



PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting report – Establishment of a new Division for Aboriginal Outcomes

In May 2020, the Director General of the Department of Communities (Communities) announced a new Communities' leadership structure. The new structure would comprise of seven divisions, including the Aboriginal Outcomes division, which would need to be formally established.

A consultation process commenced following this announcement, and Communities engaged PwC's Indigenous Consulting (PwC) to consider the following:

1. Proposed vision and purpose
2. Identification and development of proposed accountabilities
3. Development of proposed organisational structure
4. Development of a roadmap for implementation, in conjunction with CLT
5. Engaging with appropriate Central Government and advisory groups
6. Presenting recommendations to CLT for discussion and consideration, with final decision by the DG

As part of their review, PwC engaged with staff across the department, other State Government agencies, and external stakeholders (including Dr Tracy Westerman, Managing Director of Indigenous Psychological Services, who previously undertook a cultural competency audit of child protection staff and the Foster Care and Adoption Assessment Manual).

The resulting PwC Report, received by Communities in March 2021, provided strategic direction for the division's scope and structure. Consultation regarding the implementation of the new structure subsequently occurred in two stages with staff and key stakeholders between May and September 2021. This led to the establishment of teams with some new positions identified. The division has recently undertaken extensive recruitment of staff with a focus on employing Aboriginal people into a variety of positions, including providing opportunities for entry level employment and appointment to senior management decision making positions.

The purpose of the Aboriginal Outcomes division is to support and enable the Department of Communities to improve Aboriginal outcomes. The division's work streams have been

established in line with the proposed structure provided by PwC in the March 2021 report. The division is responsible for leading work in the following areas:

- Cultural Competence and Responsiveness – to develop the framework to improve the cultural capability and cultural competence of Communities
- Best Practice Partnerships – to inform, guide and develop culturally responsive and fit for purpose ways of working with Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal Workforce Support – to develop Communities to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal people
- Strategy and Accountability – to coordinate Communities response to priority reform initiatives, such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Aboriginal Economic Development and the Department's Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations Strategy.

The PwC Report also proposed refinement to Communities' iCREATE values – Integrity, Courage, Respect, Empathy, Accountability, Trust, Empowerment. In late August 2021, the Communities Leadership Team started the conversation about aligning the department's values, purpose and strategic priorities. It was the start of a collective process known as Ngulluk Marr, which translated from Noongar meaning "All Hands". The Ngulluk Marr process is currently underway across all Communities divisions and provides the opportunity to keep identifying what the department can do better, including to improve its cultural competency.

Communities is the second largest employer of Aboriginal staff in the Western Australian public sector, with an Aboriginal workforce representation of 6.4 per cent. This is appropriate given the number of Aboriginal people and families we serve. We are always looking to recruit more Aboriginal people to our workforce, and we want to be an employer of choice.

Currently, 31.5 per cent of Aboriginal Outcomes staff identify as Aboriginal. The Aboriginal Outcomes division is led by Assistant Director General, Cheryl Smith who is a Ballardong/Koreng/Minang woman with extensive family and community connections across the Perth metropolitan area and throughout Western Australia. As the Assistant Director General, Aboriginal Outcomes, Cheryl is an active member of the Communities Leadership Team.

The work of Indigenous Psychological Services and PwC will continue to inform and guide the work of Communities to strengthen our own cultural capability and improve outcomes for Aboriginal people - both within the agency, and in the diverse Aboriginal communities we work in.