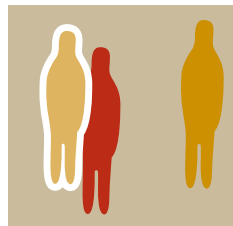




Options for the future of Indigenous Australia



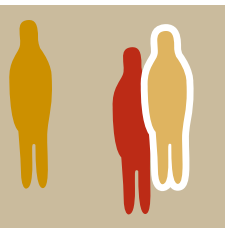
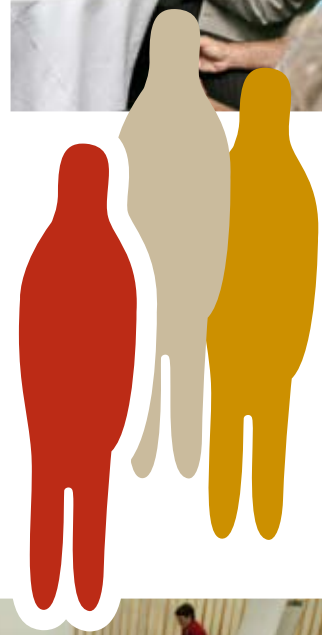
Co-chairs:

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The Honourable Jenny Macklin MP

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OVERVIEW

The Australian Parliament's apology to the stolen generations provided a historic opportunity to consider how Australia might, as a nation, achieve fundamental change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The 100 members of the stream discussing options for the future of Indigenous Australians were asked to consider the following questions as background to their discussions:

- What is required for Australians to come to understand the complexity of Indigenous disadvantage, so that they will have a better understanding of the resources and time frames required to close the gap?
- What would improve access to mainstream services for Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional areas?
- What targeted interventions have the best hope of achieving change in remote communities?
- What is the role of Indigenous leadership development?
- What can be done to best promote and preserve Indigenous cultures, languages and traditions?
- Where will Indigenous culture be placed in 2020? What is the Indigenous role in what Australia as a whole aspires for in terms of identity and culture?
- What is the role for non-Indigenous Australians in working with Indigenous communities towards shared goals?

The format adopted by this stream was to break into 10 groups over the two days of the summit, each discussing and contributing to the stream's three topics:

- ambitions
- priority themes
- top ideas.

After each discussion group session, groups reported back to a plenary session and ideas were brought together for a stream summation by the facilitator. There was no formal process of endorsement by the entire stream, a reflection of the diversity of opinions in the group. Rather, the themes, ambitions and ideas discussed here are those that had commonality across groups and on which broad consensus was reached. To ensure the completeness of the record, summaries of each of the group discussion sessions are provided. The membership of the groups was fluid, changing often during each day. As a result, this record does not reflect ideas from discussion groups with the same membership during the two days.

Finally, the chapter provides a summary of the outcomes of an out-of-session stream on Indigenous economic development and a message sent to the summit by Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara community members.

AMBITIONS

The ambitions of the stream were discussed in each of the sub-groups, and a number of themes and aims were identified in plenary sessions:

- Following the historic and significant apology a new national, bipartisan dialogue between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and government should begin.



- There should be a new form of engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in public policy and planning that affects them, as well as formal national recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their place in the national identity and national story.
- By 2020 we will have capable, productive and confident families, young people and children who are proud, independent and contributing members of society.
- By 2020 there will be a high level of attention, energy and resources focused on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- By 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have parity with other Australians across the spectrum of measures—most importantly, in the strength and wellbeing of their families and young people, safety and security for families and children, decent housing, good health and education.
- By 2020 at least one person in each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household will be in ongoing employment.

These points were summarised by some participants as follows:

Our ambition is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have formal recognition in the Australian legal framework and Australia's global identity is one that is recognised as being enriched by a living culture that is 50 000 years old. In this Australia in 2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same health, education and economic participation opportunities and outcomes as other Australians, are able to realise their hopes and aspirations and are affirmed in their cultural identity. This can only be achieved by taking measures now to urgently transform society to nurture today's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and children.

THEMES

The stream as a whole agreed on a number of priority themes, which were further explored by the smaller discussion groups during the summit:

- Enshrine formal recognition of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Provide stronger support for families and their wellbeing and their role in keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and identity vibrant. This includes safe, private space in community life for families, so children can be nurtured and cared for and are able to get a good education.
- Encourage a new form of engagement that harnesses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ability, knowledge and leadership.
- Overcome the complex arrangements at the national, state and territory and local government levels in relation to funding, infrastructure and some service delivery—for example, housing.
- Develop new, more comprehensive accountability arrangements.
- 'Close the gap' in all areas and capitalise on links between formal recognition and achieving better social and economic outcomes.
- Identify and maximise the interdependencies between housing, education, health and employment.
- Provide to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people an opportunity to be involved in developing policies and programs designed to assist them, recognising that these young people represent a substantial proportion of the Indigenous population.

- Ensure that young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in urban and regional areas, are involved in decisions that affect them, rather than being invisible to policy makers and planners.
- Speed up the pace of economic development, redistribution of resources and clarification of property rights.
- Expand partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs and business.
- Place value on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and weave them into global identity.
- Give due recognition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge of country, and recognise the relevance of this knowledge to the response to climate change, water and sustainability challenges.
- Confront racism.

IDEAS

Building on the small group discussions, the following key areas and corresponding top ideas were identified across the entire stream.

Families and children

Families need to be the fundamental building blocks for the planning and delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Families are the primary places for care of children and the primary sources of knowledge and learning about culture. As an aspirational goal, at least one parent should be in full-time, ongoing employment to provide a model to begin to break transgenerational cycles of poverty, disengagement and unemployment.

Governments at all levels need to become proactive in working with families and to develop family-centred services and family-tailored solutions. Services need to be able to deal with urgent and deep-seated intergenerational problems, especially in remote areas and where children are involved, to break cycles of poverty.

IDEAS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Provide options for children to obtain high-quality schooling—including boarding schools, hostels, away-from-home foster families to stay with at weekends, mentors for support, ABSTUDY, private scholarships and community schooling.
- 7.3 Introduce individual learning and health compacts for each Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child. The compacts should be compulsory and would be with state or territory authorities. They should be supported by case management to ensure that children who need help receive it promptly and effectively.



- 7.4 Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Fund to tackle long-term problems through the development of services to redress unmet need.
- 7.5 Build, develop and reward the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational workforce, and introduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison staff into schools and childcare centres.
- 7.6 Introduce school exchanges to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous children an experience of living in each others’ worlds, so there is a deeper mutual understanding among future generations.
- 7.7 Encourage gifted young professionals to work as teachers alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in remote schools.
- 7.8 Re-establish and reinvigorate multi-functional childcare centres.

A new national dialogue and formal legal recognition

There was support for new national, bipartisan dialogue and formal legal recognition. Participants noted that a new philosophy was needed to redefine the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the nation and that this new philosophy and relationship should be reflected in the instrument of formal recognition. Some participants felt that such recognition would elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to its proper place in providing the foundation for a national agreement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Australian nation.

Formal legal recognition was discussed in various terms—as an agreement, pact, treaty, Bill of Rights or constitutional amendment. Some groups debated whether formal agreement was necessary or whether it was a priority; others were anxious that the notion of a treaty would raise concerns in some sectors of the wider community and that it was important that the dialogue represent an opportunity to allay fears and build trust throughout the Australian community.

IDEAS

- 7.9 Formal legal recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - 7.9.1 A national education program is needed to support the dialogue.
 - 7.9.2 Co-commitment to the agreement should be sought from the states and territories.
- 7.10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being recognised as First Nations Peoples
- 7.11 Establishment of 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
- 7.12 Establishment of a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body after considering the nature of its role and relationship with government, the corporate sector and the wider community and the options for its structure
- 7.13 Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 7.14 Some groups suggested that there be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seats in parliament, as in New Zealand; others recommended greater encouragement of and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to stand as candidates in elections.

Government reform and accountability

There was wide support for rigorous accountability of, and transparency in government, including new, independent mechanisms, with ‘teeth’ and sanctions, to monitor accountability. There were also calls to streamline the way the Commonwealth, state and territory and local governments work together in relation to funding and the delivery of infrastructure and services.

It was felt that the government should commit to firm outcomes and indicators against which the outcomes can be measured. These indicators should not be changed at whim. Governments ought to support self-help, and for this to be effective families need to be able to work with government in simpler, more straightforward ways. The relationship between families and governments needs to be person or family centred.

IDEAS

- 7.15 Build accountability, reporting and monitoring in Indigenous policy initiatives, either through:
 - 7.15.1 establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Productivity Commission, involving significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation; or
 - 7.15.2 building on existing frameworks, such as the Productivity Commission having responsibility to monitor, be a ‘watchdog’ and report on progress; or
 - 7.15.3 establishing a parliamentary committee, possibly a Senate Estimates–like 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 education, health, policing and law enforcement, and employment services.
- 7.16 Reflect a better relationship with the Australian government through changes in the machinery of government.
 - 7.16.1 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.
- 7.17 Include incentives for self-help and development of skills that support independence in government funding.
- 7.18 Develop service delivery mechanisms that are people centred and more convenient—for example, a community hub, ‘one-stop shops’—with services delivered by people who are enabled to coordinate across governments and agencies and are not confined to their service ‘silo’.
- 7.19 Assess senior public sector managers’ performance against Indigenous-specific outcomes and indicators.
- 7.20 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’.
- 7.21 Create 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.



Health

There was general agreement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery models need to be renewed and reinvigorated.

IDEAS

- 7.22 Eradicate trachoma amongst Indigenous children within five years through a comprehensive health strategy, at a cost of possibly less than \$25 million.
- 7.23 Establish an equity-based reconstruction fund to build infrastructure and services designed to promote better health, to build better housing and infrastructure, and to engage in innovative projects aimed at improving communities' capacity to function well.
- 7.24 Place a child health nurse in every school, and give young mothers and their babies in the community access to this service.
- 7.25 Renew emphasis on and reinvigorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery models.
- 7.26 Establish a National Healing Foundation.

Economic development

Participants called for seamless regulation to enable Indigenous businesses to grow across state and territory boundaries, as well as for better Commonwealth–state coordination of government funding arrangements and services.

IDEAS

- 7.27 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.
- 7.28 Conduct a national review of Indigenous businesses and an annual survey of them.
- 7.29 Provide incentives to encourage people to move into employment.
- 7.30 Explore options and opportunities for increased employment of Indigenous people in the private sector.
- 7.31 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.
- 7.32 Include an Indigenous business ownership target in the Closing the Gap annual report.
- 7.33 Develop clear individual property rights in relation to homes and businesses.
- 7.34 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.
- 7.35 Explore the idea of economic business zones to stimulate economic development in areas that currently experience little or no economic activity.
- 7.36 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.

Culture, art and symbols

There was general agreement that culture, art and symbols are vitally important both for preservation of culture and for recognition. To quote a report from one discussion group, 'We know the summit will have been a success when the Prime Minister speaks an Aboriginal language in 2020'.

IDEAS

- 7.37 Create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural framework for developing a strategic plan to expand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and other cultural opportunities globally.
- 7.38 Establish a National Knowledge and Cultural Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, showcasing the cultural contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Canada and New Zealand have such centres. Old Parliament House was suggested as a possible site now that there is a new building for the National Portrait Gallery.
 - 7.38.1 A National Knowledge Centre Network should also be established to provide support to regional knowledge centres that recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to keep and tell the story of country.
 - 7.38.2 These centres could be linked to community hubs so that resources can be shared. Digital technology provides opportunities to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures part of the digital revolution by using the technology to document, record and share cultures.
- 7.39 Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teaching in the early school years.
- 7.40 Establish a national cultural authority for the protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander intellectual property.
- 7.41 Use Aboriginal artwork and symbols as national symbols and at commemorative events. Among the suggestions were 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.
- 7.42 Hold a memorial service to commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who served in or demonstrated exceptional courage in war.
- 7.43 Consideration should be given to whether people with cultural knowledge should be accredited.
- 7.44 Use the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' people, not 'Indigenous'.

Low-cost and cost-neutral ideas

The following low-cost or cost-neutral ideas were put forward. In addition, some participants suggested that tax incentives could be justified as a low-cost idea because they could 'kick-start' business activity to a level where costs could be recovered. This suggestion did not, however, receive unanimous support.



IDEAS

- 7.45 Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 7.46 Develop 'sister school' arrangements.
- 7.47 Include Indigenous business, employment or outcomes targets in government contracts.
- 7.48 Bring in local elders to share cultural practices at schools. Make 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.
- 7.49 Share information about good practices, so as to keep families functioning well and staying together.

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

The 10 groups in this stream dealing with options for the future of Indigenous Australia discussed a broad range of subjects, as follows.

Group 1***A formal relationship***

In connection with the idea of a formal relationship, group 1 came up with a number of points:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to establish their place in a globalised world, and this could be achieved through a formal framework for the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all levels of government.
- This would create a sense of security because arrangements would not be vulnerable to political change; for example, a national treaty could require government to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on relevant policies.
- The process of negotiation between the government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is just as important as the outcome.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have knowledge of the environment that can be of assistance in responding to climate change.
- There needs to be recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, the importance of self-determination, Aboriginal-run organisations (including art organisations) and the role of the Community Development Employment Projects program.

A national representative body

There was debate about the role of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body. Group members canvassed whether such a body should lead Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in relation to health, families and communities or whether it should be confined to guiding the government in relation to development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law, culture and associated policy.

- Let there be formal representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a body that could engage with governments in meaningful ways—that is, by means of a treaty, an Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Senate estimates committee and/or support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Constitutional change

There was a strong view that recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights needs to be included in the body of the Constitution, not just in the preamble.

- Amend the Constitution so that it encompasses Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world views, recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and establishes a new relationship between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on mutual respect.

Racism and the national lexicon

- Change the way some mainstream Australians think about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: tackle racism.
- Ensure due recognition of Indigenous people's contribution to Australia.

Symbolism

- There are currently no national symbols representing Australia's cultural diversity.
- Symbolism is important; for example, consider an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person for a future head of state.
- If the Prime Minister spoke an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language, this would afford respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures.

The importance of a vision

- It is important to establish a vision to bring together all other work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander areas. Leadership at all levels is important to this process, including through the family and local, state and federal governments.
- Policy should focus on family, community, land, people and livelihood and emphasise rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This should include constructive and active leadership, a healthy, wealthy community and strong, productive individuals.
- In 2020 the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be world class. The Prime Minister should be able to say he is confident about his treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that the gap of disadvantage has been closed.

Involve young people

- There is concern in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that, if action is not taken now to involve young people, culture will be lost.

Micro-loans

- Micro-loans represent an avenue through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can gain a footing in the economic market.



Group 2

Further to the ambitions agreed by the stream, group 2 considered some other aspirational goals. In particular, the group hoped that by 2020 an Aboriginal person standing on St Georges Terrace in Perth will know their culture and value their cultural identity and will be as comfortable and capable as any other skilled person working in that city. The group also considered ambitions for 2020 from the perspective of a young Aboriginal family, which would have to face difficulties such as marginalisation, ensuring that their children are educated, getting at least one parent into a job, and being safe from violence and abuse at home and in everyday life. Finally, the group noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are affected by similar difficulties wherever they live—be it in remote, regional or urban areas.

The following were among the main topics the group discussed.

A national framework and governance

- Create a national framework to begin the processes of developing policy, setting the rules of engagement, and defining the processes for moving forward.
- Create a new federalism, with Commonwealth–state relationships on a new footing. There needs to be a set of co-commitments between and across government, including with state and territory governments, to give certainty and clarity.
- Develop civil governance, with mainstream policing to protect and ensure safety and to set models and patterns designed to break the transmission of poverty across generations.
- Governance at the local level: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must be resourced so that people can solve their own problems.

Philosophy

- The philosophy underpinning policy needs to be articulated. Choice is a central theme, but we need to refine the concept of choice—for example, the exercise of choice after obtaining education so that decisions can be made responsibly. The idea is to make it clear that choice involves responsibility and is not confused with wilfulness.

Education, families, children

- Education of children is paramount. Education-related factors include the level of infrastructure, quality of education delivered, access to and the location of schools, suitability of boarding schools for remote students, levels of access to boarding schools, and strategies for encouraging students in remote areas to continue their education.
- Provide support for children who are away at school, both in an educational sense and in terms of culture and family.
- Provide support for families who cannot afford boarding school fees.
- Recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are bicultural. Learning and appreciating languages and cultures is vitally important to identity and belonging.
- Provide support for children who are not ready to go into high school for some reason and help prepare them for high school—bridging the gaps in their education and getting them up to speed, so that they can catch up, stay in school and gain their qualifications.

- Talented children can be supported through scholarships, but there is a need to develop support mechanisms for all children. Varying options and opportunities need to be created for a wide range of abilities and achievements. The opportunity to learn in a wider community context is important.
- Make school interesting so that children will go there and stay there.

Breaking the poverty cycle

- Enable at least one parent to gain employment—if possible, full-time, permanent sustained employment.
- Provide resourcing and infrastructure in local communities and regional hubs. In particular, focus on services that support the child.
- Recognise that urban communities have many of the problems that beset remote towns.
- Encourage governments to support self-help. To do this effectively, families need to be able to work in simpler, more straightforward ways with governments. The relationships between families and governments need to be person and family centred.
- Develop funding models that include incentives for self-help and developing skills that support independence. Home ownership is an important example of independence for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Culture, language and history

- Teach language and history well in school, beginning at kindergarten, to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children.
- Encourage urban Aboriginal children to live their culture—to learn it and practise it within their family and in the wider community.

Group 3

Families and children at the centre of Indigenous policy

- Establish mobile health centres and outreach for urban communities with poor transport and for communities in regional and remote areas.
- Develop a national health worker registration system in order to create a more mobile, more efficient workforce.
- Incorporate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Children in Australian legislation, so that it is enforceable.
- Attend to chronic health conditions for which early intervention and prevention are crucial—for example, trachoma, rheumatic fever and foetal alcohol syndrome. A combined health intervention program was suggested for tackling chronic disease: include in the program interventions starting with motherhood and fatherhood preparation at school.
- Develop programs aimed at increasing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers-to-be receiving medical support in the first trimester, to the same extent as non-Indigenous women.
- Provide Indigenous health nurses in schools to support children, young people, their parents and the wider community.



- Review the role of allied health professionals in Indigenous medical services and other health services, with a view to enabling them to make a more positive contribution in areas such as prevention, education and protection.
- A combined health intervention program should be developed to draw together health and education strategies and options. It would include baby care and programs for toddlers and siblings and have a substantial focus on child-protection training for mothers and fathers.

Local councils

- Local councils have the potential to play a positive role. They could welcome a mother and her new baby back to the community with a basket of baby goods and introduce mother and baby to the local mothers and grandmothers groups.

Education

- Develop a mentoring system to support children who need to leave home to continue their education.
- Fund kitchens at schools for the preparation and serving of nutritious lunches.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Fund and a Healing Foundation

- Establish a 20-year endowment fund so that effort, resources and commitment can be mobilised for long-term projects. It was envisaged that this would consist of \$1 billion invested by the government from the budget surplus. Income could be used to resource long-term programs that take on causes and be tailored to local needs in individual communities—for example, early intervention and delivery of programs, pregnancy programs.
- Establish an Aboriginal Healing Foundation similar to the Healing Foundation in Canada—although there was not full agreement about following the Canadian model.
- Alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs are desperately needed, especially residential programs where people can get away from the drinking or drug-using peer groups, which are powerful. It was considered that the Alert Bay Centre in Canada is a good model.

Aboriginal dads in cities and regional towns

- Develop programs that include fathers, provide parenting skills, deal with alcohol and substance abuse and personal trauma, and develop optimism and self-confidence.

Pathways to and from incarceration

- Develop different options so that communities remain safe and peaceful and young people have challenges and continue their education. Farm schools were suggested as an option that might help prevent incarceration.

Using art and spirituality in developing solutions

- There is evidence that children with a strong cultural identity do better than those without. Support for cultural practice is important for child health and emotional development as well as for communities and older people. Grant funding could be provided to support events such as Garma and Inma on large and small scales.

- Design prevention and other programs in creative ways that maximise the benefits of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's spirituality and artistic connections.
- Provide support so that elders and older people can preserve and convey to others their knowledge, culture and experience.

Group 4

A treaty

- A treaty is the fundamental thing. Without a clear place in this country, nothing else will happen.
- The treaty structure needs to take account of major, persistent problems such as alcoholism and deaths in custody, commit to resourcing the solutions adequately and in a sustained way, and be enforceable.
- A treaty will give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a 'level playing field'.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in parliament must be increased. This would not necessarily be through separate seats: rather, Indigenous people should be supported into local government seats then through the state and territory level and into federal politics.

A Reconstruction Fund

- Develop a Reconstruction Fund from a percentage of GDP to build community capacity, encourage healing, and improve local leadership and governance.
- The fund would:
 - be a national entity with regional hubs
 - enhance community capacity (including local leadership), internal functioning, and social and emotional wellbeing
 - focus on capacity building, governance and leadership, and decision making in communities
 - cover all communities—remote, rural and urban
 - invest in the building blocks that enable people to participate in health and education
 - manage and develop infrastructure in remote communities to achieve parity, especially in relation to health
 - use the existing network of Indigenous-controlled services and provide incentives to reconstruct communities
 - be a centre of excellence that works with and reaches out to communities to build capacity
 - be open to private sector contributions and have a role in expanding private philanthropy.

There was discussion about the actual mechanics of a Reconstruction Fund. Some participants saw the fund as an institution like a statutory organisation; others envisaged it as an account. There were questions about the authority the fund would have and how it would relate to the idea of the accountability entity that had already been put forward as a means of holding governments accountable.



An accountability entity

- Establish an accountability entity—which dovetails with a parliamentary Indigenous affairs committee and the treaty—to review health, education, justice, housing, employment and family services for efficiency and compliance with cultural performance indicators. The entity would be made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commissioners who are experts in their fields, would monitor and hold mainstream government departments to account, and would be able to penalise for non-performance. It could have the powers of the Auditor-General and report directly to the Prime Minister.
- Support a ‘Productivity Commission’ to keep all governments accountable by ensuring that the goals of governments are set and kept.
- Tie government to specific funding agreements. It should achieve certain targets and, if not, there should be a mechanism for triggering remedial action.
- Most government funding is going to supporting the status quo, which is a welfare existence for Indigenous Australians. The paradigm needs to change. One model is the Torres Strait Regional Authority—which gets a one-line budget.
- Multi-year funding is required to eliminate reliance on the electoral cycle.
- Funding should be locked in to 2020 as a minimum.
- Ensure that Closing the Gap initiatives are supported by realistic goals.
- Develop indicators and measures to assess the strength of culture.

States and regions

- Every local and state or territory government should have a five-year plan. The Reconstruction Fund could roll out a strategic regional plan for every Indigenous community—five to 10 years. It locks in the substance of local flavour because every community is different.

Identity

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need a feeling of identity.
- Indigenous cultures must be promoted, so that all Australians are proud of our heritage and so that Indigenous people are treated as, and feel like, equals rather than second-class citizens.

Emotional wellbeing and healing

- Establish an entity, independent, legally-based and funded for the long term. The first step is to engage in programs, then build and lend support for the Indigenous-controlled services across the country—for example, health and child protection organisations.
- The fund or entity could have the same structure as the Healing Foundation in Canada.
- Concern was expressed about the word ‘healing’, including what kinds of activities would be included.

The crucial nature of education

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history should be taught in all Australian schools as part of ‘Australian’ history.
- Retention at schools should be encouraged in order to offer young people the best chance in life.

Economic development

- It is essential to ensure that communities continue to thrive; for example, in mining towns male spiritual and cultural role models are absent.
- Promote tourism and reduce red tape for small business, so that Indigenous people are encouraged to be entrepreneurial rather than turning to crime.

A fundamental change in property rights

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must have the power to negotiate their property rights. There is a need to introduce a structure that acknowledges this.
- Totally new thinking by good, expert people is needed. There are good models in Canada, where aboriginal people own the resources as well as land. There must be a commitment by government in this regard.
- Aboriginal people's right to own property and resources: recognition of prior ownership of land and resources is central, across Australia, not just in remote areas; recognition of commercial rights is necessary, too—for example, fresh water, surface water, ground water, biodiversity, carbon credits and trading.

Positive social policy making

- Social policy making needs to be better and more cost effective, to fund positive policies such as education and preventive health rather than prisons and hospital beds. A change of government thinking is required. At present there is no proactive work: outcomes are tied to the electoral cycle and Ministers look for short-term 'announceables'. The following suggestions were made:
 - *Health.* \$500 million a year to solve Aboriginal health problems is required now. Good health education and health screening already exist and could be replicated cheaply. Prevention is cheaper than treatment.
 - *Education.* Improve the quality of educational instruction by creating an elite (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) teaching corps.
 - *Valuing and rewarding teachers.* Research shows that 40 per cent of student achievement is due to the quality of the teacher.
 - *Preserving Aboriginal culture.* Teachers should be supported, financially and morally, to do this.

Group 5**Education**

- Education is a high priority.
- Establish mandatory 'individual learning compacts' for state and territory authorities, with Commonwealth funding being conditional on the compacts' implementation and progress in achieving results.
- There is a need for wider community awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Australia. This could be achieved through development of a treaty, development of a formalised pact between government and Indigenous people, formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the



Australian Constitution, making the Racial Discrimination Act inviolable, making government accountable through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Productivity Commission, establishment of an Elders Council that would check on the cultural perspective of policy, and an avenue like 2020 to continue to discuss and promote ideas.

Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Group 5 called on the government:

To build on the government's intended endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to formally recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people of Australia involving a legal agreement as to the status, rights and obligations of Indigenous people and the Australian Government.

- This could be achieved through:
 - support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which could then be reflected in domestic legislation
 - development of a formalised agreement that has a legal framework
 - development of an accountability mechanism—'with teeth'
 - development of a performance management framework for the public service—performance indicators for senior government managers
 - development of a treaty to clarify the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments. This should be embedded in education and should formally provide for redress. Further, it should provide for acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems
 - political and administrative structures that allow Indigenous engagement in policy development.

A National Culture, Heritage and History Authority

- Create a National Culture, Heritage and History Authority to manage a National Centre of Indigenous Peoples.
- Create think-tanks and public discussion spaces for a virtual digital network—possibly use Old Parliament House, including for cultural events.

Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge centres

- Establish regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander centres to preserve culture (digitally), streams of knowledge, language, ways of knowing, and the arts and media.

Decolonising the culture

- Produce and display local knowledge.
- Provide a livelihood for the community.

This idea was seen as having the potential to feed into education.

A new representative body

- Establish a new representative body with an advocacy, policy, monitoring and evaluation role. The role should not include program and service delivery or the allocation of funding.

A National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Future Fund

- Establish a national fund—a Children's Future Fund—that would quarantine funds from budget surpluses, with a focus on early childhood services (especially education through early childhood) and primary and high school and into employment, with the ability to receive private donations as well.

Participants in the group spoke of a need to focus on building communities, rather than being too narrowly focused on economic development.

Group 6***Stronger regional centres supported by good local infrastructure***

- Regional areas are under-resourced and there is a need for suitable infrastructure to sustain regional towns. Cultural sustainability was also seen as necessary.
- Develop national infrastructure to support regional development—including shared management tools and business hub services (for example, standardised agreements) and shared accountancy services.
- Create Indigenous economic development zones. Rather than an ad hoc distribution of business services, target specific zones. New versions of partnerships in economic development zones are needed, to make coordination possible.

Building enduring relationships and confronting racism

- Build on the apology to the stolen generation to reduce 'the painful separation between us' as people within the nation.
- Indigenous people should be seen as equal citizens everywhere, having choice and access, and be properly culturally positioned in this country.
- After the apology, we are coming into a shared history. We need to go further and engage in a framework where we will never be in a situation of racism again.
- Confront racism to ensure a genuine, enduring relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community.
- A treaty would be a new expression of citizenship rights. It could be a declaration of rights or citizenship rights, a national treaty or regional treaties.
- A treaty would clarify engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, enable a national approach, formally provide for reparation and redress, and enhance Indigenous elders' ability to argue for cultural revival—as in New Zealand.
- We need to make sure our histories and stories are the bedrock from kindergarten upwards by developing an integrated national curriculum for all and incorporating in it an understanding of Indigenous history.
- Develop partnerships with philanthropic organisations.
- Introduce community healing processes in regional Australia.



Unity and leadership among Indigenous people

- There should be more initiatives like the summit, facilitating a sense of unity among Indigenous people and providing opportunities for people to get together and think strategically about ideas.

Accountability

- Develop mechanisms to ensure that government agencies deliver services to all citizens in all locations, in effective ways, and are accountable for service provision (and thus accountable for service delivery gaps as well).
- Establish a National Indigenous Productivity Commission.
- Indicators and statistics for Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage need to be measured in ways that are meaningful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Service delivery

- Plan nationally, act locally—across all regions. Concern was expressed about young people being left behind in regional and remote areas. There is a need to involve them in planning: give them a say.
- A different kind of parity of access to services is needed.
- All government services should be delivered broadly and in a sustained way—not just as small, one-off projects.
- Delivery of services to Indigenous communities should involve all spheres of government—local, state and territory and Commonwealth.
- Government agencies need to focus on filling service delivery gaps and making optimal use of resources; for example, rationalise 42 government agencies in one small regional centre.
- Be prepared to invest in a diversity of approaches to service delivery.
- Businesses are developing strategies to bridge the gap in health and education services for employees when the services are not provided by government authorities; for example—TAFE training or literacy and numeracy.
- Service delivery organisations should develop partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Support for living culture

- Establish a national cultural authority (with regional centres connecting to it) that values the depth and breadth of Indigenous knowledge, logic and adaptive systems. This could also include a meeting place.
- Establish a living culture centre that promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge, on a par with other national cultural institutions, and maintains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, histories and languages.
- Possibly use Old Parliament House as the location for this national authority or centre.
- Use the digital revolution to connect with others and provide outreach. Digital transfer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture could be the new message stick. Digital access to cultural information can help with rebuilding culture in regions.

- Set up a marketplace to allow Indigenous organisations to participate in the digital economy. Digital tools are needed so that people can engage—for example, protocols, education and awareness raising. Protection of intellectual property is important: copyright institutions provide a model. Reinvest in creators.

There was also discussion of the possibility of replacing the term ‘culture’ with ‘knowledge’ because culture is an anthropological construct.

Teaching and leadership: getting it right

- Value all teachers properly. Pay them enough and support them through training and coaching.
- Talented young professionals should be engaged to work in communities, including as teachers. Perhaps develop a teaching task force based on the US model of bringing in people with tertiary training to teach—for example, Teach for America.
- Train and employ Aboriginal education workers in schools.
- There is a need to combine literacy and numeracy and technological literacy skills.
- Introduce formal school partnering and exchanges for parents, teachers and students—for example, taking parents from remote Cape York communities to schools in Cairns to expose them to standards of education there, which then increases parents’ expectations of the standard of education that can be provided.
- Introduction of bilingual programs should be for communities and parents to decide.

Indigenous young people

- We want Indigenous young people to be proud of their culture (drawing on their cultural origins) and develop into strong, innovative leaders.
- Give Indigenous young people the chance to prosper and imagine a future as expansive as that available to non-Indigenous young Australians.

Early childhood

- Introduce ‘multi-functional Aboriginal children’s centres’ or MACCs—the New South Wales and Victorian 1980s model of centres embracing early childhood, childcare, education and community meeting place roles.
- Help children learn to enjoy books at an early age.

Superannuation

- Because of the gap in life expectancy, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not gaining access to their own superannuation benefits. Could we let individuals have access to their contributions earlier and for home ownership?



Group 7

In the report back to the main plenary session, some members of group 7 said the following:

We call upon the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to continue the bipartisan commitment shown through the National Apology to continue the national dialogue within the nation to change the assimilationist ethos through which Aboriginal affairs and interests over the past 200 years have been relegated.

We would encourage the establishment of a new philosophical framework through which we negotiate a new definition of our relationship and how we might define it in the Constitution. This dialogue should continue for the life of this government.

In 2020 we want a reconciled Australia built on the foundations of a treaty and constitutional protections that build mutual respect and pride; equality of access to and outcomes from all issues impacting on our lives; recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and unique place in this country, so that our identity and diversity are respected and affirmed into the future.

National dialogue and community engagement

- The question of how to come together as a group to discuss things was raised. There is a need for regular sharing of information and concerns. There could be a national forum, or perhaps a new umbrella group.
- National Campfire, on the National Indigenous Television website, could be used to facilitate a conversation using new technologies: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having their own voice, unedited, to the world.
- A discussion with the broader community is necessary.
- What is wanted is an Indigenous voice, not another bureaucracy.
- There is no wish to reinvent the wheel. The ideas heard at the summit are not new: we have lost ground and need to take it back. Therefore what kind of dialogue is necessary to consider earlier views plus all the ideas put forward at the summit?
- We haven't got representation or dialogue right at the regional level. We need to concentrate on setting up forums regionally and feeding into a national forum, democratically. It is about speaking democratically from the regions.
- We must convince our people to work as a collective, agree to disagree on some things, but keep talking on key challenges rather than being focused on personality.
- The Prime Minister has given us an opportunity to engage again: how do we grasp that opportunity to formulate a proposal and structure to open a new relationship?
- Two parallel streams are needed:
 - commitment to a formal national dialogue over four or five years about citizenship with government (primarily Commonwealth)

- national dialogue that resets the reference point to take place within a new philosophical point of view (see the next section).
- A bipartisan approach is essential. We must also be able to work on a continuous national agenda. Indigenous-specific concerns to do with representation do matter, but that is for the Indigenous community and governments to determine.
- We need action and financial engagement.
- There are questions about who, where, when and how: How to engage with enough people around the country? Who does the speaking?

Philosophy

- We need to ask why we haven't achieved the outcomes we are all talking about. Is it because the foundations of the nation are based on assimilation? Unless we develop a new philosophical framework—not based on assimilation—we will have the same outcomes.
 - This is what a dialogue should be about.
 - New mechanisms for doing this may or may not be relevant.
 - Globalisation is bringing a totally different way of thinking—for example, the speech at the Sunday morning summit plenary session. We have to harness that new way: dynamism and energy.
 - Dialogue has to be with those who put governments in power.
 - Everyone needs to have dialogues with the general community and community leaders. These people can influence governments.
- The apology was a moment when something was created—a feeling of inclusiveness, connectedness and pride across the Australian community, addressing the separation of non-Indigenous people from Indigenous, creating a shared experience. We must work out how to use the positive experience of the apology to take us forward as a nation.
- The National Sorry Day Committee is proposing a task force to consider the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report. There are many gaps to be closed in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, so that in 2020 we can all live in partnership, united and with all gaps closed.
 - We have to work on a whole-of-Australia relationship encompassing and embracing all of us and looking at how to use the apology to create this new relationship.
 - National Sorry Day could be used to launch promises and commitments to the rest of the country. It could be used as an opportunity to heal.
- What about having a referendum to get rid of the race power, as a way of having a new dialogue with the nation to redefine our relationship?
- We want a new framework to take forward a new relationship—to find our rightful place in our country.



Group 8

A national dialogue and treaty

- The government should instigate a national dialogue leading to formal reform of the Constitution and involving recognition in the body of the Constitution of the place of Indigenous people as Australia's First Peoples.
 - The process should be referred to a (proposed) Bipartisan Commission or, from there, to an independent commission (with Indigenous people on it) established under legislation.
 - A staged approach would be important, with national dialogue before any legislative or constitutional change.
 - Any constitutional amendment should articulate rights, responsibilities and recognition, including recognition of customary law. It should also build on the government's intended endorsement of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The global knowledge economy

- Indigenous Australia should be at the centre of Australia's push to be part of the global knowledge economy and to show creativity, productivity and entrepreneurship.
- Indigenous Australia should be connected to the global knowledge economy in 15 years' time.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should have functional access to the internet.
- Allow digital access to the higher education sector for adults in remote and regional communities.

Closing the Gap

- We must also close the relationship gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Accountability

- Establish an accountability structure—for example, through the Productivity Commission—that drives the system and measures the 'return on investment' achieved by all tiers of government.
- There should be a score card against which the community can judge performance.
- Capture and share best and promising practice—for example, circle sentencing.
- Review key reports to see whether the recommendations need to be reconsidered.

Family and community

- A complete overhaul of the child protection system is needed.
- Training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sensitivities and culture should be compulsory for all child protection workers.
- The current model is about crisis intervention—not about nurturing, protecting and sustaining our culture.
- We need better case management methods.
- Employ more Aboriginal liaison officers in the court system.

- Strengthen trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and service providers.

Education

- Two-way education is needed so that we don't lose our culture and language. If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are taught in schools, racism will diminish.
- We need to look at options for improving retention rates—for example, hostels.
- Schools should receive incentives for excellence in educating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, such as more resources for programs that attract students.
- Offer clear pathways to Certificate II and III courses and prepare people for the shift into employment.
- Indigenous language is taught in schools in New Zealand and racism has diminished.

Employment

- Job Network providers need to have incentives to get people into employment quickly when they are ready to move into or return to the workforce.

National representation

- We need Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at all levels of government, as well as a formally established representative body.
- A range of models should be considered—for example, the Canadian Assembly of First Nations, which includes elders, women and youth councils.

Local governance and control

- Governance and control must occur in the community and be reflected in the overall constitution or treaty framework. Solutions should not be imposed on Aboriginal people.
- There needs to be a system of integrated support across infrastructure, policing, health and education.

A low-cost idea

- Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Some members of the group emphasised that the language and expectations associated with a treaty need to be carefully managed because they could engender fear (which is not the intention) rather than support for an agreement in the wider community.

Group 9

The National Indigenous Knowledge Centre Network

Group 9 wanted to more accurately depict the regional nature of the knowledge centre proposal discussed on day 1 and provide more detailed ideas about the concept.

- A National Indigenous Knowledge Centre Network should be established to reflect the fact that Indigenous knowledge is a great asset.



- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies should be used to provide support to regional knowledge centres, through a memorandum of understanding. The regional knowledge centres need to use existing facilities and have more resources invested in existing infrastructure to transform current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural centres into the future. The concept should be linked to the development of community hubs.
- Establishment of the regional centres acknowledges that each Indigenous group and region is different and has different knowledge to preserve, share and develop into the future.
- The centres help redress the concern that each time an elder dies part of the culture is lost.
- The regional knowledge centres should have the following characteristics:
 - be owned and operated by and employ Indigenous people, contributing to improved local employment options
 - focus on supporting and capturing regional knowledge and all Indigenous knowledge across Australia. They should not be limited just to the surface culture. It is much more than this. It is Indigenous thinking strategies, knowledge of the land, complex adaptive systems, law, and so on
 - provide a one-stop shop for teaching Indigenous children and teaching others—health workers and teachers, for example—about Aboriginal culture
 - provide a location for Aboriginal knowledge production and research by Aboriginal people
 - have two programs—one with material accessible to the general public and a second with information solely for the local Indigenous people
 - provide a social and cultural context and increase value and self-esteem
 - be based on the Canadian model.
- Access to country: identify country and ensure access to country for all Indigenous groups, as in New Zealand.
- It is important to retain and regenerate language and culture by preparing books and resource materials in language for use in schools—CDs, photos, videos, and so on.

A healing centre

- Establish a national healing centre.

A treaty

- A treaty needs to be written into the Constitution.
- By 2020 the treaty should be a formal agreement enshrined in the Constitution, so that rights cannot be arbitrarily removed.
- The Northern Territory Intervention made people feel powerless: a treaty is needed so that changes to the Racial Discrimination Act cannot lead to the removal of rights.
- A treaty is the next step after the apology.
- Basic human rights must be recognised.

- The treaty needs to be enshrined so as not to be subject to political terms: people need protection for the longer term.

Identity

- In 2020 our children should be confident about their identity, proud of who they are, skilled and capable.
- The national anthem needs to be in an Indigenous language.
- Every non-Indigenous Australian should have met an Indigenous Australian.

Education

- In 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and education should be part of the curriculum.
- Language and culture should be revived.
- Each child should have an education plan specifically tailored to that individual.
- There should be more two-way learning—of ‘white’ and Indigenous culture—where each learns from the other.
- Only Indigenous communities can teach children some aspects of culture, but other aspects can be incorporated in the curriculum. This will help reinforce Indigenous values in a school.
- Build on the schooling system in regional areas and communities. Reconsider what is lost when children are sent to ‘white’ schools. Children find it hard to fit in, and we have to question the value and recognise the pain when children must leave their family and community for education.
- Care needs to be taken not to segregate children because they will need to mix with the wider community.

Community control and capacity

- There needs to be more community ownership and control of the development of communities. Ownership should be returned to the people.
- Reinstate Indigenous chief executive officers of community organisations.
- Reinstate a representative body but in form different from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, with more Indigenous representatives who are in touch with the people.
- Indigenous capacity must be improved so that people can take more control, have leadership roles, and motivate change for Indigenous people.
- We would like to think that we are responsible for ourselves, for our destiny, and that we have respect and can move forward.
- Elders and leaders in our clans need to be invited to play a role and weave this back into our tattered social fabric.
- Individual responsibility is important.



Community services

- Mainstream organisations should provide culturally safe and appropriate services and be held accountable for this.

Group 10

The members of group 10 put forward many suggestions in relation to education, service delivery, a pact, closing the gap, remote communities, and culture.

Education

- Diversity of educational options, choices and opportunities is required.
- The focus should be dual—on health and education. This should start early in a child's life.
- Include a range of early intervention programs for babies, toddlers and mothers, including parenting skills.
- Develop the skills of mothers and grandmothers.
- Local councils could meet and greet new mothers on their return from hospital.
- Individualised learning compacts could be developed.
- Expand the opportunities for boarding school. Consider using foster care through families in the school community.
- Upgrade the role of foster carers.
- There was wide support for community-run schools—there are examples in the Northern Territory and Western Australia—but good governance capability is needed to run the schools.
- Provide incentives for schools to deliver better outcomes.
- School principals should be accountable for the achievements of their school.
- Provide mentors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.
- Education should include language and culture and should start early.
- Cultural training for teachers is needed.
- Connect families to the internet and the digital world. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should have safe internet access when they start school, if not earlier.

Service delivery

- Many services operate already, but they need to be better integrated and be linked up.
- Use a partnership approach that has clear accountabilities for service deliverers and tangible commitments for families.
- Long-term commitment of resources is needed if a community-driven approach is to succeed.
- Provide incentives for self-help and developing greater independence.

- Young people are falling behind. We need to involve them and use cultural identity positively to promote in them self-confidence, positive behaviour and an ability to resist peer pressure.

A pact

- Enshrine the rights of Indigenous people in an agreement or pact or in the Constitution as a basis for working towards reconciliation and eradicating racism.
- We need to have a new way of thinking that encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take responsibility for themselves and empowers them to choose their own future.
- Genuine consultation at the community level is needed.
- Establish a 2020 committee to continue the dialogue.
- A national representative body: consider the best of the many models—for example, Canada's Assembly of First Nations.
- Regional governance: the Torres Strait Regional Authority is a good model.
- If there is to be a national Indigenous representative body it needs to represent both men and women and include representatives from each state and territory.
- An Aboriginal Women's Council should be formed—a national one.

Closing the Gap

- Tackle the underlying causes of Indigenous disadvantage. Policy needs to be evidence based—no band-aid solutions—and to take a long-term view to solve the problems.
- Establish a Reconstruction and Innovation Fund.

Remote communities

- The diversity and differing needs of communities must be recognised. One size does not fit all.
- Communities are keen to have self-control—especially in relation to housing, rental accommodation, and housing maintenance.
- CDEP (Community Development Employment Projects) jobs are not meaningful; for example, we need to offer more than rubbish collection jobs and we need to have young people developed in new areas—such as landscaping, mechanics and plumbing. Additional programs are needed to support this, including more creative and flexible ways of involving TAFE and vocational education and training programs for young people in remote areas.
- Programs designed for young people with mental health problems in remote communities are needed.

Culture

- Establish the National Cultural Heritage Centre to showcase culture and peoples and their participation in and contribution to the nation's life.
- There should be a national public holiday to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's contribution to national identity.



- There should be more use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork and symbols in national commemorations and events.
- There should be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's war monument on Anzac Parade in Canberra.
- Re-adopt Aboriginal place names.
- Every school should be involved in gathering and learning the stories and culture of their local country: this would be a sincere acknowledgment of local Indigenous people. Bring in local elders to share cultural practices at school: this would be appropriate to all communities, not just those that have retained their traditional language, and it could be cost neutral.
- Develop programs to take young people to outstations and homelands for a few days at a time to help them learn about traditional culture and knowledge.
- Establish local literacy centres and give priority to learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.
- Establish more partnerships and activities that bring the generations together in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Give consideration to two law and justice systems—traditional and western—and how these can be further integrated.

THE OUT-OF-SESSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

A group of participants met out of session to discuss Indigenous economic development. The discussion was based on recognition that economic development is vital to ensure the wellbeing of Indigenous families. It was also felt there was a need to promote Indigenous wealth creation, rather than merely focus on income generation. The group developed the following statement:

We recommend an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic and Business Strategy be developed, including:

1. National Review of Indigenous Business in Australia so that baseline data on the number, type, location, size, contribution to the Australian economy and benefits and barriers can be identified.
2. The need for an annual [Australian Bureau of Statistics] National Indigenous Business Survey to measure actual business activity, success and shrinkage.
3. Inclusion in the annual report to parliament on Closing the Gap of all aspects of Indigenous development and how the government is closing this gap, including economic development and business activity.
4. The need for better coordination of national, state and local government resources that are provided to agencies that deliver Indigenous business services in Australia.
5. The need to finance and support the establishment of Indigenous business alliances, clusters in all parts of Australia to support and promote the importance of Indigenous business ownership.
6. Form an Indigenous Capital Entrepreneurial Fund to support Indigenous businesses by investing in Indigenous enterprises:
 - the Commonwealth Government to provide at least \$20 to \$30 million in seed funding

- after that, a public–private partnership with the Commonwealth Government to match corporate contributions dollar for dollar
 - favourable tax treatment
 - quality board members
 - once structure and governance arrangements are in place the fund will attract pro bono work from corporates.
7. Form Indigenous business alliances and clusters:
- to provide pathways to jobs
 - to ensure adequate housing is provided as an incentive, especially in remote areas, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are seeking to find employment and create a future for their family. This housing incentive will not be provided on a long-term basis but be seen as a transition to private rental or home ownership
 - to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses.
8. Tax incentives are an area for further policy development. There should be tax incentives for people working in Indigenous businesses, for Indigenous businesses generally, and for Indigenous investment. For example, tax incentives for skilled people to work in remote Australia (based on China and minority business models in the United States and United Kingdom). Must be performance based.
- Review the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Charitable Trust perverse Australian Taxation Office ruling a 10-year limit on the accumulation of funds.
 - Tax incentives to Indigenous business modes (based on forestry and film).
 - Tax reform for sole traders and joint venture investments.
9. Fundamental change in property rights
- Indigenous Australians must have the right to negotiate their property rights, and there must be a commitment by government in this area.
 - Need to form a group of experts to look at how best to progress this. Totally new thinking by good people is required. There are good models in Canada, where the Indigenous people own the resources as well as land.
 - Indigenous people must have the right to own their property and the resources on that land. They need recognition of prior ownership across Australia, not just in remote areas. Recognition of commercial rights is needed as well—for example, fresh water, surface water, ground water, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and carbon credits and trading.

Low-cost, no-cost option

- Ensure that government contracts are reformed to ensure that Indigenous ‘participation’ in such contracts is compulsory and the contracts have ‘teeth’—for example, employment of or tendering to Indigenous organisations.



A MESSAGE SENT TO THE SUMMIT

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara community members sent the following message to the summit:

- Listen to the people.
- Aboriginal leadership occurs on many levels.
- Train good-hearted people and local people.
- Community-controlled organisations and resources.
- Recognise the importance of arts centres for health, education.
- CDEP is important to us.