

Email Submission from: Dr Hannah McGlade

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Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the new Strategy which acknowledges the importance of Prevention and Early Intervention approaches. I have had 20 plus years working in the area of Aboriginal human rights and more recently supporting the establishment of the Noongar Council for Child Family Safety and Wellbeing Council and pleased to see greater attention being given to prevention and early intervention approaches to break the cycle of trauma and disadvantage, compounded by systemic and structural discrimination including in government today.

In this regard, I would add there is a need to increase commitment to the development of an Aboriginal workforce in family violence and sexual assault, respectful relationships, trauma and healing, social and emotional wellbeing and mental health in particular. I am not seeing evidence in WA of commitment to Aboriginal workforce development that is required if we are to Close the Gap and provide culturally appropriate responses to Aboriginal inequality, child removals and incarceration. You can look to New Zealand in this regard as they have made significant commitments and developed the concept of cultural safety in health care to a high standard.

The strategy also lacks reference to Aboriginal rights as contained in a myriad of international human rights conventions and treaties and especially the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is disappointing and lacking in consistency with our international obligations. Aboriginal people have pursued a rights based agenda being the holders of human rights and having human rights violated consistently by states. It is heartening to see Victoria pursue a modern day Treaty agreement (along with NT) and I urge the WA government to similarly uphold the fundamental rights of Aboriginal people of this state through a comprehensive Treaty process.

It is important that culture and respect for culture is also recognised but closer attention must be paid to improving responses to racism and bias which Aboriginal people are frequently experiencing and the lack of accountability for agencies that engage in systemic and widespread discrimination, including the justice system. The laws have proven to be largely ineffective and agencies, and courts and tribunal, are not addressing racism and bias which is widespread. As an Aboriginal foster carer, I have pursued the Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making model successfully before the Children's Court but have like many Aboriginal people found the departmental

practices and staff overwhelmingly lacking in knowledge of culture and lacking in respect for Noongar culture. AS we have the highest level of child removals in WA this is most disappointing.

I note you have also not included the ALRC Inquiry into reducing Indigenous incarceration 'Pathways to Justice' (2019). This is a significant report which contains clear guidance to the states on what reforms must be enacted to stem the ever increasing tide of Aboriginal incarceration. There has been no response to date from the federal or state government on this very significant inquiry.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the strategy, I hope it can be strengthened in consideration of the above comments.

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