Webinar: Closing the Gap 2025 Annual Data Compilation Report and July Dashboard updates

22 August 2025

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Introduction

We might get started. We've got a little over 200 odd people that have now joined us, which is great. And as I mentioned earlier, great that people are showing interest in the Dashboard updates and what the data is showing us in terms of progress, etcetera.

So we might get kicked off and I'm sure that others will join us along the way.

So thank you very much for joining this is this afternoon. My name's Selwyn Button, I'm Productivity Commissioner and presenting with me today will be Assistant Commissioner Sarah Leary, and we'll also have Andrew McDonald and Amanda Meric walk us through some of the Dashboard updates as we go along through the presentation as well.

So I will start by acknowledging Country and acknowledge that today I'm in Canberra on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people and pay respects to that custodianship and connection to this Country and for looking after this Country for thousands of years and would like to acknowledge Country where everyone is located around the place wherever you're dialling in from. We would like to pay respects to those Traditional Owners and Country in those places as well.

So today's session – before we get into the actual presentation, I'll outline just a couple of quick housekeeping pieces. The way that we'll do the presentation today is that we've got a bunch of slides that we'll get through and we've got the demonstration of the dashboard and some of the updates, so we can do a bit of a data demo as well.

Annual Data Compilation Report and July Dashboard updates

So what we want to talk through today again is give a quick brief overview of our role in the Productivity Commission and certainly what we undertake as part of our – of the public reporting and accountability component of the National Closing the Gap Agreement, talk a little bit about that 2025 Annual Data Compilation Reports in the July Dashboard updates give some progress, talk about some of the contextual information that's gone into the dashboard and certainly additional work that we've been doing at the Productivity Commission around underlying some of those pieces that go into explaining what goes into the data itself and some of the other things that we think are necessary to consider in terms of the analysis of targets. There'll be a bit of a demonstration, as I mentioned, Andrew and Amanda will walk us through a bit of a demo and then we'll talk about some of the future considerations.

But if we start with our role and certainly just a quick reminder, our role in the National Agreement as spelled out in Section 9, the Public Accountability Framework and there are a couple of components that sit in there specifically for the Productivity Commission. One is the update of the dashboard, which we will talk through and demonstrate some of the changes today, the second part of that process is then the Annual Data Compilation Report, which is released in July of each

year based upon progress and based upon updates where indicators have been updated. As you would appreciate, not all indicators are updated annually.

But where we do have updates on a regular basis, we'll make sure that those things go into the ADCR (Annual Data Compilation Report) each year, and then the third important element of our work is then the Productivity Commission review. So the three-year review that's already baked into the Agreement, the last review report as people would know, it was released in in February 2024 and we're now working towards the commencement of – working towards commencing our next review process to start in early 2026. So which would then look at ensuring that a report in terms of timeliness, that there's a report that comes out in 2027 to meet the time frame of the three-year review.

And now I'll hand over to Sarah to run through some of the some of the updates.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you Sel. I will be stepping you through some of the things that you'll see in our latest publications and updates just now.

And thanks for listening along. We look forward to fielding your questions at the end.

Well, look, understanding the diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia require so much more than just data alone, and our approach to monitoring progress against the national agreement is certainly evolving at the Productivity Commission. We would like to thank everyone who has guided this journey so far, either through their feedback or engagement with the Commission and our products. We know they're among the most highly read publications in the Productivity Commission's portfolio.

Okay, so looking at this year's annual data compilation report, it is the second year that we've combined the release of this annual report alongside a release of the Closing the Gap dashboard in this year's ADCR, we have continued the themes that were introduced in 2024 and we've also transitioned our artwork to the second piece in that series. We'd really like to acknowledge and thank the terrific and talented contributions of Lani Bolzan, who is contributed artwork for this year's publication.

In this year's release, we've also taken great care to present accurate and strengths-based reporting. You will see as well in the report that was released the end of July that we're reporting on progress towards the targets, but there's also analysis and information for over 40 supporting indicators this year. This expanded contextual information helps us present a picture that is more than just the target headlines.

The nine theme summaries, or snapshots of themes in the report, particularly in Section 2, bring together some of the key insights or analysis within each theme. In this year's report, you will also find details on State and Territory progress.

We know that while formal targets have not been agreed for each State and Territory, we've included a summary of state and territory progress for each outcome area in the body of the report. This is also in section two this year. We've also included a summary table in the appendix and a glossary to explain some of the key concepts discussed in our reporting.

The update on Closing the Gap reviews includes a summary of key findings and core themes from the inaugural Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led-review of the National Agreement of Closing the Gap that culminated this year. Under priority reform milestones, the report also notes that the Tamworth Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (TACCO) and the Tamworth Regional Council have formalised a historic Mara Ngali partnership, which they did in May this year. The reason this is included in the report is it's the first time in Australia that a local council and an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation have signed a formal partnership agreement together under Closing the Gap.

Now, this year's ADCR does include a new feature that we'd like to highlight now. It presents some detail on the data landscape and it acknowledges that it is crucial to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about their data. This year, Doctor Scott Avery has shared his expert perspective on population statistics reported on the Closing the Gap dashboard and in the ADCR.

Dr Avery is a descendant of the Worimi people of the Port Stephens and Great Lakes Region of NSW. He is also the professor of Indigenous Disability Health and wellbeing at the School of Public Health at the University of Technology in Sydney. His article in this year's release emphasises how the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be told through the respectful use of their data.

The article explores Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives of their representation in data sets over time, amid changing social contexts. It provides greater understanding the factors that influence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population data over time.

And it connects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, histories and storytelling. We'd like to pause by expressing our sincere gratitude to Doctor Avery for his contribution. In the spirit of his article. We would also like to acknowledge all people who have contributed to the stories that you see and read throughout the Closing the Gap Information repository as well as those who have chosen not to identify but whose stories remain just as important.

Now looking at the July dashboard release, it's certainly been a busy year. With the July update, we've added another historical and ongoing context piece, which we'll cover later in the presentation. Some of you might also recall that at the start of the agreement, all of the population-based targets and indicators were calculated using the ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2016 population estimates. In March this year, we commenced the transition from those 2016 based population rates to the more currently available 2021 rates.

In this year's July release this transition has now been completed with the revised population rates for Target 3 preschool enrolment. Also in the July update, we've included a new year of data for two targets, Target 3 (early childhood education) and Target 4 (children developmentally on track). This means that there is a new assessment of progress for both targets, which we'll talk about a little bit later as a team.

However, we do note that this is only the second time since the national agreement began that we've been able to update the assessment of progress under Target 4. Also in this year's July release, you'll see that we've added 12 new supporting indicators, taking the total to 16 new indicators covered in this year's ADCR. We've also added disaggregated data for Target 17 (digital inclusion).

As I said, it's been a really busy year for the team. Over to you, Sel.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Thanks, Sarah.

And now if we go to progress against some of the targets themselves and in the latest report in the latest update, there is an update of 15 of the 19 targets.

And if we then look at the fifteen socio-economic targets with the data available, what we're seeing is that these four targets that show good improvement and are on track. Six targets are showing improvement but not on track. One that's no change from the baseline. Unfortunately, four that are worsening and still four that can't be assessed.

So there is a mixed bag in terms of the overall progress, but we can certainly go into a little bit more detail in the next few slides about what that then looks like across the themes.

And so the way that we've broken them down and what you'll see on the dashboard is them, it is put into themes and we think about the theme of health well being and development which talks about life expectancy and healthy birthweights for Indigenous babies.

So what we are seeing is improvement there and the change certainly in the health well being and development theme has been for healthy birthweights that in the last update healthy birth weights were good and showing good improvement on track to make the target. Unfortunately they've slipped back to the space, whilst there's still improvement, it's not showing enough improvement to demonstrate it's on track to meet the target by the end of the agreement. Life expectancies improvement, but not on track to meet the target.

And then when we think about targets, Targets 4 and 14, as Sarah mentioned, children who are development on track, so using the AEDC (the Australian Early Development Census), so using that as the marker to determine developmental progress and that is showing that we're worsening and we're seeing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childhood children across the country who are. In one or more domains that's worsening, and certainly then what we think about Target 14 in terms of suicide rates, we are unfortunately seeing that go in the wrong direction and we do know it goes well against the trend of the rest of the population in the country where suicide rates for the mainstream population have stagnated over the last few years, but the Indigenous suicide rates and deaths in that space are going backwards.

In the theme of families in kin, again, we are seeing a worsening target in respective numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids in out of home care, the target in looking at family violence, we still have no new measures in space line, but what we do know in that space is that when we think about some of those supporting indicators, the supporting indicators that we do use do contribute to give us an understanding of what needs to happen or the things that are required in that space, and some supporting indicators, I guess that we use to give you a bit of an indication of the types of data and that go into and then thinking about what are some of the responses that are required. So we do look at measuring things like hospitalisation rates for domestic and family violence, for both women as well as children. So it's getting an under broader understanding of those sorts of things to determine what's necessary in the space of family violence.

We look at education and training domain and we are seeing some again improvement in terms of numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids who are attending school or enrolled in preschool in the first full year before schooling.

But again, if we think about the direct correlation with the health, well being and development domain and those children who are developmentally not on track and across the number of. Domains, we've got to then think about ensuring that whilst we're getting more kids to school, what are we doing in terms of the response it's required to ensure that they're getting the quality service and quality education and care that's needed to ensure that we're addressing the vulnerabilities that exist at that earliest possible time.

The education space, then, certainly looking at things like year 12 attainment and equivalence and looking at further education and training and those that are engaged in employment and education, those things are showing improvement. Certainly not on track to where we want them to be, but we're still continuing to see some green shoots in this in the sense of what that looks like across the board.

Then if we go into the other themes in terms of housing, so at the moment what we're seeing in terms of overcrowded housing is that we are seeing is improvement. Certainly not on track but improvements across the board. There's still no measure that's available for us in relation to looking at infrastructure and critical infrastructure in remote areas for connecting to housing in terms of water infrastructure, etcetera – so waste and sewage, so those sorts of things. We still have no measure, which is why at Target 8 – Target 9. sorry, sits the way it does.

Economic participation, so we're seeing continued increases in the numbers of people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employment rates.

The unfortunate one in the justice theme, again, we talked about incarceration rates, those continue to worsen and certainly when we think about incarceration rates and what does that look like in terms of supporting indicators.

We do know, using the data to focus on the supporting indicators and where we're seeing those rates worsen, what we are also seeing is increase in things like (which give us an indication of progress), we are seeing an increase in the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are coming into contact with the police and interactions and then at rest with the police.

We're also seeing an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are incarcerated on remand who are unsentenced. And that certainly is a large proportion in the juvenile justice rates and there's a large proportion of young people who are in youth detention, who are unsentenced.

So it's getting an understanding of the full picture that feeds into those broader targets is what we can do through the through the entire process and the work that happens in the dashboard to make sure at least it provides some contextual information to think about when determining what the relevant interventions are.

As mentioned, digital inclusion. We haven't had assessment against progress since the first, since we've had the target itself and where we do see great good progress across the boards in relation to what's happening in the in the Native Title space and certainly in the conversations that exist between traditional owners and state and territory governments where land hand backs are occurring. So the rights and interest to land and sea and water rights, those things are increasing and showing good improvement to be on track.

And again, the Languages survey is something that still we're we don't have any data since the baseline to determine progress around what's the culture and language and access to language.

If you think then about the overall improvement and whilst we can give an indication to show where targets are improving across jurisdictions or worsening or there's no change, the targets that are sitting on the dashboard themselves are national targets. We don't set states and territory targets. But certainly it is something that state and territories then think about in their own jurisdictional implementation plans to determine is there a need to focus on what that looks like.

But certainly what we do do as part of our process is provide a snapshot through this through this table that gives an indication of showing what performance looks like across states and territories for them to start to consider – to have some consideration about where they need to pay attention to.

And what I might do, and certainly if we look at some of the indicators and where we can see continued worsening targets, they're the sorts of things that we want to make sure, at least we're putting a bit of a spotlight on and having direct discussions with states and territories. But certainly paying attention to in a way that gives some context to what's going on in those spaces and what I will do. Because as you can see, some of those things are certainly continuing to worsen.

What I will do is to hand to Sarah and then talk through, I guess what that looks like. Certainly the adults in prison – where those areas are (where we're seeing, I guess) the issues around worsening targets.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Thanks Selwyn. And for those online, we are aware that the following information may be sensitive for those of us who have had family or community members impacted by the justice system.

So please do take a moment if you need and return to us when it feels ready. When you feel ready.

So here we would like to talk a little bit about what we're seeing in incarceration and out of home care, both nationally and across all jurisdictions. All of the states and territories continue to show worsening outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in youth justice, adult imprisonment, all out of home care. This is an alarming trend and it's one that we've seen for successive years.

Recent changes to the minimum age of criminal responsibility in some jurisdictions may also perpetuate this trend. The outcomes that Sel has just been sharing with you now show us that far more effort is needed from all levels of government to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Now, as we've mentioned earlier, the headline results for the targets are only part of the story. Some of you may have heard of the tyranny of the aggregate. This is because progress towards the targets under the agreement are reported at a national level, which obscures the different experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in different regions and within specific communities. The local experience can look diametrically different to progress or priorities at the national level.

This is why the dashboard and the ADCR provide breakdowns of the data. Or disaggregations, which can provide more insights into the outcomes and experiences in different regions and population groups, highlighting areas of progress and where greater effort is needed.

So beyond the headline targets, we are also updating our supporting indicators. The data outlined in this presentation today is actually a small portion of the indicators available on the dashboard and analysed in the ADCR. The Productivity Commission works with parties to the national agreement to specify and develop the supporting indicators named in the agreement, expanding the range of indicators that we report on each year. We currently have 54 of 164 indicators outlined in the agreement available for you to analyse and review on the dashboard. We have introduced 16 supporting indicators to the dashboard in 2025 as well as the ADCR that we highlighted earlier in the presentation.

And as the mix of drivers and contextual information expands, greater information for you – the greater information is available for you and your communities, to understand the factors that underpin each of the targets. It's here where I'll now invite my colleagues Andrew and Amanda to demonstrate how to access some of this data and some of these stories within the information repository.

Thank you, team.

Andrew McDonald

So thank you. Yes, we just thought we'd take the opportunity to present some of the information and details that's available on the dashboard for you to do your own research. As you come in, you'll arrive usually at the Information Repository homepage. From there you can navigate to the dashboard for the latest available data or the annual data compilation report where you see the update each year and the latest one just come out. Giving that descriptive analysis of the data that's available on the dashboard.

Today we'll just show a couple of the outcome areas where we have updated data and some of the analysis that you can do.

And I'll hand over to Amanda to talk at moment about what we're seeing in Outcome Area 3.

Amanda Meric

Thanks Andrew. Nationally, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in year before full-time schooling early childhood education is increasing, and the target of 95% is on track to be met.

And if you as you can see in 2024, 94.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the year before full time schooling cohort were enrolled in a preschool programme, and you can also say that it's higher than the baseline year of 2016, when 61.3% were enrolled in a preschool programme.

Now beyond the national target, we do know that outcomes are diverse amongst various populations and they have improved and that enrolments have improved amongst almost all jurisdictions.

And as Sel mentioned, while there are currently no state and territory targets, progress made in each state and territory does contribute to the national outcomes and you can see that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program has increased across every jurisdiction from 2016 to 2024, except in the Northern Territory.

Now there are supporting indicators that also provide a fuller picture of the story to be told. And for here we have some context around early childhood education services, access availability and governance. And you can find those as you can see there on the left-hand side under the target information as well.

So indicator 3A can help us interpret the intensity of participation when attending preschool. And 3B will tell us about service providers, but let's dive into to 3A.

So Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have spent more hours in preschool. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program who are attending for 15 hours or more has increased since 2016. And nationally in 2024, you can see that the portion was 72.3%.

So now we'll move to Indicator 3B, which tells us more about the number of service providers and their governance arrangements. And you can see that the number of community controlled early services has continued to grow. And it's increased year on year since 2016.

In 2024, there were a 107 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled early years services and for Victoria and the ACT that is 100% of integrated early year services were community controlled.

Now I'll pass over to Andrew who will talk to you about outcome 4.

Andrew McDonald

Thank you, Amanda.

And if I just navigate to outcome 4, we can see an interesting story is highlighted by Selwyn. While we've seen an increase in the enrolment in children preschool. The proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track against the five domains measured in the Australian Early Development Census has not shown improvement since the baseline year (at 35.1% in 2018). And has in fact declined to 33.8% in 2024.

And we can say again that there's differences across the states and territories with it's been a worsening in jurisdictions such as NSW, WA, Tasmania, ACT, NT, but improvements in. Queensland and Victoria, while the trend for South Australia shows no change since the baseline year.

As we've said, outcomes vary within the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander population. You can see that boys are less likely to be on track than girls. This is a pattern common across jurisdictions and also similarly to the non-Indigenous population. You can also see nationally that the children assessed as developmentally on track tends to decline by remoteness, so while close to 40% of developmentally on track in major cities, it declines as you get into more remote areas and only 16.5% in very remote areas. Again, this is a similar pattern we see is if you go across jurisdictions.

Similarly, if we look at outcomes by socio-economic disadvantage and areas, children living in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia tend to have a, or overall, have a lower rate of being on track against the five domains compared to children living in the least disadvantaged areas of Australia.

Also available within the AEDC is data on disability status. While we can't, or the AEDC doesn't measure, whether or not children are on track for children with disability, we do get a measure of how many children are commencing school with the disability or with the special needs status. And

we can see that that is increasing both with the special needs status and also where the teacher has assessed that further assessment is required. So important context for understanding the needs of children commencing school.

Thank-you. With that I'll hand back to Selwyn.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

OK. Thanks Andrew.

And so future considerations, I guess for us and the work that we're doing at the Productivity Commission and the types of things and this may go to the answering some of the questions that I've had a quick look at in the Q&A function at the moment, so there is work to look at the ongoing reporting and what that looks like in terms of building on the information that already exists in the in the repository. As we do know, there's no data to assess progress against the priority reforms. Although we do know that there has been some work that's going on with NIAA (National Indigenous Australians Agency) and they've they have commissioned and started to do a piece of work for them to then start to define what that might look like in really starting to measure priority reforms, we do also do know that there's work that's occurring individually inside agencies to focus on transformations through PR3 (Priority Reform 3) to get a better understanding of what's actually happening, and certainly some of the work that we're doing in the Productivity Commission is focusing on building some case studies around PR3, to then demonstrate what that might look like for many agencies across the country as well.

We still don't have – there's no assessment for the four of the targets itself. Many of the targets have already been assessed once and that's better because as we know, the instruments that are used to determine targets aren't used on a on a frequent basis or haven't been used for a while. So the Dashboard also reports on 54 of the 164 supporting indicators. So you will see continual work that goes into supporting indicators to create that contextual information.

We do have 150 data development items that are ongoing and certainly for the 2026 reporting process targets and supporting indicators will make up a lot of the annual data that we can demonstrate not only is it just about the annual improvement, but then also getting an understanding of some of those supporting factors that go into it. As we've mentioned and talked about what are some of the things that we can find out in relation to incarceration rates around contact with police, around looking at remand rates and numbers of people that are in prison that are unsentenced, looking at juvenile detention (how many young people are in juvenile detention that are still awaiting sentence?). So it's getting an understanding of that picture to then provide advice around some change.

The outcomes the reported also highlight the need for implementation of the overall agreement and certainly the independent review that's been undertaken recently by the Jumbunna Institute had 12 key findings and nine recommendations and certainly their focus was not too dissimilar from some of the work that came out of the PC (Productivity Commission) review of 2024.

As I mentioned, we have started some work on looking at releasing some case studies around transformative action aligned with PR3, which is transformation inside government agencies and so we'll start to release those. The hope is that we can start to go live to release some of those case studies in September. Our Chair Danielle Wood has interviewed a couple of secretaries to get

an understanding of the transformation journey and what that looks like inside their own agency. So we'll start to use those to then inform some change in practise.

And certainly the terms of reference for the second PC review, which is expected to commence in early 2026, are currently being discussed and amended across – between both the NIAA and Treasury and certainly having those sort of conversations. So at least the work is occurring, the work commencing to get to a point where we can start our next review process in early 2026.

And so that brings us to the end of the of the today's presentation. Certainly thank you for dialling in and being a part of the process with us. What I will do is before we finish up, obviously we can then go to go to some of the questions and make sure at least we can answer those things along the way as well.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Q&A segment

There's a question for Rowena in relation to the linkage between the Closing the Gap data and the RoGS (Report on Government Services) data.

And yes, obviously because the RoGS team and the CtG data team, we're all part of the one organisation there, there is some linkages that we, there are some linkages we undertake to make sure at least there's a there's a reflection of what is happening in the RoGS space and how we can ensure that that information is part of the process.

But I might even hand to Andrew to give a bit of a broader understanding of exactly how we how we do that in the background as well.

Andrew McDonald

Certainly yes. Where we report the same data or indicators, we work very closely to ensure that we have consistency there. I think Rowena may also be pointing to the fact that that there's data within the Report On Government Services that is important for understanding service – government service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. They're not, that's not always reported on Closing the Gap, but it remains an important part of understanding the entire landscape of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people and progress and their relationship with government. I think there's more, as always, we can do to bring some of this information together for people, but we're certainly conscious of that fact and we'll work and support people to make that where it's not clear on the on the sites.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Thanks, Andrew.

And while you've got the floor, then, we might continue the other question, that's the next question that's in the relation to the difference between the close the gap reporting and the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander health performance framework.

And to put it simply, I guess the health performance framework, from my perspective, which is developed through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), it's been around for a while, but it's certainly there is a there is a the difference is the frameworks existed and the framework captures a much broader set of indicators that the AIHW (Australian Institute of Health

and Welfare) reports on a regular basis. But also we do have the CtG reporting which is attached to the national agreement and so I'll let you expand on that one a little bit as well.

Andrew McDonald

Thanks, Sel.

And to be honest, I think you've hit the nail on the head to some extent. There are areas of overlap between the two frameworks because, obviously, the Health performance framework does cover a broad range of issues, not just directly health measures, but socio-economic factors that influence and impact health outcomes. So there'll be, or there is, a number of indicators that you can see report on both the Closing the Gap and the health performance framework. They're separate exercises. We're very much responding to what's in the national agreement on Closing the Gap, but we do work with their colleagues at Health and Australia Institute of Health and Welfare to ensure that we've got some consistency in our approaches and reporting.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

The next -- sorry, Sarah, did you want to add as well?

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Yeah, look, I'm. I'm actually happy to take the question from I think it's Mars Banu around the PR3, if that's OK with yourself.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Yeah.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Lovely. We're really pleased to be in the warm-up phase of our next review of the national agreement. We're hoping that that review will kick off early next year.

For the question in focus here is how is PR3 coming along inside the NSW government? As part of our next review, we will be looking at the priority reforms and assessing government's performance just as we did in our last review that was published in February last year. Our research team have also been very busy this year preparing case studies of pockets of good progress and good practise at the jurisdictional and federal level with in honouring the priority reform. We are pleased that one of those cases is shaping up to be a NSW story, so please do look out in late September for more publications from the Productivity Commission in this space.

Thanks for the question. Back to you, Sel.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

No worries. Thanks, Sarah.

Continuing on the list, there was one from another one from Rowena in relation to areas where there is no assessment and no data available. Just to give it an indication of what's happening in that space.

Is that there has been a data policy partnership that's been pulled together, which is being Co led by ABS and the community. There is a community control organisation that is also supporting that I think. It's –

Andrew McDonald

NSW CAPO (NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations).

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

I thought it was NSW CAPO, but yeah, thank you Andrew.

So all the data, all policy partnerships are Co-chaired by a government entity and one of the coalition of peaks members and the data Policy partnership is being Co led by ABS and NSW CAPO. And they have started conversations and discussions about focusing on data development items and where there are data gaps so that we should see more happening in that space certainly throughout the year and early until the into next year because we've now pulled together the data policy partnership to focus on that work.

There's a question in relation to modelling around minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 years in states and territories and investing in the community led health First justice reinvestment programmes and the impact this would make.

Great idea, Kate. It isn't something that that we're doing at this point. But certainly it is – I think it would be something that would benefit to give an understanding of what that might look like if there was a way of looking at undertaking that sort of modelling to look at criminal responsibility, I know that there's been much conversation, and certainly my understanding is that the Standing committee of Attorney General's at a meeting I think it was last week that Minister McCarthy also went along to another conversation about this issue and about the incarceration rates.

So certainly some conversations that are already happening to focus on the increasing incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.

Here's one that I might hand to you, Andrew. The statistical significance considered when assessing progress against targets.

Andrew McDonald

Thanks, Selwyn. And I've just popped in a comment. Hopefully that comes up, but I've provided a link to the how to interpret the data page where there's a summary of what are assessments of progress and that there's a further link within that to the method for estimating assessments of progress.

The basic approach we take is to do a regression model to determine the slope the trend in progress and in part of that there is a test of statistical significance within the method, but without getting into the details today, if you want to get into the details of that please have a look at that site and if you have further questions please contact us.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Thanks Andrew.

When we'll see updated implementation plans released? They expired last year.

So our understanding is that implementation plans are something that is put on the table through PWG (Partnership Working Group) and Joint Council (the Joint Council on Closing the Gap) on a regular basis.

So and those have been up, many of them are actually been placed upon the website. There is a website that I think it's the coalition of peaks and NIAA host which is a website just for the agreement which contains the updated implementation plans.

So they – my understanding those things are referred to in terms of updates on a on a regular basis through both PWG and Joint Council.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Well, there's a great question here from Jocelyn actually say great minds. We might be able to do a total some of the options and platforms available.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Yeah.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Great. Jocelyn, there are some really useful tools that you can use to dig a little bit deeper at the local government level. I'm just looking at one at the moment, the data by region platform that the ABS, the Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes is one and you can search via local government area, local council and via Indigenous structures. There's also a terrific tool, Andrew, that you might like to share with Jocelyn at a later date. RIFIC (Regional Insights for Indigenous Communities) might be another platform that might be of interest.

Andrew McDonald

Yes.

And I've have provided a link to a page we've got on our site where we provide those direct links to both the Regional Insights for Indigenous Communities (RIFIC) and the ABS data by region. Both those have small area and, where they can, local government area data for some of the – for several of the targets we report on the dashboard, but happy again. Jocelyn, if you want to reach out, we can speak to you more about what might be available for Tamworth.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

And the next question there, Andrew, is around the use of SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) data and determining disadvantage.

Andrew McDonald

And yes, we use SEIFA – the index of disadvantage. There's four indexes, but that's the one we generally use.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Thank you. We've got a question in relation to robust, more robust data and cultural indicators and social emotional well being.

And certainly when we look at the, the land and sea target itself, that's certainly based on what happens in around native title claims. Through traditional owner groups and when what happens through the court process and certainly land handbacks from state territory governments in relation to the social emotional well being, there are additional indicators. If you go to Target 14 and have a look at what is in the additional contextual information. We do have things for hospitalisation, for

self harm, psychological distress though that we do capture data barriers to accessing experiences of racism. We do report on that data for social emotional wellbeing as well. So there are some more specific things that we do report on and it's about for us, it's actually using what we can in terms of publicly available data to determine what are the things that people should be paying attention to that contribute to those broader targets as well.

Rowena has got another question in there. We got lots of questions for us today. Rowena Dashboard only reporting on all the indicators, not just 54, could be one way to measure PR4 (Priority Reform 4).

So certainly I guess in the context of PR for one of the recommendations, to give you some context, one of the recommendations that came out of the 2024 Productivity Commission three-year review was a recommendation to government to establish a Bureau of Indigenous Data.

And the reason why that recommendation was in the report was for a couple of reasons. One is that we do that there needed to be a space where it was about ensuring that Indigenous data governance, Indigenous data sovereignty, that capability was built across both government and in the community. There was a place as a central repository of information, so that government data and community-based data could actually go to and be collated and analysed.

So those are the things that would be functions of the Bureau of Indigenous data. So certainly agree with your, I guess with the notion of, you're saying that it's there could be a focus on PR4, and yes, that's why the recommendation around the Bureau of Indigenous data was in the last report because there needs to be more action in relation to the sharing of information and data that happens across government.

Andrea, my apologies. I was just reading your question, important question, long question, but important and certainly and that's why we've focused as you would see as part of those additional information, additional contextual information, on Target 13, that looks at some of those things that are contributors towards getting a better understanding of what's happening in community about family violence. And as I mentioned, that's why we collect the data and this is certainly something that we capture through the RoGS process is capturing data on hospitalisation rates for family violence for both females and for children.

So those things give us a bit of an indication of exactly then what's happening in community in the absence of actually having a specific target for the Target 13. It's focusing on what is already publicly available that we can use to determine whether or not strategies are being put in place to focus on ensuring that we're actually addressing these sorts of things in community as well.

And so it is the, and as I mentioned, the data, the data policy partnership is one of their tasks is to focus on the areas where there is a lack of data, a lack of information and certainly what's the role that they play in ensuring that we can actually capture or set specific targets and, sort of, capture information that feeds into the process to get a better indicate indication for us about how we're tracking as well.

Andrew McDonald

I'm just putting into the chat as well, Selwyn, we have included data on the dashboard on the rate of women seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services, which may capture some of the impacts that Andrea has referred to in her question.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Excellent. Thank you. Ted's question in relation to how do we quantify cultural health now? Is this being measured?

It's a good question. And again, we use a range of other sources. Whilst it's not something that we specifically capture and report on, we use a range of other sources to then use and interpret in space.

As part of the, and again it's really about the contextual information that we use across a range of the targets to determine what are some of the factors that go into it and certainly looking at things like people's experience of racism and that in terms of accessing services, give us an indication of what are the areas that we should be focusing on.

Certainly as a specific measure for cultural health, it is not something that we that we actually collect and measure. To answer your question specifically anyway.

Craig had a question about data based on wealth upon death and you know, range of disaggregations across age, First Nations, gender, etcetera. Certainly not something we capture, Andrew. Any anything you want to add?

Or anything you can add. It's not something that we capture in the targets themselves.

Andrew McDonald

No, it's the supporting indicators to be developed around income, which we currently don't have in self managed business, but not wealth specifically.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Maxine had a question in relation to Children's Health checks and whether or not we then capture more specific information around dental, ear health, etcetera. What we do – what is part of the process for us, Maxine, is actually having a look at where health checks are occurring and what the what rates look like across the country.

I know the AIHW reports on this and produces an annual report that we then use to interpret and consider in our own deliberations about what is it the contextual information that we need to provide in terms of the advice that we give to governments as well. It's not something that we specifically report to go down to that level in focusing on some of the focusing on some of the things that have been identified in health assessments.

But it is certainly something that we do think about in in respect of giving a broader understanding of the importance of undertaking health assessments. So that has a process to then determine what are the necessary interventions or strategies that need to be put in place is something that we certainly keep an eye on.

And attachment 4, there's a question about attachment forward, Andrew.

And I think that was the state and territory breakdown or the state and territory arrows. That's not something that we, whilst we do it in in, in this and we put it into the, we put it into the slide deck, so the arrow showing the jurisdictional progress, it's not something we do – we make publicly available other than through this process.

Andrew McDonald

So that attachment is in the annual data compilation report, so that's available.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Yeah.

Andrew McDonald

Yeah, I don't – I'm not sure we've got further analysis that we can point Jane to on that one.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

OK. Yeah. Other than Jane on the dashboard itself, where you can actually click on ACT as a jurisdiction where ACT data is available against all of the targets to give you a bit of an indication of what ACT progress looks like and it's comparison then with the national trend. Hopefully that's giving you something.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

There's another great question from Rowena and I'm mindful, gentleman, that we have almost run to time for our session. But   Rowena has asked a really interesting question around, you know, instead of all this data being collected individually across different organisations, why don't we get everything to route through one portal? Rowena, under the auspices of the national agreement that is precisely what we at the PC has been tasked to do.

As you can imagine, building the Closing the Gap Information Repository is a big construction effort. We're about a third of the way there, and as Andrew and Sel have flagged, there are a number of supporting indicators that we will be building out gradually over time.

And then there's also a lovely question upfront around, you know, asking around, are there any standards Maydina asks when the government departments are allowed to claim they are achieving CtG outcomes when they are not directly reporting against them? Again, this is really important. This is a really important part of the PC's independent functions.

We all are aware that all departments and indeed jurisdictions will have their own reporting aspects for Closing the Gap outcomes in their patch. But it's really the annual data compilation report that we release each year and the regular updates, the dashboard that capture that kind of factual basis for fair outcomes nationally. So please do follow on our work as we both build out this incredible tool to its full maturity through to 2030.

Now for other questions, Selwyn, I'd be very comfortable supporting and fielding any further queries that come through from attendees who have attended this session, and Andrew, I know you've already been very generous in providing links. Are there any other questions in chat that you'd love to just touch base on quickly before we wrap up?

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Yeah.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Yeah. Look, there's, there's one in there that I that I think I might actually ask you to talk to Sarah, because certainly something that we've done some work on at the PCs around the use of data sovereignty principles in our work.

Sarah Leary (Assistant Commissioner)

Absolutely. We're just as committed to reviewing our own performance and keeping ourselves accountable for the work as we do in our national reviews. I think the Indigenous data sovereignty piece is something that we're very much on a journey with ourselves at the PC.

We're at – in the process of developing our mandatory reporting under the national Indigenous Australians Agency's governance of Indigenous data framework and we look forward to publishing that material once available to the Community later this year.

We also work very closely with the Coalition of Peaks and Joint Council to ensure that there is a cultural safety layer to the data that's presented on the dashboard and, as we highlighted earlier in this presentation, we've come a long way in our evolution as an organisation. And showing the story behind the data, the ongoing and historical context that sits behind so much of the work that we publish.

So please do continue following our work and keep an eye out for the PCs governance of Indigenous Data framework and implementation plan once available.

Selwyn Button (Commissioner)

Thanks, Sarah. We might wrap it up there and certainly those additional questions that have come in, what we will do is to make sure at least we can respond to them given that we've been out, we've got them in the chat function, so we can actually still respond to make sure that the information goes back to those that we haven't been able to get to today.

But certainly want to thank you everyone and appreciate those that have joined us this afternoon for the session. Really do appreciate the questions. The questions have been great.

And certainly want to make sure, at least, there's an ongoing conversation between Productivity Commission and those that are interested in the work that goes on through the whole Closing the Gap National agreement reporting process that we keep the dialogue going and certainly if there are suggestions and I know that there's been some commentary in relation to getting involved in supporting some of the work around additional information and contextual information that goes into our data would be very welcome that support and that helps with the process as well.

So look appreciate everyone's time today. Thank you for joining us. Thanks very much for to the team and Amanda and Andrew for the work that you guys do in preparing us for this and hopefully everyone has a nice weekend.

[END]