



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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### SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2022-2023

Mr James Milligan MLA (Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA  
(Deputy Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

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**ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA:** To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Ref: Budget Outlook, p. 84 output class 1.3 (Community Services Directorate)

In relation to: Community request for a board of inquiry

1. The Budget Outlook states that the government is, 'working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders to address over-representation – with roundtables and community meetings helping guide systemic change' (p. 84). A roundtable of Indigenous community leaders met with you and other ministers last year and unanimously requested a board of inquiry into over-representation. When did you first meet with this group of community leaders, and on which dates have you met with it since then, either virtually or in person?
2. To your knowledge, has this group of community leaders ever walked back from, qualified, or reversed its request for a board of inquiry in any way? If so, how exactly?
3. Minister, in conjunction with other ministers, you have previously said that a board of inquiry could take potentially many years and would be a large cost for a small territory. What do you estimate both the cost and duration to be, and how have you arrived at those figures?
4. Minister, a review of previous reviews was offered as a quicker response than a board of inquiry. Has it been completed yet?
  - a. If not, when will it be?
  - b. If so, can the minister provide the master list of previously unfulfilled recommendations and explain how we will be able to track the implementation of these recommendations?

**MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

1. I attended a Roundtable discussion with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, experts, and officials on Thursday, 25 March 2021. It was also attended by Shane Rattenbury MLA, Attorney-General; Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections; and Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Justice Health and Mental Health.

I also attended a second Roundtable on Wednesday 15 September 2021 facilitated (online) by Heidi Yates, Victims of Crime Commissioner. This roundtable was co-convened by me and Minister Rattenbury in his role as Attorney-General. It was also attended by the Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections, Minister for Justice Health, and Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services.

Between these roundtables, Minister Rattenbury, Minister Davidson and I attended a meeting with a smaller number of community leaders at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services on 20 May 2021 to discuss the Board of Inquiry proposal.

2. No. However, a number of community members have also pointed out that many relevant inquiries and reports have been completed and recommendations made, including the Australian Law Reform Commission's 2018 report *Pathways to Justice – Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.
3. The cost and duration of a Board of Inquiry would depend on the scope of the Terms of Reference of an Inquiry.
4. The ACT Government has prioritised early actions in consultation with the community to address over-representation. The Government continues to consider the role an audit of previous reviews could play in addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system. This work is being led by the Attorney-General and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

In the 2022-23 Budget, the ACT Government committed new funding of more than \$11 million to deliver a range of programs and initiatives focused on addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system. This work combines new initiatives that are expected to have a real and immediate impact, and the continuation of established programs that have been demonstrating positive results.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023

Signature:



Date:

11/9/22

By Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs