

# City of Wanneroo Submission on Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy Discussion Paper

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## Answers to Specific Questions Asked:

### 1. Are the main ideas right? Do you agree with the description of the overall goal, principles, strategic elements and framework?

Yes.

### 2. Would you change or add anything?

Our view is that we would not change any of the content as it aligns with best practise engagement, empowerment and community development principles.

#### Addition 1

After reading the discussion paper it was identified that an addition could be made in examining the framework of the strategy through a gender lens. Research continually demonstrates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls face additional hardship and disadvantage.

Statistics report that:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from family violence [1]
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 11 times more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to be killed as a result of violent assault [2]
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have been identified as the most legally disadvantaged group in Australia [3]

Questions in relation to gender that the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy (the Strategy) could address or examine are:

- How will the identified disadvantages be addressed at a gender level within the Strategy?
- Taking the reported disadvantage into account; how are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls in particular going to be empowered in engagement and agreement-making to ensure reported disadvantage is not a barrier to inclusion in the Strategy and its implementation?
- What strategies will be put in place to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls are as engaged and active in the Strategy at all levels?

In addition, since culture is central to the Strategy; how will the separation of Women's and Men's Business within some Aboriginal cultures be considered and/or acknowledged within the Strategy or the implementation of it?

An Aboriginal female member of our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RAPWG) agreed that this examination of the Strategy from a gender perspective would be a valuable addition.

*Note: The City is recommending these additions from a strategic viewpoint and does not claim to speak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in making these recommendations. The City acknowledges that Aboriginal women have already been extensively engaged in the planning of this Strategy.*

### Addition 2

After reviewing the Strategy we identified that 'education' could be added as a strategic element.

- It has been reported that in 2017, "the overall attendance rate for Indigenous students nationally was 83.2 per cent, compared with 93.0 per cent for non-Indigenous students."
- Indigenous students are underrepresented in enrolments and completion rates for university when compared with non-indigenous students. [4]

The above figures coupled with education being a critical determiner of individual and community wellbeing is evidence for its inclusion in the Strategy. [4]

### **3. Are we using the right words? You might broadly agree with the main ideas, but want to see them expressed using different language. We welcome your recommendations. In particular, we are interested in whether the term "Aboriginal people" should be used or whether other terms such as "First Nations" would be more appropriate.**

The City of Wanneroo currently does not have the cultural knowledge specific enough to respond to this question. However, in consulting with one of our RAPWG members, they personally stated they prefer the term "Aboriginal" as there are a lot of First Nations individuals living in Australia that are indigenous to countries other than Australia.

### **4. What else should we be thinking about? You may have a view on how the strategy should be implemented in a particular region or subject area, or examples of current good practice. Your ideas are valuable to us.**

We believe the Strategy Discussion Paper is thorough, and proper consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Elders has taken place. The City does not have the cultural knowledge specific enough to respond to this question and believes that this should be driven by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. However, from a community development perspective at this stage it is in accordance with best practise principles.

A point of relevance: Several Local Governments (LG) already work within the framework of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP). The City suggests that the Department works closely with Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation WA to integrate principles from the strategy with principles and standards of RAP's. When delegating actions under the Strategy's Action Plans it will be important to ensure that LGs have enough resources to implement actions as they may only be resourced to implement RAP actions adequately.

An additional suggestion for guiding LG on implementation of the strategy is to develop a document/tool that explicitly outlines how LG can pursue opportunities from the strategy. The Department of Health's South Metro Population Health Unit has done great work in this area

to support LG to link to their strategic priorities e.g. Pathways to improving food security: A Guide for Local Government - [https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~/\\_/media/Files/Corporate/general%20documents/SMHS/Reports%20and%20Publications/SMPHU/PathwayToFoodSecurity.pdf](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~/_/media/Files/Corporate/general%20documents/SMHS/Reports%20and%20Publications/SMPHU/PathwayToFoodSecurity.pdf)

Also please see response to question 2.

## Additional Comment

Principles	Related Content in Discussion Paper	Comment
<i>Empowerment and self determination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government systems, structures, policies and programs should contribute to Aboriginal people's empowerment and self-determination.</li> <li>The government's primary role is to support Aboriginal people, families and communities to solve their own problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If Government is going to contribute to Aboriginal people's empowerment and self-determination, one of the best strategies to ensure this is to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander employment at all levels of Government, which has been continually raised by our RAPWG as an important empowerment strategy.</li> <li>An allocation of senior roles as 50D positions across Government could be a way of ensuring systems, structures, policies and programs contribute to Aboriginal people's empowerment and self-determination.</li> </ul>
<i>Diversity of people and places</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and programs should be made as close to the local or regional level as possible; State wide or national policies and programs should be used only where necessary to achieve their objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Strategy aligns with the City's RAP priorities.</li> <li>The Strategy aligns with the City's Strategic Community Plan (2017/18 – 2026/27).</li> <li>State Government and LG's could collaborate to ensure that LG RAPs are aligned with the Strategy's proposed regional action plans.</li> <li></li> </ul>
<i>Services</i>	The government as a whole is accountable for delivering results through coordination between State agencies, Federal and local governments, the private sector and the broader community. Cross-agency flexibility is necessary to address issues that do not fit within traditional agency responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been identified that traditional LG engagement methods could be framed differently to engage the Aboriginal community more effectively.</li> <li>Cross-agency and inter-agency flexibility could be</li> </ul>

		<p>an effective way of re-framing this engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGs may need to partner with other LGs to deliver RAP actions, and the Strategy's regional action plans based on language group and country boundaries, not LG boundaries.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Elements</b>		
<i>Boosting economic opportunities across all areas of Government activity</i>	<p>Some policy areas are within the control of Commonwealth or local governments; for these, the State's role lies in advocating for change. More broadly, coordination and cooperation between all levels of government and the private and community sectors are essential for maximising opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strategic element is aligned with the City's Purchasing Policy which stipulates that the goods or services supplied from a person registered on the Aboriginal Business Directory does not have to go to tender.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>During 2020, the Government will partner with Aboriginal people to develop a State action plan and regional action plans under the strategy. In many regions, Aboriginal people have already taken the lead in telling the Government what their key priorities and preferred approaches are. That work will form the starting point for planning conversations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will LGs be delegated actions under the plans or will the Outcome Activity Groups referenced in the Discussion Paper implement the action plans?</li> <li>• Engagement of the District Leadership Groups may be beneficial in supporting the implementation of the Strategy at a local level.</li> <li>• Will the Corporations set up under the South West Native Title Settlement have any future influence on the creation or the delivery of the Strategy's actions?</li> <li>• Will these Corporations have a role in the Strategy's implementation and if so, what will it be?</li> </ul>

1. *The Australian Productivity Commission (2014) Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage—Key Indicators 2014, 4.93 table 4A.11.22.*
2. *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2006) Family Violence Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Cat. no. IHW 17, p.71.*
3. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) (2003) Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee, Parliament of Australia, Inquiry into Legal Aid and Access to Justice, 13 November 2003, p.4.*
4. <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/reports/closing-the-gap-2018/education.html>