



MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ

Brisbane
16 August 2023

The Council for the Australian Federation (CAF) met in Brisbane on 16 August 2023 and had a productive discussion about key issues and reforms to drive better outcomes across the Federation.

Health Reform

CAF discussed work underway in the lead up to the dedicated Health National Cabinet meeting in the fourth quarter of 2023, agreeing the focus must remain on long-term reform, coupled with concrete short-term actions to alleviate the pressures collectively facing all governments – from access to primary care, to hospital demand, ambulance ramping and workforce shortages.

All states and territories look forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth Government and key stakeholders to co-design patient-centred solutions across all aspects of the health system, including primary, secondary and tertiary care, and interfaces with other systems such as aged and disability care.

Housing

CAF welcomed the Commonwealth Government's focus on housing and acknowledged previous investments to support housing supply, including for social and affordable housing.

Premiers and Chief Ministers strongly supported the ambition of further measures to build more homes where people need them, including a shared national target for 1.2 million new homes. To ensure states and territories are well-placed to deliver at the pace that is needed, CAF agreed on the importance of early investment from the Commonwealth, with an emphasis on enabling supply through arrangements that recognise local needs and circumstances. CAF further agreed that performance payments must be achievable and timely.

Skills and Workforce Reform

CAF welcomed the Commonwealth Government's commitment to improve migration planning, particularly a new multi-year planning model and greater role for states and territories in determining migration settings which meet local needs.

However, all Premiers and Chief Ministers noted concern with the drop in state nominated visa allocations for 2023-24, and agreed there would be value in a mid-point review of these allocations to ensure a strong national skilled migration pipeline, noting this will be critical to deliver on Australia's housing and health reform goals.

CAF agreed to pursue further opportunities to work together with the Commonwealth Government on skilled migration reform, including through: revitalised State Migration Plans, with more flexibility to allocate places where they are needed and target occupations, skill sets and industries that meet local needs; reviewing red tape in skills and qualification recognition; and improving visa pathways for international students, including permanent migration pathways and greater collaboration between the Commonwealth and states and territories on higher education offerings.



Early Intervention for At Risk Young People

CAF noted the progress update on work underway in its priority area of early intervention for at risk young people.

Northern Territory Knife Crime Strategy

The Northern Territory discussed work underway in their jurisdiction to develop a strategy to address knife crime and highlighted the value in sharing successful practice across states and territories.