

Honourable Ben Wyatt MLA
Treasurer; Minister for Finance; Energy; Aboriginal Affairs
Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: AboriginalPolicy@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Minister Wyatt,

**AN OFFICE FOR ADVOCACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS IN
WESTERN AUSTRALIA – DISCUSSION PAPER**

Thank you for your letter of 28 June 2018 regarding the discussion paper arguing the creation of an office for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia.

Firstly, the Town of Port Hedland (Town) would like to thank the Department of Premier and Cabinet for inviting us to provide feedback to strengthen this initiative. With over 16% of Port Hedland's population being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, the Town of Port Hedland welcomes initiatives such as this, which aim to listen to Aboriginal people's priorities and advocating for the areas that matter to them.

After carefully reviewing the discussion paper and all the documentation attached, the Town would like to contribute by providing feedback to some of the questions raised in the above mentioned discussion paper:

1. What do you think of the Government's Proposal?

The Town of Port Hedland always salutes initiatives that seek enhancing the lives of people. On this matter, we consider the overall proposal to be interesting. The reasons, objectives, and methodologies to achieve the aims seem correct and on the right track. We would like to contribute with one minor suggestion being on page 10, second last paragraph, it is stated that the engagement with the public will be through media releases, opinion pieces and social media. If what matters to Aboriginal residents is the main aim, the Town would like to suggest a more direct engagement method. Regional engagement committees or a main steering committee that engages with community groups around the

State could be a good option. We believe the proposed office should consider fostering proactive engagement in an active and direct manner.

2. What should the name of the organisation be?

The Town is not in the position to answer this question. Our organisation represents all residents living in Port Hedland LGA, not just Aboriginal people. Thus, we suggest the Department of Premier and Cabinet should liaise with local Aboriginal organisations within Port Hedland and the Pilbara to gather their thoughts on the name for the organisation, especially if using an Aboriginal name is being considered.

3. How should Aboriginal people be involved in choosing the right person?

The Town also believes this should be something that only Aboriginal organisations should decide. The Department of Premier and Cabinet should liaise with all the participating organisations of each region and seek their collaboration to identify the best formula for their region.

As indicated previously, and regardless of feedback from the Town, we would like to suggest that the Department of Premier and Cabinet liaises with local Aboriginal organisations in Port Hedland and in the Pilbara region to gather their thoughts and feelings about the proposal. The Town would be happy to provide assistance regarding contacts of local organisations if required.

Should you require any further information regarding this matter please contact Armando de la Flor Olavide, Senior Partnerships and Engagement Officer on (08) 9158 9306 or adelafloreolavide@porthedland.wa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



David Pentz
Chief Executive Officer

30 August 2018