

Data Policy Partnership Communique

Preamble to the Data Policy Partnership Agreement to Implement

Our people carry the stories of our Ancestors. These stories hold more than sixty thousand years of knowledge: of the seasons, the stars, the movement of waters and winds, and the ways we live with each other and with Country. They tell us where we have been and guide us towards where we need to go.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, data is more than numbers or reports. It is our knowledge, our stories, and our aspirations for the future. Data is layered, interconnected, and intrinsically linked to every element of our lives and being. Yet governments have traditionally used our data to tell stories about us, stories that are not ours.

Through this Partnership, we will share our knowledge so governments can better understand how we see data, and how it connects to the needs of our communities. We will continue to tell our stories in ways that celebrate our strengths and empower our people to shape the path ahead.

At the heart of this work is our drive to uphold the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance. By placing our people at the centre of how data is governed, we ensure it becomes a foundation for truth-telling and better outcomes.

Together with our government agency partners, we will work to build what is needed to make this work real, so that data has a positive impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. In this Partnership, we will walk forward together, with trust and respect.



Members of the Data Policy Partnership on Kurna Country at Meeting One.

Meeting One Outcomes

The Data Policy Partnership (DPP) held its first meeting in Tarndanya (Adelaide) on October 16th, 2025.

Members were welcomed to Kurna Country by Bryce Cawte a proud Kurna and Ngarrindjeri man through his mother's side, and Wirangu, Kokatha, and Mirning through his father's.

Coalition of Peaks (Peaks) Co-Chair Sharif Deen and Australian Bureau of Statistics proxy Co-Chair Sybille McKeown opened the meeting by thanking members for attendance and their support in establishing the DPP. Members introduced themselves and shared their aspirations for the DPP and the experience and expertise they bring to the forum.

Agreement to Implement and Preamble

All DPP members agreed to and signed the Agreement to Implement and the inclusion of the preamble. The Agreement to Implement is the terms of reference for the Partnership agreed between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak and Independent representatives and every Australian Government. It is the establishing document for the DPP and will guide how the DPP will function and what matters it will work on.

To make sure that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lead the direction of the DPP, the Peaks and Independent members drafted a preamble (see above) to open the Agreement to Implement.

National data landscape

Government members provided an overview of the work to support Priority Reform Four already underway in their jurisdiction. The National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare joined for this item because of their critical roles in the Community Data Projects.

Discussion focused on the existing work and promising practice across government, and the challenges and opportunities that exist to progress Priority Reform Four and data sharing. There was an open and strong discussion about the internal obstacles for government agencies to navigate in implementing Priority Reform Four. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members spoke about the impact of this for community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations.

Members agreed to a standing agenda item on the Community Data Projects and how these reflect implementation of the Priority Reforms, particularly Priority Reform Four.

Work plan

The DPP discussed work planning and considerations for sequencing work. Members agreed to a process for prioritising and planning workstreams over the first 12 months of the DPP and in the four-year strategic plan. This discussion included the work priorities tasked to the DPP by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council); options for implementing recommendation 2.2 of the Productivity Commission Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and measuring outcomes of the Priority Reforms.

Non-voting members and observers

To focus on fully establishing itself and the critical work required on the 12 month work-plan the DPP decided not to accept any requests for observers or non-voting members within the first 12 months of operation. However, the DPP may invite other agencies, experts or stakeholders to observe or participate in a meeting or agenda item where there is a clear need.

Meeting two of the DPP will be scheduled for February 2026.



Data Policy Partnership ABS proxy Co-Chair Sybille McKeown and Peaks Co-Chair Sharif Deen signing the Agreement to Implement.