

# Communique - Meeting No. 004/2019-2020

21 May 2020

The Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia (the Council) held Meeting No. 004 on Thursday 21 May 2020 via tele-conference, due to the COVID-19 travel and social distancing restrictions. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms Gail Beck and Mr Martin (Marty) Sibosado.

**Key items discussed and considered by the Council included the following:**

## **Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019 - Hon Simone McGurk MLA**

The Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services, Hon Simone McGurk MLA, provided a briefing to members on the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019. The Bill was to have its Second Reading in the Legislative Council later that day (21 May 2020).

Minister McGurk acknowledged the amendments to the legislation were long overdue. The key purpose of the amendments is to improve the lives of Aboriginal people and children. The Minister explained to members she wanted to make sure the concerns of Aboriginal people were adequately addressed through the proposed amendments.

The Minister went on to say that, 53 of the 70 recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse had been addressed through the legislation or by way of policy.

Following discussion, the Minister invited Council members to contact her office, if they wished to discuss the amendments or any other aspects further.

## **COVID-19 Update**

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet's (DPC) Director Aboriginal Engagement, Ms Kate Alderton, gave members an update on the COVID-19 pandemic and the Directions by the State Emergency Coordinator for public health and safety, and the work of the Complex Task Team in relation to remote Aboriginal communities.

## **Presentations by Agencies**

A number of presentations were made to the Council, either providing information or seeking advice in relation to consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders as follows:

### ***Department of the Premier and Cabinet – Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse***

The Community Policy directorate within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet presented to the Council on the progress of recommendations made under the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse. The Royal Commission made 409 recommendations, of which 310 are relevant to Western Australia. The State Government has implemented 125 of these recommendations.

Given the distinct experience of Aboriginal people told to the Royal Commission, and the continued over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in institutions, it is essential the voice of Aboriginal organisations inform the establishment of an independent oversight system for organisations involved in child-related work.

The Council agreed to provide feedback to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the proposed Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse.

#### **Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia**

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#### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders past, present and emerging.

**Department of the Premier and Cabinet – National Agreement on Closing the Gap**

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet provided an update to the Council on progress of the National Agreement for Closing the Gap. The new National Agreement replaces the previous National Indigenous Reform Agreement and aims to close the health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians.

**Aboriginal Advisory Council Communications Strategy**

The Council is preparing a communication strategy to enable effective dissemination of information about Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia. While this will include information-sharing relating to COVID-19, the strategy will focus on the longer-term policy reform impacting on Aboriginal people.

**Productivity Commission Case Study of the Aboriginal Advisory Council**

The Secretariat provided members with an update on the submission of a case study of the Council to the Productivity Commission.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Friday 19 June 2020.



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Ms Gail Beck  
**Co-Chairperson**

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Mr Martin (Marty) Sibosado  
**Co-Chairperson**

\* Confidential agenda items were not included in this Communique.