

Stolen Generations Advisory Committee Meeting

3 December 2019

Communique

The Stolen Generations Advisory Committee met in Sydney on 3 December 2019. This meeting followed a preparation meeting with Stolen Generations Organisations (SGO) representatives in the week commencing 18 November which was independently facilitated by Mr Grant Sarra. In the period since the October 2019 advisory committee meeting SGOs also had out-of-session discussions with several government agencies to discuss the progress of commitments relating to the Government's response to Unfinished Business. During 2019 survivors also attended two roundtable discussions hosted by representatives from the NSW Ministry of Health and Commonwealth - National Indigenous Australians Agency (formerly Prime Minister and Cabinet).

At the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee meeting Stolen Generation survivor representatives met with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Donald (Don) Harwin MLC, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts. Stolen Generations survivors took the opportunity to discuss their organisations recent achievements and to outline some current issues that are important for survivors and their descendants.

The broad range of discussion issues included;

- survivor's aspirations for the conservation and use of sites of the former Aborigines Welfare Board homes as museums and educational centres and
- aspirations to establish healing centres for collective healing and strengthening family and cultural connections.
- additional support for SGOs including funding for social and emotional wellbeing practitioners based in SGOs to meet specific needs of survivors.
- survivors concerns about the lack of trauma informed aged care facilities and home care packages for survivors to support their ageing in place.
- opportunities to improve housing options for survivors and their families and carers, including investment opportunities to attain home ownership
- pending responses following survivors roundtable discussions with NSW Health, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AHMRC) and Commonwealth agencies regarding health care services, including survivors needs for better co-ordinated and trauma informed service delivery.
- Survivors unmet need for better information and access to health and aged care services, including survivors request for a Commonwealth access card, for priority access to services and to cover gap costs and expenses.
- Education resources being developed by SGOs for survivors to tell their stories about the Stolen Generations, including the launch of the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) Mobile Education Centre.

Government agencies provided brief updates on work being progressed on Unfinished Business commitments. The Committee also discussed the following agenda issues.

Family and Community Services (Family is Culture Report)

On 7 November 2019, the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the Hon. Gareth Ward MP, released the report *Family is Culture: an independent review of Aboriginal children and young in OOHC*. A copy of the report can be found at <https://www.familyisculture.nsw.gov.au/>

The review was conducted by Professor Megan Davies. The report provides critique of the Department of Communities and Justice's (DCJ), and the broader child protection system, application of legislation, policy and procedure, and its practice with Aboriginal children, young people and families. The report outlines 125 recommendations aimed at systemic improvements to legislation, policy, practice, regulatory oversight and reporting.

The committee heard from Matthew Jones, Family is Culture Response Team on the Family is Culture Report.

Matthew explained Minister Ward has requested advice on the 125 recommendations. The Family is Culture team is currently working on providing advice for the Minister's consideration and developing options for the response, anticipating completion in early 2020.

Sites of former Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB) Homes and Keeping Places

Anthony Body, (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment) attended the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee to update the SGO's on the Former Sites government working group and the progress on Keeping Places.

A government agency working group on Former Sites has been established to respond to Unfinished Business commitments focused on the sites of former Aborigines Protection Board homes. The working group is comprised of representatives from of Regional NSW (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), Aboriginal Affairs (DPC), Heritage (DPC) and Create NSW (DPC). The Governance Group has met a number of times since its inception in May 2019 and will meet again on 4 December to arrange a tender process to engage an independent consultant to facilitate stakeholder engagement in aspiration mapping. A partnership approach will be taken to support SGOs and other agencies to work together about aspirations for these sites.

The working group has committed to working on a tight timeframe, including visiting each SGO and site. Anthony advised a consultant will be tasked with gathering the aspirations of each site and to produce a report detailing this information.

Issues Relating to Commonwealth Government Responsibility (NIAA)

Commonwealth Government representatives (National Indigenous Australians Agency and Department of Health and Ageing) held a one day roundtable discussion with Stolen Generations Organisations on 2 December 2019. NSW Health also attended the roundtable discussion to progress the Unfinished Business commitments that have cross government jurisdiction. The roundtable discussion was the start to addressing Health and Aged Care priorities, service access and costs and also the Stolen Generations survivor's request for a health care card. Further conversations with the Commonwealth and NSW Health will

continue in 2020.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health held its roundtable with Stolen Generations Organisations (SGOs) on 9-10 September 2019 with a focus on development and delivery of tailored supports. The Ministry of Health have commenced reviewing the information received during the roundtable and will work closely with the Commonwealth Government on the issues and themes that have cross jurisdiction to confirm commitments with a co-ordinated response.