



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2022

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Closing the Gap

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.55 am): Today I table Queensland's 2022 Closing the Gap annual report and snapshot report.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Closing the Gap—Annual Report 2022 [2049](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Closing the Gap—Snapshot Report 2022 Edition [2050](#).

These reports outline Queensland's performance and outcomes against the four priority reforms and 17 socio-economic targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Palaszczuk government is committed to working hard to achieve these targets over 10 years. In addition to funding that supports achievement of the individual targets, we have committed an initial \$9.3 million over four years to support implementation of the agreement in Queensland.

I am pleased to report that two years into this new agreement we are on track to achieving four of the socio-economic targets including increasing the proportion of First Nations babies with a healthy birth weight to 91 per cent by 2031—we are seeing nine in 10 babies being born strong and healthy. We are on track to increasing the proportion of First Nations children enrolled in early childhood education to 95 per cent by 2025. Our current data tells us that 95.1 per cent of First Nations children are enrolled in early childhood education today. Our focus is maintaining and improving on this strong outcome. This result is actually higher than the mainstream population—which is very positive. We are on track to reducing the rate of First Nations young people between 10 and 17 in detention by at least 30 per cent by 2031. We are also on track to ensuring that First Nations people maintain their distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their lands and waters.

These on-track measures are promising because things such as good birth weights should mean healthier kids engaged in schooling, resulting in better health and social outcomes all the way into their adult lives. Queensland's annual report highlights the strong partnerships we have built with First Nations' organisations to effect change, but we must and we will do better because, while life expectancy has increased over time, we are not on track to meet the life expectancy target. We are not on track to increase the availability of appropriate, affordable housing, but we have established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, the peak body to work with Indigenous community housing organisations and councils on housing and homelessness. We are not on track to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in the adult criminal justice system. That is why we have established the First Nations Justice Office, and we have committed \$2.3 per annum ongoing to address over-representation in the criminal justice system.

Self-determination and hearing First Nations voices is at the heart of Queensland's Path to Treaty, Local Thriving Communities reform and our state's role in achieving the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Given the entrenched and intergenerational disadvantage experienced by First Nations people, we will not solve these issues overnight. As has always been understood,

closing the gap will take a focused effort over a generation, working toward the progressive realisation of the targets that have been set. Together these reforms being developed and delivered in partnership with First Nations Queenslanders will set the foundation for the substantive change we would all like to see.