



Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Meeting 2 of 2022: 27 and 28 April 2022 – Communique No. 3

The Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (AJAC) convened for Meeting 3 on April 27 – 28 2022. Due to the ongoing COVID situation in Perth, and to ensure the safety of members and vulnerable communities, the meeting took place virtually over Microsoft Teams.

Commissioner for Children and Young People

Recently appointed Commissioner for Children and Young People Jacqueline McGowan-Jones met with the AJAC to discuss her role as an advocate for young people in Western Australia.

The Commissioner is passionate about the future for our children and young people. She believes the role of Commissioner brings high expectations to be a strong voice advocating the views of young people across government. She has a long history working in education, child protection and Aboriginal affairs.



The Commissioner and members engaged in a wide-ranging discussion covering Aboriginal education in regional and remote areas, community engagement, mental health and the welfare of Aboriginal young people, and the current status of Banksia Hill Detention Centre.

The Commissioner expressed her wish to work extensively with the AJAC and to continue to meet regularly.

Strategic Priorities 2022-2024

In the lead up to Meeting 3 AJAC members identified a number of key focus areas the AJAC wishes to address in its first two-year term. The Department arranged facilitated discussions with subject matter experts to aid AJAC members in determining their priorities in the following areas:

Aboriginal Workforce Development and Employment

Members agreed that systemic change can be driven by increased Aboriginal participation in the justice workforce. The AJAC met with Trent Davies, Manager of Diversity, Inclusion and Aboriginal Workforce Development, to discuss the Department's progress in Aboriginal employment and the development of its Aboriginal staff. Culturally safe recruitment practices and increased opportunities for Aboriginal people in leadership positions were recommended as key areas for development.

Procurement and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO)

Members recommended that the Department prioritise increased participation of ACCOs in delivering reintegration and rehabilitation programs, as essential for improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal people. Members were joined by Assistant Director Procurement and Contract Services Mark Corbett to provide insight on, and facilitate a discussion about, the Department's current procurement processes.

Safe Housing and Homelessness

Secure and safe housing for young people and those leaving custody is another focus for the AJAC. Appropriate housing is an essential element of the reintegration process that contributes to reduced recidivism and increased wellbeing. The AJAC discussed its role in cross-sector collaboration with other Aboriginal Advisory forums to achieve better housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Young People

Issues facing Aboriginal young people is a priority concern for the AJAC in its first term. Members identified the need for improved structure and governance across public sector agencies to improve outcomes for Aboriginal young people. The AJAC identified the need for it to hear the voices of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and will explore mechanisms to enable that.

Aboriginal Cultural Capability Training Strategy

The Department recently engaged Keogh Bay People to assist with the development of its Aboriginal Cultural Capability Training Strategy. Members met with Keogh Bay representatives Matt Wrigley and Camis Smith to discuss the Department's cultural training needs and the outcomes required to improve staff cultural capability. The AJAC will be consulted regularly during the strategy's development.

Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy

Professor Victoria Hovane briefed members on the recently drafted state-wide Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy developed by Professor Hovane and the Department of Communities. The Department of Justice's own Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy, a deliverable under its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-24 and *Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030* (Path to Safety Action Plan), will align with the State strategy and will be developed in consultation with Professor Hovane, Aboriginal community members, and other internal and external stakeholders.

Aboriginal Engagement Plan

Department of Justice policy staff briefed the AJAC about initial work to develop the Department's Aboriginal Engagement Plan and sought the AJAC's advice about upcoming stakeholder consultation processes. The Aboriginal Engagement Plan is intended for launch in 2023 and is another deliverable of the Department's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-24.

The AJAC will next meet on 22 and 23 June 2022.