

Communique - Meeting No. 30/2024

14 and 15 March 2024

The Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia (the Council) held Meeting No.30/2024 on 14 - 15 March 2024 at Hale House in West Perth, with members participating in person and online via MS Teams. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (the Department) and the Council co-chairs agreed to cancel scheduled Meeting No.29/2024 and postpone the proposed Culture at the Heart Forum.

The meeting was led by co-chairs, Ms Gail Beck, and Mr Martin Sibosado and included engagements with Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, Ms Divina D'Anna MLA, Department of Treasury, Public Sector Commission, Horizon Power, National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The agenda included a range of presentations and discussions during which the Council offered strategic advice and feedback to the Western Australia (WA) Government.

The key items discussed and considered by the Council included:

Ministerial Engagement

The Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA: Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests*

Hon Tony Buti, Minister for Education, Aboriginal Affairs, Citizenship and Multicultural Interests welcomed the Council to Parliament House to continue their discussion on the Close the Gap targets, following the Minister's engagement with members in [January](#). The Council reflected on [the Productivity Commissioner's review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap \(the National Agreement\)](#) and encouraged the WA Government to continue and expand work in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities to ensure success is achieved.

External Presentations

National Indigenous Australians Agency

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) provided an update on the Federal [Remote Jobs and Economic Development \(RJED\) program](#). Council members provided advice and guidance as regional residents with strong community connections on how the program could best benefit Aboriginal people and communities. The Council endorsed NIAA's request for further collaboration on the RJED program and sought clarification on opportunities for this.

Department of Treasury – Aboriginal Expenditure Review and Budget Process Update

The Department of Treasury provided Council members with an update on the second iteration of the [Aboriginal Expenditure Review](#) and sought feedback on the proposed approach for the budget process, specific to Closing the Gap initiatives. Council members acknowledged Treasury's invitation for a debrief regarding the 2023-24 State Budget – WA Government. Members expressed interest in continuing to work together to review current spending on Aboriginal programs and services and to identify opportunities for reprioritisation and elevation of investment to Aboriginal-led organisations in WA.

Horizon Power – Remote Essentials Services Programs

Horizon Power returned to Council, following a previous engagement in [October 2023](#), to provide an update on the transfer of essential service provisions in 141 remote and town-based Aboriginal communities. Horizon Power sought guidance and feedback from the Council regarding the next steps in the implementation of their services. Council members from varied regions of the State provided advice to Horizon Power on engagement with Aboriginal communities and supporting local economies.

Public Sector Commission – Senior Executive Service Series

The Public Sector Commission attended Council to seek guidance and advice on a Senior Executive Services (SES) development program that aims to create and foster an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait

* Confidential agenda items were not included in this Communique.

Islander people regard the public sector as an employer of choice. Council members acknowledged the importance of leadership pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the public sector. Additionally, members explored challenges and highlighted the importance of culturally safe workplaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Defence – Australia Submarine Agency*

Representatives from the Australian Submarine Agency, Department of Defence and Defence West were welcomed by members who supported the opportunity to establish a relationship with the Commonwealth and State representatives. Council members acknowledged the importance of this work and the potential economic, employment and engagement opportunities for Aboriginal communities including with Traditional Owners.

Internal Presentations

Aboriginal Engagement Directorate – Closing the Gap Implementation Update

The Council and the Department discussed the status of the WA Government Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2023-2025 and explored the prioritisation of Targets in Focus to achieve meaningful change for Aboriginal people and communities. As one of WA Government's strategic partners in the State's implementation, members voiced concern regarding the progress of targets and the long-term impacts on Aboriginal people and communities.

Members reinforced the need for all levels of government to consult with Aboriginal people and communities and expressed concern that the lack of whole-of-government collaboration and partnerships may result in failure to close the gap for present and future generations.

Community Policy Unit – Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee Update

The Department and Council explored opportunities to strengthen the connectivity between the [Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee \(AACC\)](#) and Council, as statutory bodies under the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Act 1972. Discussions included opportunities for a program of work to improve the partnership including improved alignment to the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and recent Productivity Commission report recommendations.

The next meeting is scheduled for 8 May 2024.



Ms Gail Beck
Co-Chairperson
Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA



Mr Martin (Marty) Sibosado
Co-Chairperson
Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA

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