural phenomenon. It is a direct result of the ways in which governments have used their power over many decades. In particular, it stems from a disregard for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s knowledges and solutions.</i></p> <p><i>Over the course of this review, it has become clear that in order to see change, business-as-usual must be a thing of the past. Across the country, we have observed small tweaks or additional initiatives, or even layers of initiatives, as attempts to give effect to the Agreement. However, real change does not mean multiplying or renaming business-as-usual actions. It means looking deeply to get to the heart of the way systems, departments and public servants work. Most critically, the Agreement requires government decision-makers to accept that they do not know what is best for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”</i></p> <p>It made four recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power needs to be shared • Indigenous Data Sovereignty needs to be recognised and supported • Mainstream government systems and culture need to be fundamentally rethought • Stronger accountability is needed to drive behaviour change
current	Closing the Gap Dashboard	Productivity Commission	<p>The Productivity Commission’s Dashboard include its annual Closing the Gap progress reports and current indicator data on all CtG targets and outcomes.</p>

2013	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Advisory Group	<p>The first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy (NATSISPS) was released in May 2013. It was developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and leaders in mental health and suicide prevention. It contains six Action Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building strengths and capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities • Building strengths and resilience in individuals and families • Targeted suicide prevention services • Coordinating approaches to prevention • Building the evidence base and disseminating information • Standards and quality in suicide prevention <p>NATSISPS has a holistic and early intervention focus that works to build strong communities through more community-focused and integrated approaches to suicide prevention and commits the Government to genuinely engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop local, culturally appropriate strategies to identify and respond to those most at risk. It commits the Government to working across portfolios and across all levels of government to reduce the incidence of suicidal and self-harming behaviour amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by addressing social determinants that contribute to social disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as unemployment, education, housing and community safety and focusing on building strong, resilient families, young people and communities.</p>
2020	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy (revision - pending)	Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia	<p>GDPSA has been tasked by the Commonwealth Government to renew the 2013 <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy</i> (NATSISPS) in consultation with stakeholders and community members. This work is continuing.</p>
2017	The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023	National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)	<p>This Framework provides a dedicated focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing and mental health. It sets out a comprehensive and culturally appropriate stepped care model that is equally applicable to both Indigenous specific and mainstream health services, and is intended to guide and support Indigenous mental health policy and practice, complementing the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan and contributing to the vision of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2012-2023.</p> <p>It provides a framework for action for governments, communities and researchers, by outlining protective and risk factors according to the seven domains of social and emotional wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connection to body • connection to mind and emotions • connection to family and kinship • connection to community • connection to culture • connection to country • connection to spirituality and ancestors.

2016	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP)	The University of Western Australia	<p>The highly influential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP) was established to evaluate the effectiveness of suicide prevention services and programs for Indigenous people, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of working • establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth forum • strengthening the evidence base for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention • developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural framework for suicide prevention services and programs. <p>ATISSPEP's final report, <i>Solutions That Work: What the Evidence and Our People Tell Us</i>, remains a key text in Indigenous suicide prevention policy.</p>
2015	Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration	Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia	<p>Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia's vision is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, excellence and presence across all parts of the Australian mental health system and the achievement of the highest attainable standard of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. An implementation plan is under development.</p>
2021	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>This Health Plan represents governments' ongoing commitment to the systemic change needed to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, shifting from a top-down approach to working in genuine partnership.</p> <p>It focuses on the capability of mainstream services to provide high quality, culturally safe, trauma-aware, healing-informed and responsive care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people alongside prioritising and extending the reach of ACCHO services and increasing access to primary health care services through government clinics, private GPs and mainstream community health services. It also addresses cultural responsiveness of hospitals, including emergency departments.</p> <p>The health plan includes as accountability framework that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is overseen by a governance mechanism that embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership • is centred around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's perspectives, priorities and knowledge systems • measures the impacts of policies and programs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • holds the government and mainstream organisations accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • has an outcomes focus • does not increase the reporting burden on the ACCHS sector • respects the principles of data sovereignty
2006	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>This website brings together information from numerous sources to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date view of the state of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes, health system performance and the broader determinants of health in one area. With ongoing updates and major releases every two to three years, it is designed to inform policy, planning, program development and research.</p>

2020	Indigenous Evaluation Strategy	Productivity Commission	<p>The Productivity Commission’s Indigenous Evaluation Strategy sets out a comprehensive agenda for the evaluation of programs and services for Indigenous people and communities.</p> <p>Intended for use by government agencies, the Strategy, “sets out a new approach to evaluating policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aimed at improving the quality and usefulness of evaluation. It puts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at its centre, and emphasises the importance of drawing on the perspectives, priorities and knowledges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when deciding what to evaluate and how to conduct an evaluation.”</p> <p>Aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Strategy calls on Australian Government agencies to disseminate, synthesise and translate evaluation findings in accessible forms that can be used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support their self-determination and their active participation in decision making that affects them.</p> <p>The Strategy also advocates for a new Office of Indigenous Policy Evaluation (OIPE) to be established in partnership with an Indigenous Evaluation Council with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, to oversee the transition to improved Indigenous evaluation.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing are proposed as policy domains for initial focus under the Strategy, along with education, housing, land and water, justice, culture and languages, family and child safety, and employment.</p> <p>The Strategy calls for credible, useful, ethical and transparent evaluation of Indigenous programs and services and addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to evaluate • Evaluation planning, design and conduct • Reporting evaluation findings • Building capability and a culture of evaluation <p>The Strategy is accompanied by an Evaluation Guide that offers practical advice on evaluation of both Indigenous-specific and mainstream programs and services in Indigenous contexts.</p>
2016	Cultural Respect Framework 2016-2026 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>This framework commits the Commonwealth Government and all states and territories to embedding cultural respect principles into their health systems; from developing policy and legislation, to how organisations are run, through to the planning and delivery of services. Developed for the Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council (AHMAC) by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Standing Committee (NATSIHSC), it defines cultural respect as: “Recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” It outlines six domains that underpin culturally respectful health service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-of-organisation approach and commitment • Communication • Workforce development and training • Consumer participation and engagement • Stakeholder partnerships and collaboration • Data, planning, research and evaluation.

2021	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	Co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, this plan's target is for First Nations people to be fully represented in the health workforce by 2031. It includes actions to attract, recruit and retain workers across all roles, levels and locations within the health sector.
2020-2025	National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)	The strategy promotes consistency and quality improvement in matters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and cultural safety across AHPRA's National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. It aims to make cultural safety the norm for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, setting directions and actions for AHPRA, National Boards and Accreditation Authorities, which regulate Australia's 740,000 registered health practitioners. It states that "Cultural safety is a critical component of patient safety, and cultural safety must be defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples."
2021 - current	Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Clearinghouse	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	The Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Clearinghouse uses three social and emotional wellbeing measures – psychological distress, level of mastery and perceived social support – drawn from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) 2018–19 to identify relationships between mental health conditions, drug and alcohol use, unfair treatment and social and emotional wellbeing.
Current and historical	Mental health and social and emotional wellbeing data sources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	Australian Bureau of Statistics	A directory of data items from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections, relating to mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.
Current and historical	National Key Performance Indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	Government-funded Aboriginal Medical Services report a set of 21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Key Performance Indicators (nKPIs) twice a year. The data is used to measure progress towards the Closing the Gap health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Current and historical	Online Services Report (OSR)	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	The Online Services Report (OSR) collects national data every year about Australian Government-funded organisations that deliver health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It provides information about the organisations themselves and the services they provide.

2016	National Framework for Health Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families	Australian Government	<p>This Framework articulates a vision, principles and approaches for the delivery of child and family health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It aims to provide guidance for policy and program design, and for the development and implementation of services.</p> <p>The Framework has been developed to complement the National Framework for Universal Child and Family Health Services, the National Framework for Child and Family Health Services – secondary and tertiary services and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023.</p> <p>It identifies the core elements of health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and developmental surveillance • health promotion • early identification of family need and risk • responding to identified need. <p>The Framework recognises that the child and family health service system does not currently meet the needs of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and a more holistic that draws on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures is needed.</p>
2014-2015	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey	Australian Bureau of Statistics	<p>The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) was conducted from September 2014 to June 2015 with a sample of 11,178 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in private dwellings across Australia. The 2014–15 NATSISS is a multidimensional social survey which provides broad information across key areas of social concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, nationally, by state and territory and remoteness area.</p>
2018-19	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey	Australian Bureau of Statistics	<p>Statistics about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's long-term health conditions, disability, lifestyle factors, physical harm and use of health services.</p>
2014	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework	Australian Government	<p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework supports higher education providers (HEPs) to implement Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curricula across their health professional training programs. It aims to prepare graduates across health professions to provide culturally safe health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the development of cultural capabilities during their undergraduate training. The Framework addresses:</p> <p>Context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and curricula</p> <p>Resources that outline, map and align the implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curricula with learning outcomes and the development of clearly articulated graduate cultural capabilities</p> <p>Resources, suggestions, tools and guidelines to assist higher education providers in the process of implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curricula</p> <p>Accreditation guidelines including suggestions for accreditation bodies in defining criteria that could be expected in undergraduate health professional programs to demonstrate a curriculum is being delivered in line with professional standards</p>

Whole of community

Date	Title	Organisation	About
2017	Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (PDF 2017) Progress reports, supplementary data and performance indicators	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>The Fifth Plan is a foundation policy document that includes Priority Area 4: Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention (p30).</p> <p>For the first time the Fifth Plan adopts the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration (p52), committing the government to promoting Indigenous people's leadership in the health system. The Fifth Plan was intended to be implemented until 2022. An Implementation Plan, published in 2017, is no longer available online. Progress reports continued until 2021.</p> <p>According to the AIHW, a sixth National Mental Health plan is currently under development.</p>
2022-2026	The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement sets out the shared intention of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to work in partnership to improve the mental health of all Australians, reduce the rate of suicide toward zero, and ensure the sustainability and enhance the services of the Australian mental health and suicide prevention system.</p> <p>It describes their shared commitment to contribute to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in relation to mental health and suicide prevention, including:</p> <p>a significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples towards zero (Target 14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share decision-making authority with governments through formal partnership arrangements building a strong, sustainable community-controlled sector to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ensuring all services funded by Australian governments are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' have access to, and training and support to use, locally relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities, and drive their own development. <p>Bilateral agreements between each State and Territory and the Commonwealth, consistent with the National Agreement, can also be accessed from this website.</p>
Launched 2019 with subsequent revisions	National Mental Health Service Planning Framework (NMHSPF)	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	<p>The National Mental Health Service Planning Framework (NMHSPF) is a comprehensive model designed to help plan, coordinate and resource mental health services to meet population demands. It is an evidenced-based framework providing national average benchmarks for optimal service delivery across the full spectrum of mental health services in Australia. The model has been developed to take account of the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> <p>The associated NMHSPF-Planning Support Tool (NMHSPF-PST) is an interactive data tool. It allows users to estimate need and expected demand for mental health care and the level and mix of mental health services required for a given population.</p>

2020	Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health	Productivity Commission	<p>The report discussed key influences on people’s mental health, examines the effect of mental health on people’s ability to participate and prosper in the community and workplace, and economic implications.</p> <p>It made recommendations to the Australian and State and Territory Governments, to improve the mental health of people of all ages and cultural backgrounds, working with people who have experience of mental illness, and with their families and carers - recommending reforms across workplaces, schools and universities, the justice system, community groups and healthcare, psychosocial support, and housing services.</p> <p>It included the following recommendations specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:</p> <p>Indigenous communities should be empowered to prevent suicide. (Action 9.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian, State and Territory health ministers should initiate and implement a renewed Indigenous-led National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy and Implementation Plan to guide suicide prevention in Indigenous communities. • Commissioning bodies should ensure that Indigenous organisations are the preferred providers of suicide prevention activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. <p>Governments should, in collaboration with consumers and carers, commit to a more strategic and cross-portfolio approach to mental health that promotes genuine accountability and that prioritises prevention, early intervention and recovery. As a priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian Government should expedite the development of an implementation plan for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023. (Action 22.2) <p>The Australian Government Department of Health should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • position Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services as the preferred providers of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. (Action 23.6) <p>The Australian, State and Territory Governments should agree on a set of targets and timeframes that specify key mental health and suicide prevention outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the National Federation Reform Council Indigenous Affairs Taskforce should be included in discussions about any targets that may affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Action 24.4).
2020	National suicide prevention strategy for Australia’s health system: 2020–2023	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>This strategy supports and furthers the existing efforts of governments, non-government organisations, Primary Health Networks, the private sector, research institutes and people with lived experience of suicidal behaviour from 2020 to 2023.</p> <p>It includes advice on community-driven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention (p43)</p>

2022	National Mental Health Workforce Strategy 2022–2032	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>The National Mental Health Workforce Strategy considers the quality, supply, distribution, and structure of Australia’s mental health workforce. It presents a roadmap for building a sustainable workforce that is skilled, distributed and supported to deliver mental health treatment, care and support that meets current and future population needs.</p> <p>It includes one action specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 6.5 Support higher education providers to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework into higher education curricula for a broad range of undergraduate and graduate courses and health social service career pathways (p32)
2017-2026	National Drug Strategy 2017–2026	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>This national strategy includes a section about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (p26), describing their alcohol, tobacco and other drug use as a “major concern”, linking these issues to disconnection from cultural values as well as experiences of trauma, poverty, discrimination and lack of adequate access to services.</p> <p>It calls for culturally responsive approaches to reduce the disproportionate harms experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from drug use, delivered in the context of addressing social, cultural and emotional wellbeing needs holistically.</p> <p>It also calls for strong community engagement in the planning and delivery of services, including shared regional planning and evaluation of prevention programs and services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.</p> <p>Further, it advocates for interventions based on evidence of what works specifically for Indigenous people.</p>
2019-2028	National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	<p>This framework to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm highlights possible actions at local, state or territory and national levels. It includes the following description of alcohol use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (p8):</p> <p>“Overall, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to abstain from drinking alcohol than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (31% compared with 23% respectively). However, among those who did drink, higher proportions drank at risky levels (20% exceeding the lifetime risk guidelines) and were more likely to experience alcohol-related injury than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (35% compared to 25% monthly, respectively).</p> <p>For this reason, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience disproportionate levels of harm from alcohol, including general avoidable mortality rates that are 4.9 times higher than among non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to which alcohol is a contributing factor.²⁰ The poorer overall health, social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also significant factors which can influence drinking behaviours.”</p> <p>The strategy references the earlier National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Drug Strategy 2014 - 2019 (a sub-strategy of the National Drug Strategy 2010 – 2015); however there is no current national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drug or alcohol strategy.</p>

2021	Vision 2030	National Mental Health Commission	Vision 2030 was promoted as a national direction for mental health and wellbeing in Australia, focused on lived experience perspectives/
2021	National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	National Mental Health Commission	<p>Australia's first National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed as part of the Australian Government's Long-Term National Health Plan. It focuses on children from birth through to 12 years, as well as on families and communities. The Strategy takes a child's rights-based approach, drawing on principles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>The concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are integrated into the Strategy (ie not confined to a separate section) and Indigenous understandings of culture, community and wellbeing inform the strategy as a whole.</p>
2021	National Suicide Prevention Adviser – Final Advice	National Mental Health Commission	<p>In July 2019, then Prime Minister Scott Morrison appointed the first National Suicide Prevention Adviser, who worked with a National Suicide Prevention Taskforce to develop advice across all levels of government and portfolios, organisations working in suicide prevention, researchers, leaders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention and the community.</p> <p>This final report takes a lived experience approach to system reform, prevention and early intervention, in three sections:</p> <p>Compassion-First This report captures the voices of more than 3000 people with lived experience of suicide, particularly those who have survived suicide attempts or lived with suicidal distress.</p> <p>Connected and Compassionate This report details recommendations and actions in the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and governance to drive a whole of government approach • Lived experience knowledge and leadership • Data and evidence to drive outcomes • Workforce and community capability • Responding earlier to distress • Connecting people to compassionate services and supports • Targeting groups that are disproportionately impacted by suicide • Policy responses to improve security and safety <p>Shifting the Focus The report presents a model for a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention, highlighting the critical role of multiple sectors and government portfolios.</p>
2021	National Suicide Prevention Trial – Final evaluation report	University of Melbourne/ Department of Health and Aged Care	The National Suicide Prevention Trial was announced by the Australian Government in 2016. It was designed to gather evidence and further understanding of what strategies are most effective in preventing suicide at a local level and in at-risk populations through trial interventions in 12 regions. These included two Indigenous-specific trials in the Kimberley region of WA and in the city Darwin in the Northern Territory.

current	Primary Health Network resources	Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care	Thirty-one regional Primary Health Networks across Australia are responsible for planning and commissioning primary health services at a regional level including in chronic disease, mental health and suicide prevention. These resources outline the government's expectations for the PHNs, which are government entities but operate independently under community and clinical governance. They include specific advice on commissioning mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Services (2019)
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