




Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Justice**
Office of the Director General

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Mr Darren Foster
Director General
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Dear Mr Foster 

Development of an Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Government's Discussion Paper titled *A Path Forward: Developing the Western Australian Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy*.

The Department of Justice (the Department) is supportive of the proposed Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, and joins the State Government in its commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people, families and communities.

The Strategy closely aligns to the Department's implementation of its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This should ideally encourage more government agencies to implement a RAP to better deliver reconciliation and corporate objectives. The Department also has an Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy arising from the RAP to help ensure Aboriginal people have better employment outcomes.

Through consultation across the Department the following suggestions are offered:

- Key messages around the strategic elements are seen as essential to the State Government achieving the Strategy's overarching goals and were supported.
- The Strategy's emphasis on collaboration and strong partnership between government and Aboriginal people and their communities has synergies to the former Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), which aimed to establish a framework for improving justice-related outcomes for Aboriginal people. I recognise that the Western Australian AJA was a visionary program which provided results, however it did require significant resourcing that I believe subsequently led to its closure.
The concept of an AJA is sound I believe. How such a model could be developed in a more co-designed way, and with greater consideration as to how it could be run in a cost-effective manner, is worth consideration.
- Development of a consultation framework to guide and connect government agencies to Aboriginal communities may be beneficial.
- All agencies being engaged with the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council (WAAAC) is pivotal to achieving the desired outcomes of this Strategy, particularly in the development of any future considered or proposed initiatives such as an AJA. Furthermore, young people attending WAAAC meetings with elected members from their respective communities would ensure the views of the younger generation are represented.

We look forward to the working with the State Government integrating and aligning the Department's work to the Strategy once finalised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AT', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Dr Adam Tomison
DIRECTOR GENERAL

27 February 2020