



Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Meeting 6 of 2022: 16 and 17 November 2022 – Communique No. 6

Banksia Hill Detention Centre

The Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (AJAC) acknowledges that there has been a lot of public interest and media attention recently around youth justice, including young people at Banksia Hill Detention Centre (Banksia Hill) and Unit 18.

We know our community feels sad, angry and frightened by the things we are reading and seeing, and we feel those things too.



We have been briefed regularly this year on matters related to the youth justice system and Banksia Hill. We visited Banksia Hill in June this year, which was confronting, but generated important conversations. We have been briefed about the new Operational Philosophy and Model of Care at Banksia Hill, and we are pleased to hear that there is a renewed focus on bringing Aboriginal people and ways of caring into the facility's approach.

We accept that the nature of events at Banksia Hill over the last few months were such that operational decisions needed to be made by the Department. While there was not an opportunity for us to be consulted about many of these decisions we have talked openly and honestly with the Department's leaders about our concerns, and our views on how things can be improved moving forward together.

The AJAC's role is to provide advice and guidance to the Department of Justice, so that the decisions they make are fully informed and we believe it is our role to be strong and honest in expressing our views - and to participate in open and respectful conversations with the Department. It is our role to ask questions, to listen, to give our best advice, to stay connected to community and to be ourselves.

Ultimately, we believe that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that our children are safe and thriving in the community, and don't end up at Banksia Hill. Government must continue to work together with Aboriginal community to create sustainable solutions for community and youth safety.

Site Visit – Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women and the Corrective Service Academy

Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women

As part of the AJAC's Safe Housing and Homelessness Strategic priority, we visited Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women to discuss the current services and programs the Department provides to assist women transition from custody to the community. We met with A/Superintendent Mike Henderson, Boronia Community Engagement staff and Transitional Managers to discuss the needs of women exiting custody and how they can find stability when back in the community.

We were also briefed on the Yirra Djinda Kitchen project, which equips participants with catering, hospitality and cleaning skills and qualifications and links them to employment opportunities after they leave custody.

Corrective Services Academy

We met with Directors of Learning, Professional Development and Operational Training at the Corrective Services Academy and discussed the cultural awareness training for prison and youth detention officers. We also discussed use of force training and the ways in which that training may need to evolve in the future.

Consultation

Victims of Crime Reference Group

The Commissioner for Victims of Crime briefed us on the current status of the Victims of Crime Reference Group and outlined its role to inform the Department's services to victims and their families.

The Commissioner sought our advice and recommendations regarding the recruitment of Aboriginal representation for the group, noting that Aboriginal people are overrepresented as victims of crime compared to the non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal Cultural Capability Training Strategy

We received an update on the status of the Department's Aboriginal Cultural Capability Training Strategy being developed by the Aboriginal Justice Transformation Directorate. We have been closely involved in the strategy's preparation, including multiple consultations. The strategy is nearing completion and the Department's focus will soon turn towards implementation.

Reflection and Planning for 2023

We ended the 2022 meeting schedule with a reflection session on our first year of operation and our vision for 2023. It was a useful process to recognise what has been achieved in 11 short months since our first meeting on 1 December 2021, to our learning about the Justice system, the strategic and policy development we have contributed to, and the frank and fearless advice we have given, and has been provided to us.

In 2023, we will continue to progress our strategic priorities of **Young People, Safe Housing and Homelessness, Aboriginal Workforce Development** and **Procurement**, building on the solid foundation and respected and trusting relationships that we have established this year.

We wish you all a safe festive period and a good start to 2023.