



# Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group

## Communiqué 12/2025 – December 2025 Meeting



Advisory Group members and Communities staff.

L-R: Patrick Ryder, Renae Hodgson, Denise Macale (Member), Patricia Hayward (Co-chair), Tony Hansen (Co-chair), Cheryl James-Wallace (Member), Jodie Clarke (Member), Leanne Kickett (Member), Glen Caton.

The Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its final meeting of 2025 on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja on 1-2 December 2025. The meeting was held at the Department of Communities' (Communities) head office in Walyalup (Fremantle).

The meeting focussed on shared decision-making, early engagement and co-design, self-determination, and transforming government to collaboratively deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal people, in advancing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

## Day 1: Aboriginal workforce support

### Aboriginal Employee Network Debrief & Director General Discussion

Glen Caton, the A/Assistant Director General of the Aboriginal Outcomes Division, provided an overview of the Aboriginal Employee Network (AEN) Forum held on 30 and 31 October 2025 and joined the Advisory Group in a discussion and debrief regarding matters raised by members of the AEN at the Forum.

The Director General congratulated Tony Hansen and Patricia Hayward on their recent re-appointment as Co-Chairs and proceeded to provide an update on key agenda items from Advisory Group meetings held in March and June 2025, the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy and his recent presentation to the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia.



Members were welcomed by Whadjuk Elder, Steven Jacobs.

## Key strategy updates

### The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform

Project team provided an update on the implementation of Communities' Aboriginal Cultural Framework 2024-2034 and the first twice-yearly update on Communities' Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Aboriginal Cultural Framework calls for place-based cultural immersion. The associated draft Learning Strategy focuses on cultural supervision and leadership for Aboriginal employees. Since the Framework was launched in November 2024, the Project team have held over 60 presentations across the state.

Communities Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan was launched during National Reconciliation Week earlier in 2025 and is aligned with Reconciliation Australia's pillars of Governance, Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. The Plan will provide a supportive framework for Communities to work towards meeting the five national reconciliation dimensions of Race Relations, Equality and Equity, Institutional Integrity, Unity and Historical Acceptance.

The project team provided an update on the Aboriginal Engagement Framework, including a tour of the Framework on Communities' intranet, both of which were met with strong support by Members.

## Day 2: Data and research partnerships

### Data and research partnerships

Professor Rhonda Marriott AM (Prof Aboriginal Studies Murdoch University, Pro Vice Chancellor, Ngangk Yira Institute for Change); Doctor Tracy Reibel (Director, Ngangk Yira Institute for Change); and Melanie Samuels (Deputy Director General, Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS)) provided an overview of the Child Protection Roundtable held in September 2025.

The Roundtable was convened through a partnership between the Ngangk Yira Institute for Change and Communities. This partnership is focused on co-designing a culturally informed, solutions-driven approach to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care.

Communities' Business Services team provided an overview of the Aboriginal Data Sharing project and the development of mechanisms to share location-specific data, aligned with the Aboriginal Cultural Framework implementation plan. There was considered discussion regarding the categories of data that would be most valuable, with key areas of interest identified as service provision, service impact, and interagency data.

## Family violence

Nicole Leggett, Director of Communities Office for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence (OPFDV) provided an overview of current reforms in the Family and Domestic Violence portfolio, including the soon to be released National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence and the recent criminalisation of coercive control.

Against this backdrop of reform, family violence remains the greatest barrier to positive socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal women and girls. Communities recognise that Aboriginal-designed and led services are better placed to support Aboriginal people and has awarded nearly six million dollars to 12 Aboriginal-led family safety projects through the Aboriginal Family Safety Grants initiative.



Advisory Group members. L-R: Cheryl James-Wallace, Tony Hansen and Patricia Hayward.

## Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group

The next Advisory Group meeting will focus on homelessness and Aboriginal Economic Reform and will be held on Yamatji Country, in Jambinu (Geraldton), on 24-25 March 2026.

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