



Uniting Aboriginal & Islander
Christian Congress



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New Closing the Gap Agreement a historic step forward, but must be backed up with action and funding

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and UnitingCare Australia have welcomed the new Closing the Gap Agreement announced today, but have urged governments at all levels to back up their stated commitments with comprehensive action, including dedicated funding and policy reforms that reflect the priorities identified by First Peoples.

“The new Closing the Gap Agreement has the potential to be a turning point in the relationship between First Peoples and governments – one that delivers lasting change and is based on shared decision making on policies and programs that affect First Peoples,” said Pastor Mark Kickett, Interim UAICC National Chairperson.

“The formal agreement with the Coalition of Peaks and the support for the Priority Reforms by all levels of government is a positive step, but meaningful and lasting change will require translating the priorities identified by First Peoples into tangible and properly funded actions.

“Ultimately the commitment to Closing the Gap must be more than words—it must lead to comprehensive actions that can make a real difference to the lives of our people, families and communities.

“We are disappointed more ambitious justice targets were not included, but we remain hopeful that the systemic and structural changes in the new Agreement and the Priority Reform areas will lead to meaningful and sustained change,” said Pastor Kickett.

Claerwen Little, National Director of Uniting Care Australia, commended the new National Agreement as a critical step forward, but urged governments to take swift action to give effect to their commitments, including policy reforms to reduce the over-incarceration of First Peoples in youth detention and adult prisons.

“The announcement of the Closing the Gap Agreement comes just days after Australian Attorneys General met and chose not to increase the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years – a move which would have immediately reduced the over-incarceration of First Peoples children.

“After more than ten years of Closing the Gap, it is time to turn rhetoric into real action that empowers First Peoples and delivers lasting benefits,” said Ms Little.

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the Uniting Church’s community services network in Australia, supporting 1.4 million people each year across urban, rural and remote communities.

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress consists of Aboriginal and Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia and members in fellowship.

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