



Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Communique No. 10 – Quarter 4 2023

AJAC Meeting 6 of 2023

Corrective Services Commissioner Bradley Royce

We met for our final Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (AJAC) meeting on 22 and 23 November. As members of the AJAC we acknowledge that there has been a lot of concern in the community regarding youth justice, and we share the community's grief over recent events. We are deeply saddened by what has occurred, but it has strengthened our resolve to continue advocating for change that will benefit our community and prevent similar events in the future.



We were very pleased to meet with the newly appointed Corrective Services Commissioner Brad Royce APM to discuss his first few weeks in the role and his plan for improving the circumstances of our young people in custody. Commissioner Royce stated his intention to raise standards and practices across the custodial estate which will improve both the safety of people in the Department's care and for Department staff.

Commissioner Royce emphasised the importance of training and he assured us that all Department processes are being continually reassessed to ensure a high level of safety and accountability.

New Strategic Priority: The Prevention of Deaths in Custody

In response to recent events and following our discussions with Commissioner Royce, we determined that the AJAC must have a role advising the Department on strategies to prevent avoidable deaths in custody. In 2024 the AJAC will add a new strategic priority: *The Prevention of Deaths in Custody* to ensure that the Department hears the perspective of our communities and receives appropriate cultural guidance on how to reduce avoidable deaths in custody.

We intend to convene an AJAC subcommittee to address this new strategic priority in 2024 and work toward making recommendations to the Department.

Reflection and Planning for 2024

We ended the 2023 by reflecting on our first term of operation and began our planning for 2024. It was a useful process to acknowledge what we have accomplished in 2 years since our first meeting on 1 December 2021 and how much work is still to be done. We feel the weight of responsibility to our communities to ensure that Aboriginal people have a role in the development of policies and programs that affect our people.

Over our first two years we have greatly developed our knowledge of the justice system and providing strategic cultural advice. Our first two years have gone very quickly but we are very satisfied with the progress we have made. Since the establishment of the AJAC we have been consulted and have provided advice on numerous Department strategies, programs and initiatives in development, including:

- Heads of Jurisdiction United Statement on Reconciliation
- Youth Justice Operational Philosophy and Model of Care
- Youth Justice Strategy
- Aboriginal Engagement Plan
- Aboriginal Cultural Capability Training Strategy
- Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Strategic Commissioning Project

In 2024, we will continue working with the Department to get better outcomes for members of our community who come into contact with the justice system. We wish you all a safe festive period and a good start to 2024.