

## **Stolen Generations Advisory Committee Meeting 11 September 2017**

### **Communique**

#### **Aged care, health care and repatriation of survivors incarcerated overseas**

The Committee heard from representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Health, who provided an overview of the current reforms in relation to the Commonwealth aged care system. The Committee has requested a more detailed discussion with the Commonwealth on the design of the aged care system, to further explore the specific aged care needs of Stolen Generations survivors.

The Committee would like to hear directly from the Department of Social Services on the issue of health care cards for survivors and other health care supports.

Further work will be undertaken between the Commonwealth, NSW Government and the Stolen Generations Organisations regarding the repatriation of Stolen Generations survivors and descendants who are incarcerated overseas.

#### **Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme**

The Advisory Committee noted the update on the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, including that at the end of August 2017, around 600 applications had been received, and around 130 applications finalised.

The Stolen Generation Organisations representatives expressed concerns that the reparations and funeral fund payment amounts do not overcome the pain and suffering that Stolen Generations survivors experienced.

#### **Collective Reparations**

The Committee noted that Aboriginal Affairs is continuing to develop the guidelines for collective Reparations Funding for the four NSW Stolen Generations Organisations and is currently working on some transitional funding arrangements.

Aboriginal Affairs also provided an update to the Committee on the Family Records Review. Aboriginal Affairs has engaged a consultant to consider the Family Records Service in the context of the implementation of the Government commitments made under Unfinished Business. This review will consider issues such as right of reply and the recording of survivor testimonies. The Committee asked that the scope of the review be extended to include consideration of access to records held outside of government (e.g. churches and private institutions).

The Committee also noted the indicative timeframes for the implementation of the Stolen Generations Healing Fund, which is expected to commence in 2018.

#### **Child protection and early intervention**

The Advisory Committee heard from Family and Community Services (FACS) on early intervention programs, including Family Group Conferencing. The Committee also noted an update from FACS on the independent review of Aboriginal Children in out-of-home care, being led by Professor Megan Davis. The Committee expressed an interest in speaking directly with Professor Davis.

The Stolen Generations Organisations raised concerns about Aboriginal children being removed from their country and culture and being placed in culturally inappropriate settings. The Committee also highlighted the intergenerational impacts that continue to be experienced by Aboriginal families and communities resulting from the past policies and practices that separated Aboriginal children from their kinship systems and culture, and emphasised the importance of Aboriginal people being involved in decision-making about the removal of Aboriginal children. The Committee also discussed the importance of having strong leaving care arrangements for any children in care transitioning into adulthood.

The Stolen Generations Organisations have requested to meet separately with FACS to continue discussions about the NSW child protection system.

### **Aboriginal Housing**

The Advisory Committee noted initiatives delivered by the Aboriginal Housing Office that support or encourage home ownership. The Committee noted, however, the difficulties in purchasing properties in Sydney given issues with housing affordability. The AHO offered to meet separately with the Stolen Generations Organisations to further discuss housing issues for Stolen Generations survivors.