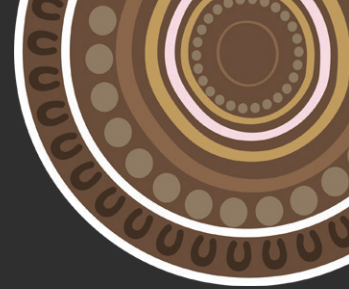


A Fair and Just Future for First Peoples: Social Justice Report 2025 Summary Overview



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

***A Fair and Just Future for First Peoples: Social Justice Report 2025 (the Report)* is the first Social Justice Report by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Katie Kiss, who commenced in her term in this role on 3 April 2024.**

Through its 'Blueprint for a fair and just future for First Peoples' and its 25 recommendations, the Report:

- Sets out a vision where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can fully and freely exercise and enjoy their human rights and where they are supported by systems that uphold self-determination, dignity and equality
- Provides a pathway for governments to move beyond rhetoric, to act with integrity, and to ensure the strength, courage and determination of First Peoples is met with structural reform and genuine accountability.

The Report's recommendations have been developed in response to voices heard through the *Informing the Agenda* project throughout which the Commissioner held engagements with First Peoples communities across Australia.

What we know

- First Peoples must be able to participate fully and freely in decisions that affect them
- Indigenous-led solutions work – governments must follow their lead
- A rights-based approach is the pathway to real change
- Systemic accountability is urgently needed
- Rebuilding relationships within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and between First Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians needs truth-telling and agreement making
- Access to justice remains unequal and continues to drive disadvantage
- Land justice is central to wellbeing, identity, culture and the everyday enjoyment of rights

What the report calls for

- Independent national mechanisms for participation, truth-telling and agreement-making.
- A national Human Rights Act and full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and National Anti-Racism Framework.
- Stronger accountability structures, including: independent oversight and accountability mechanisms for Closing the Gap (CTG) targets and deaths in custody; transparent data; and an urgent shift to long-term needs-based funding.
- Protection and expansion of community-led initiatives and culturally safe services.
- Criminal justice reforms including raising the age of criminal responsibility, banning solitary confinement for children, and giving detainees access to Medicare and PBS.
- Comprehensive land justice reform in partnership with First Peoples and aligned with international human rights standards.

The Blueprint and Recommendations

- **A fair and just future for First Peoples**
(Chapter 2, Recommendation 1)
- **Increasing First People's participation**
(Chapter 3, Recommendations 2-6)
- **Promoting the full enjoyment of rights by First Peoples**
(Chapter 4, Recommendations 7-8)
- **Fostering systemic integrity and accountability**
(Chapter 5, Recommendations 9-15)
- **Rebuilding the village**
(Chapter 6 – Recommendation 16)
- **Assuring access to justice**
(Chapters 7 & 8, Recommendations 17-25)

See the full Blueprint on page 158 of the Report.

Human rights framework as a pathway to change

Australia's lack of a national human rights framework or a national human rights act has left it an outlier among Western liberal democracies. The National Anti-Racism Framework (NARF) outlines legislative reform and accountability measures for addressing racism, including truth-telling for First Nations peoples and embedding their rights to self-determination. Following this framework, the Report calls for improved accountability structures and mechanisms for participation, truth-telling and agreement making.

There is a critical need for both a national Human Rights Act and the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which was adopted by Australia in 2009. The UNDRIP does not give rise to any new or 'additional' rights for Indigenous peoples. Rather, it provides guidance to governments, businesses and the public to understand how the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination is intrinsically linked to rights to cultural maintenance and revitalisation, and other universal rights like health, education and housing.

Participation rights for First Peoples benefits everyone

Enabling and facilitating the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is not only beneficial to First Peoples and their communities locally. In ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable communities, all Australians have their participation rights further understood, respected and protected. All Australians, and indeed all citizens of the world, have a vested interest in supporting the fullest participation of Indigenous peoples in our civil societies.

A fair and just future for First Peoples in Australia

A fair and just future for First Peoples in Australia is possible. The evidence in this Report shows the innovation, strengths, and success of solutions created by First Peoples to address problems affecting their communities. Governments must demonstrate meaningful action through collaborating with First Peoples, and to uphold the dignity, courage, and determination of First Peoples with structural reform, genuine accountability, and integrity.



Where can I find more information?

The Social Justice Report 2025 can be found on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website or scan this QR code.

