

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership Engagement Criteria

The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECPP) welcomes requests for engagement from any government and non-government organisations that are developing policies or initiatives that will impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This relates to initiatives that impact all children and families in Australia and is not limited to work focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The below criteria are for use by governments, external stakeholders and organisations seeking the ECPP's input into other policies, strategies and processes. Requests for engagement will be considered accordingly to ensure that the ECPP has meaningful opportunities to influence key policy reform initiatives in line with its strategic agenda, goals and priorities. These criteria will support the ECPP to respond to reform opportunities in a way that is effective, impactful and makes best use of its time and resources.

The Criteria Explained

The opportunity should fall within the purpose, objectives and scope of the ECPP

An engagement opportunity must fall within the purpose, scope and objectives of the ECPP.

The ECPP primarily focuses on issues and actions that will deliver progress towards outcomes **2, 3, 4, 12 and 13** of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement):

- Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong
- Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years
- Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years
- Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not over-represented in the child protection system
- Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.

Consideration of the issues and actions that drive these outcomes extends to socio-economic drivers as well as actions and initiatives related to prevention and early intervention.

The ECPP's purpose, objectives, scope and membership are outlined in full in the [Agreement to Implement](#).

The opportunity should align with the Year 1 priorities adopted by the ECPP

While all opportunities that fall within the remit of the ECPP will be considered, higher priority will be given to engagement opportunities that align with the ECPP's current priorities.

The ECPP's agreed Year 1 priorities, for further development and consideration, are to:

1. commission research to develop funding model options for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) that deliver Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), including integrated early years services
2. increase the base entitlement to 30 hours per week of subsidised ECEC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–5
3. commission research and evidence development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led models of family support to prevent entry into out-of-home care
4. progress a cross-sector project to identify collaborative efforts required to break down siloes and address social determinants of tertiary systems intervention for children and families

5. establish a fully empowered and legislated National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner, and
6. oversee and require regular reports on progress to implement the outcomes and recommendations of the *Stronger ACCOs, Stronger Families* review commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

The opportunity should be developed and implemented in line with the National Agreement

Engagement with the ECPP does not preclude an organisation from having to develop its work in line with the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#). Engagement opportunities must demonstrate consideration of and alignment with the National Agreement, in particular genuine partnership and shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all stages of development and implementation. Engagement with the ECPP is not a replacement for genuine and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

The opportunity should hold potential for impact and influence reflective of the unique role of the ECPP and that necessitates the engagement of senior representatives and decision-makers

The ECPP is comprised of senior decision-makers and leaders from Commonwealth, state and territory governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities. The ECPP focuses on driving strategic reform and identifying influential and impactful opportunities to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

While the ECPP will consider all opportunities presented, preference will be given to opportunities that provide the most scope for impact and influence across early childhood, care and development. This approach is reflective of the unique role and the seniority of the ECPP's membership.

The opportunity should have a clear and defined opportunity for the ECPP to make a collective contribution

All ECPP decisions are made by consensus, including when the ECPP provides guidance, input or information as part of an engagement opportunity. Engagement opportunities must identify a clear 'ask' for the ECPP as a collective. Examples of a clear ask may include:

- a request to share the findings of research or projects commissioned by the ECPP
- seeking input from the ECPP that outlines agreed positions on key issues, and
- seeking the expertise of the ECPP on an opportunity, with influence in the design of a process or outcome.

ECPP membership is diverse and includes leaders from across government, non-government organisations and communities. The ECPP acknowledges that its members may participate in engagement and consultation opportunities in their individual, organisational and/or community capacity. However, participation in an individual, organisational or community capacity differs from engagement with the ECPP as a collective and should be reflected as such in any consultation reports.

The opportunity should allow sufficient time and information for collective discussion, decision-making and input

The ECPP's foundation of shared decision-making and collective input requires time and information for member discussion and agreement. Opportunities that do not provide sufficient time and information for this process and require urgent input or feedback may not be able to be considered by the ECPP.