



NYOONGAR OUTREACH SERVICES

Department of Premier and Cabinet

RE: Response to discussion paper 'An office for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal Affairs in West Australia'.

Nyoongar Outreach Services (NOS) Executive meeting 27 August 2018 discussed the proposal by the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the establishment of an office for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal affairs in West Australia.

The following input for consideration is as follows;

1. It is paramount not to repeat the same mistakes where the previous Aboriginal Affairs establishments failed Aboriginal people.
2. The new office objectives need to represent the voice of Aboriginal people and the issues negatively impacting their quality of life. Importantly, the new office must not be a platform for self-interest and needs to be inclusive of the grassroots and not merely strategic and political backgrounds.

The identified outlined features for the new office in the discussion paper are paramount for its success for the reasons of:

- Aboriginal people need to have a strong voice and to be heard.
- Government departments need to be accountable in meeting its KPIs, like wise for service providers not delivering the agreed outcomes to reduce the disproportionate social/economic and health indicators affecting Aboriginal people.
- Government must engage with Aboriginal people and translate their voices into social policies and service deliverables reforms to meet the outcomes and achieve accountabilities.
- Its is important not to duplicate services as it increases complacencies and no performance outcomes.
- The new office mandate needs to highlight and identify gaps in the problem-solving mechanism. Often issues that are too difficult/challenge are turned a blind eye with no solutions. The new office needs to advocate the 'too hard' issues, to bring them to the forefront and in collaboration with the Aboriginal community identify solutions.
- Importantly, the new agency needs to support Aboriginal controlled organisations and work towards capacity building and collaborating with Aboriginal organisations to minimise performance risks.
- The establishment of a super Aboriginal organisations need to be reconsidered. The risks associated with the fragility of Aboriginal governance structures for the not for profit sector should be a concern for the government, particularly, where there no alternatives due to the lack of capacity building of other smaller Aboriginal organisations.

Structure of the new office

- The board agreed that the structure has a new identity.
- To be effective it needs to incorporate all the legislative powers to strengthen its position and build confidence within the Aboriginal community that there is a genuine mechanism in place so that their voices will be heard.
- The office should not be tempted to fund programs or grants as this will have the propensity to blur the purpose of the office's objectives.
- The preferred name is 'First Nation's Voice' this gives appropriate recognition of Aboriginal people as original inhabitants and clearly identifies itself as the agency for Aboriginal Affairs as comprehensive representative agency.

Appointment Process:

- NOS do not believe in representative memberships structure.
- Currently not for profit Aboriginal organisations have their own memberships who determine elected Executive committee board members for their organisations.
- Aboriginal CEOs, or the chairperson person/an or board members from these organisations would be ideal candidates to sit on the selection panel and choose the head person for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal Affairs in West Australia.

Importantly, the panel candidates need to reflect equal representation from large and small organisations. It is vital that smaller organisations are confident that they represent the Aboriginal people and the real issues and are inclusive in the process.

We would like to thank you for providing us the opportunity in providing input to this process.

30/08/2018