

9 July 2026

## National Roundtable Calls for Urgent Action on Murdered and Disappeared Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and Children

On 11 June, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women leaders, people with lived experience, government representatives, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, advocates and practitioners came together and called for urgent and coordinated action to address the national human rights crisis of murdered and disappeared Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in Australia. They gathered for a national roundtable, initiated by Dr Hannah McGlade, and hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, at Government House.

The roundtable was co-convened by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Katie Kiss, and Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin. Participants discussed the profound impact of violence, systemic racism, institutional failures and unequal access to justice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Katie Kiss said this issue is a national human rights crisis and called on governments to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“This crisis is the result of intersecting forms of violence, systemic racism, and longstanding institutional failures. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, families and communities have been calling for change for decades. Their voices, leadership and solutions must be at the centre of the national response.

It is heartbreaking to hear stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, families and communities who have fought for truth, justice and accountability for loved ones who were murdered, disappeared or died in unresolved circumstances”, said Commissioner Kiss.

The Seven Sisters Project was a key catalyst for the meeting and centres on advocacy through a series of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) cases concerning Aboriginal women and their families. The project highlights the impacts of wrongful incarceration, homicide, and inadequate or discriminatory justice system responses, as well as broader systemic and societal failures. Participants discussed these issues, as well as expressed deep concerns that many recommendations from previous inquiries and reviews remain unimplemented or only partially implemented. This is despite decades of evidence identifying systemic failures across policing, justice, child protection, housing, health and social service systems.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner Micaela Cronin said governments need to rise to the scale and seriousness of the crisis.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children deserve to live safely, with dignity, and free from violence. Families and communities have carried the burden of truth-telling and advocacy for far too long. The solutions are known, what is needed now is sustained national leadership, accountability, and action.

While domestic and family violence is a significant factor in many cases, the crisis includes deaths and disappearances linked to racism, exploitation, institutional neglect, child removal policies, homelessness, incarceration, unsafe service responses, and failures in investigations.

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“Everyone at the roundtable agreed on the need for a dedicated national response grounded in human rights, self-determination, cultural safety and accountability”, said Commissioner Cronin.

Urgent calls to action emerged from the roundtable, including that:

- National Cabinet provide an update on the implementation of recommendations of the 2024 Senate Committee Inquiry on the Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children.
- Murdered and Missing (Disappeared) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and Children is a government priority, addressed through a Department of Social Services audit of inquiry recommendations and by all states and territories through national Ministerial Councils, including at their next Council meeting.
- National data collection and transparency is strengthened through the Data Policy Partnership in accordance with Priority Reform Four under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level.
- Culturally appropriate mechanisms of national remembrance and recognition are established by the Prime Minister’s Office and the Office for Women.

The roundtable considered the implementation of existing national strategies, including *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036*, launched in February this year, that participants recognised as important foundations for reform. They also agreed that the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and children cannot be understood or addressed solely through the lens of domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV).

Commissioners Kiss and Cronin noted the roundtable emphasised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children have the right to live free from violence, to be safe within their communities and institutions, and to have their lives valued equally.

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If you or someone you know is experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic, family or sexual violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732, chat online via [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au) or text 0458 737 732.

If you are concerned about your behaviour or use of violence, you can contact the Men’s Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or visit [www.ntv.org.au](http://www.ntv.org.au).

To speak to a 13YARN Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Crisis Supporter, call 13 92 76.