



Summary of Findings: 2025 SAPC Self-Assessment Survey



Government
of South Australia



SAACCON
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL
COMMUNITY CONTROLLED
ORGANISATION NETWORK



CLOSING THE GAP

Background and Response Rate

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The 2025 Self-Assessment which was developed with SAACCON, aims to meet the requirements of Clauses 2.13 and 2.14 of SAPC's Terms of Reference: *To self-assess the Committee and its operations against the Strong Partnership Elements of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap; and review the Risk Register.*

A questionnaire was sent to 14 members of the Committee, being seven SA Government and seven SAACCON representatives. Nine responses were received, which is a response rate of 64.3%. Due to the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, it is not possible to determine the response rates of the representative groups. SAPC will consider in the future alternative ways of conducting its self-assessment to encourage engagement from members.

Findings are summarised below.

1. A majority of respondents agree with the [2023 assessment](#) (refer to Attachment B1, pages 1 to 2) against the 15 strong partnership elements.
 - a. There is strong commitment to the partnership elements and shared decision making as evidenced by the Committees:
 - composition and Terms of Reference
 - acknowledgement and implementation of the partnership principles, and
 - collegiate and respectful way of operating since inception as well as the way it reaches decisions.
 - b. Agencies continue to develop appropriate partnerships to ensure compliance with partnership elements.

However, a minority of SAPC members believe that:

- c. Despite the efforts to address all 15 strong partnership elements, SAACCON is a representative body that relies on members for feedback and action which may mean not getting all the feedback needed such as from traditional owners but instead relying on member groups to provide a voice.
 - d. Focussed effort from SAPC could deliver improvement around aligning funding to community priorities and access to relevant data and information, noting also that the partnership is still in its infancy regarding ensuring equal access to relevant data.
2. The vast majority of respondents believed that some elements under Clause 32 and Clause 33 can be further strengthened. They propose the following strengthening actions for discussion:
 - a. Ensuring increased government funding to SAACCON translates to participation in Closing the Gap work, including increased access to independent policy advice.
 - b. Understanding and managing expectations of where joint engagement can occur including instances of government business that is controlled by Ministers/Cabinet.
 - c. Focussed effort from SAPC to provide leadership and advocacy across government to further improve alignment of funding to Aboriginal community priorities and access to relevant data and information.
 - d. Ensuring SAPC decision-making and processes translate through to the broader government.
 - e. Identifying how strong partnership elements interact with the operations and processes of government including Cabinet and legislation; and providing practical



examples of when these elements can be implemented including to what extent as well as when they may not be able to be implemented.

- f. Clearer presentation of options for decision-making with pros and cons for members to engage with.
- g. Ensuring the voice and input of diverse community groups such as elders and Traditional Owners can be obtained for example through MoU or agreement with statutory bodies.

- 3. The majority of respondents view legislation of the SA Partnership Agreement as unnecessary.
 - a. The Partnership agreement is already in place and working and does not require legislation to continue.
 - b. Non-legislative agreement provides flexibility allowing the agreement to be a living document.
 - c. The Independent Mechanism when operational would be more effective in holding government accountable.
 - d. The benefits of legislating are not clear (though could be discussed) and could distract SAPC from more important work including implementing the agreed reforms.
 - e. The agreement still provides legal protection as an agreement between the SA Government and SAACCON.

However, a minority of SAPC members believe that:

- f. Continuous monitoring is required as transformation occurs.

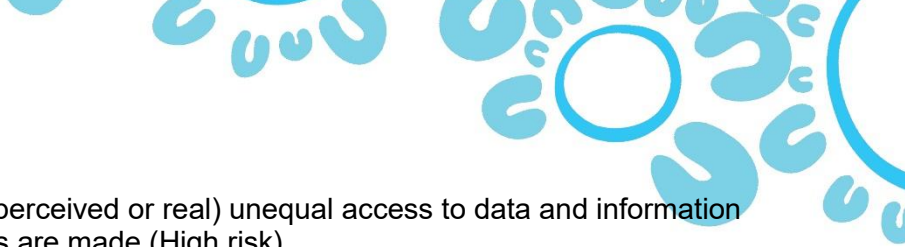
- 4. The majority of survey respondents agree the Partnership Agreement does not require amendment as:
 - a. The Partnership Agreement was recently updated.
 - b. SAPC is working toward meeting its current objectives including the Theory of Change, data and monitoring and shared decision-making processes at the level of specific reforms and initiatives.

However, a minority of SAPC members note that:

- c. There is scope for improvement – there seems to be limited progress so far in implementing the Priority Reforms, and there needs to be increased focus on getting results in place that will influence practices that encourage the use and implementation of the strong partnership elements within government and ACCOs.
- d. There should be regular road shows, either annually or bi-annually, to the community regarding the Partnership Agreement to ensure that it is up to date and still relevant.
- e. Consideration should be given to attaching SAPC to the Senior Leadership Council so Chief Executives across government and the SAACCON Senior Leadership Group could engage on all matters related to oversight, support, responsibility, implementation and monitoring of Closing the Gap.

- 5. Most survey respondents agree that the clauses in the SAPC Terms of Reference do not require amendment.
 - a. The current operation of SAPC is appropriate.
 - b. While there are some concerns around the need to monitor the number of sub-committees and meeting requirements, it appears to be working well.

- 6. The majority recognise the current partnership risks are adequate and appropriate.
 - a. In February 2024, SAPC identified and agreed to three partnership risks:

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- The potential for (perceived or real) unequal access to data and information on which decisions are made (High risk).
 - The perception of inability to speak without fear of reprisals or repercussions, with specific concern for the potential to impact contracting or funding arrangements (High risk).
 - Difficulty ensuring that funding consistently aligns with community priorities (Medium risk).
- b. However, a minority of SAPC members have suggested considering and mitigating against the following risks:
- The pace of change and level of impact not being evident to community and government. Risk of community losing faith and government not seeing SAPC as a major influence on what it does, becoming instead a stakeholder engagement or compliance exercise rather than a mechanism for change.
 - A deeper understanding that there is a new way of doing business, which requires government to engage in change rather than doing what they have always done
 - The ability to understand what the big competing options are for any decision, noting that even when a rigorous CTG-consistent process is followed to develop proposals, there will often be big choices with different benefits and risk profiles.
 - Ensuring change management is implemented in the government to ensure the strong partnership elements are implemented at all levels of government. Shared decision-making and co-design principles require government to engage in change rather than operating as usual, understanding that there is a new way of doing business.
 - Regarding the risk of difficulty ensuring that funding consistently aligns with community priorities, it is not just funding but also the partnering model design. This also must be consistent with the Priority Reforms.



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