

2014

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON HEALTH, AGEING, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
REPORT NO 2**

**REPORT ON THE INQUIRY INTO ACT PUBLIC SERVICE
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
EMPLOYMENT**

**Tabled by
Katy Gallagher MLA
Chief Minister**

Government Response to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Service Report No 2 – Report on the Inquiry into ACT Public Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Service (the Committee) announced its Inquiry into ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment (the Inquiry) in May 2013.

In keeping with their joint responsibility for delivery of initiatives against the ACTPS Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the previous Head of Service and the Commissioner for Public Administration (Commissioner) provided a submission to the Inquiry on behalf of the ACTPS. Representatives from the ACTPS attended hearings into the Inquiry in December 2013.

In March 2014 the Chair of the Committee, Dr Chris Bourke MLA, released Report No 2 (the Report), which outlines the findings of the Inquiry and sets out a total of 31 recommendations divided across nine main themes:

- Employment Strategy Implementation (recommendations 1 – 2);
- Recruitment (recommendations 3 – 9);
- Retention (recommendations 10 – 12);
- Cross-Cultural Training (recommendations 13 – 15);
- Supporting the ACTPS Indigenous Staff Network (recommendations 16 – 20);
- Recognition and Celebration (recommendations 21 – 22);
- Training and Mentoring (recommendations 23 – 26);
- Accountability and Reporting (recommendations 27 – 30); and
- Indigenous Leadership Program (recommendation 31).

The Report was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly in April 2014. A summary of the Government's response to the Committee's recommendations is outlined in the following table and addressed in full below:

Agreed	14
Agreed in-principle	16
Noted	1
Total	31

Response to Committee Recommendations

Employment Strategy Implementation

Recommendation 1

2.51 The Committee recommends that the ACTPS implement a project management approach to ensure the timely achievement of outcomes identified in the ACT Public Service Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The ACT Public Service Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (the Employment Strategy) establishes a vision for the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) “...to be seen as an attractive workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to seek employment, and to more than double the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the ACTPS by 2015”.

The Employment Strategy sits in parallel with the Employment Strategy for People with Disability under the broader governance framework articulated by the *ACTPS Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework* (RED Framework).

At a whole-of-government level, the RED Framework is overseen by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) with each of the directorates within the ACTPS having day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of initiatives and strategies to further its objectives and the specific targets underpinning the Employment Strategy.

In this context the Public Sector Management group of CMTEDD is in the process of undertaking a review of the RED Framework, which relevantly considers the ongoing management and delivery of initiatives falling within the Employment Strategy. Adoption of a project management approach to ensure the timely achievement of outcomes identified in the Employment Strategy will be considered in the context of this review.

Recommendation 2

2.64 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service precisely define the target level of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACT Public Service.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The Employment Strategy clearly defines the target level of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACTPS as increasing from 0.9% (176 employees) in 2010 to 2% (407 employees) in 2015.

However, given the target was developed in 2010, and based on a 2010 ACTPS-wide headcount, updating this aspect of the Employment Strategy will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework.

Recruitment

Recommendation 3

3.22 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be amended with a view to incorporating a plan to recruit and retain suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior executives in the service.

Government Response: Agreed

As discussed in the ACTPS submission to the Inquiry, the ACTPS aims to employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at both higher level administrative classifications and senior

officer level, and seeks to influence the reduction in the difference in average remuneration between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Indeed, achieving outcomes in this area has been an aim of the Government, and remains ongoing in that context.

The proposal to amend the Employment Strategy to include a standalone plan to recruit and retain suitably qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior executives in the ACTPS is being considered as part of the ongoing review of the RED Framework (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 4

3.35 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service give priority to identifying and implementing innovative ways of recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into the ACT Public Service, including secondments from non-government sectors. This must entail ongoing consultation with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

Government Response: Agreed

The ACTPS remains committed to attracting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce characterised by a positive reputation founded on the respect and courtesy we extend to our colleagues and clients via innovative recruitment methods, and is considering such methods in the renewal of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (PSM Act), currently underway.

In May 2014, the ACTPS amended the *Public Sector Management Standards 2006* to allow for the alignment of recruitment terminology between the Commonwealth and ACTPS with a view to reducing community confusion surrounding engagement of employees of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background to 'designated positions'.

The ACTPS Whole-of-Government Recruitment Guidelines (Recruitment Guidelines) will also be updated in line with the renewal of the employment framework upon its implementation. This will be supported by development of a toolkit for managers, supervisors and colleagues of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (the Toolkit) to provide cultural competency and other relevant information, including information relevant to recruitment.

Against this context, ACTPS directorates actively identify and implement innovative ways to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, some examples include:

- The Health Directorate engagement with a number of external bodies to increase recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It has also established a working group of key internal and external people and organisations to increase the potential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be attracted to working in Health;
- Development of the *Many Journeys....Deadly Mob! Staff Voices* website by the Education and Training Directorate (http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/538825/Our-Mob-Our-Stories-Our-Voices.pdf), which supports reciprocal learning that strengthens two way relationships and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It tells the story of seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed across various positions within the Directorate, who have shared their journeys, their passion for education, hopes for the future and their influences in joining the education community; and
- The use of a wide variety of recruitment methods to fill vacancies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS), including:

- engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees under the Australian Apprenticeship Program through the Australian Training Company;
- advertising all designated positions in mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and networks;
- ACT Human Rights Commission advertised traineeships/internships through the Canberra Institute of Technology and University of Canberra networks; and
- creating community awareness about the directorate by participating as a sponsor at the 2014 ACT & Region Indigenous Excellence Awards Dinner.

The Government is committed to maintaining a meaningful relationship with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body), and will continue to strengthen its relationship through consultation where appropriate.

The proposal that the Government consider secondments of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons from non-government employers will be considered as part of the review of the RED Framework (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 5

3.37 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service use proactive recruitment methods, including external recruitment agencies and alternative merit-based selection processes, to fill more vacancies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

As outlined at Recommendation 4 above, the ACTPS seeks to continue to enhance its relationship with the Elected Body and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through that partnership. The Government will continue to consider and adopt innovative recruitment practices to enhance the attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The proposal to utilise external recruitment agencies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be considered as part of the review of the RED Framework (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 6

3.40 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service enhance its website to address the requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be interested in employment in the ACT Public Service.

Government Response: Agreed

The ACTPS will continue to work with the Elected Body to seek specific detail as to the requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be interested in employment in the ACTPS, and how the ACT Government website can be enhanced to address these requirements (for example targeted information on websites and how best to hold community information sessions). These enhancements will be made in conjunction with Shared Services who manage the ACT Jobs website.

Some directorates have already initiated enhancements in this regard, including JACS whose website has an Indigenous Justice Affairs portal to assist readers in their search for information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice issues, justice organisations, policies and research including cultural events of significance. The JACS website also provides a link to career opportunities in the Directorate and the broader ACTPS.

Recommendation 7

3.55 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service Graduate Program offer at least 2.0 percent of the total number of positions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Government Response: Agreed

The ACTPS Graduate Recruitment Program (Graduate Program) currently offers an unrestricted number of special measure positions that are restricted in terms of eligibility for recruitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and People with Disability. As part of the review of the RED Framework and in turn the Employment Strategy, the Government will engage with the Elected Body and the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) within the Community Services Directorate (CSD) to implement targeted strategies to enhance interest in participation in the Graduate Program within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Recommendation 8

3.60 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service continue to be involved in the Australian Government's Indigenous Cadetship Program.

Government Response: Agreed.

The ACTPS has been actively engaged with the Commonwealth Government who manages the Indigenous Cadetship Support Program (ICSP) since 2012, and has been registered as a participant since that time.

Recommendation 9

3.69 The Committee recommends that, as a matter of priority, the ACT Public Service takes steps to improve the Community Services Directorate Indigenous Traineeship Program, ensuring that:

- (a) there is effective support and guidance given to all participants;*
- (b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students become aware of career pathways linked to the Traineeship Program;*
- (c) at the completion of their traineeship the trainees are mentored to continue their professional development; and*
- (d) approved training must be qualification-based with automatic promotion upon successful completion within a broadband appointment.*

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The ACTPS delivers a whole-of-government Indigenous Traineeship Program (the Traineeship Program), coordinated and administered by CSD via OATSIA.

The Traineeship Program is being reviewed with a view to focussing on improved recruitment practices, developing strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within the ACTPS and creating a range of initiatives to support career development for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

As part of this review, OATSIA anticipates launching a new Entry Level Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in 2015. The new Entry Level Program will continue to provide a blend of on the job and accredited training to participants, peer support and culturally appropriate mentoring and support for managers. As part of this initiative, consideration is being given to providing for ACTPS workplace experience opportunities to years 10-12 students (drawing upon the Education and Training Directorate's school based Structured Workplace Learning Program) and a targeted open age traineeship program.

Consideration will also be given to a secondment type program to encourage experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to step into the ACTPS.

Currently under section 247F of the *Public Sector Management Standards 2006*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees may be promoted. It states:

The head of service may promote an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee to a position with the classification Administrative Service Officer Class 2, without an additional selection process if the appointment of the officer has been confirmed.

This issue is being considered as part of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* renewal process. This clause and potential changes will be included in and promotion of the new Act once finalised.

Retention

Recommendation 10

4.15 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service take the necessary steps to ensure exit data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees is collected and reported:

- (a) to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body;*
- (b) in directorate annual reports for 2013-14; and*
- (c) in annual ACT Public Service State of the Service reports.*

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The Government aims to improve the collection of exit survey data for workforce planning and reporting purposes. Presently, an exit survey is available to all staff to be completed on a voluntary basis.

In line with the review of the RED Framework, the ACTPS will consider how best to update the survey in line with the One Service model, and will consider continuous improvement in promoting the survey and its benefits to all staff (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 11

4.20 The Committee recommends that, as a matter of priority, the ACT Public Service take steps to ensure all ACT Public Service agencies have in place for all staff and in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees:

- (a) learning and development plans and*
- (b) career pathway plans.*

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The *ACT Public Service Performance Management Framework* (Performance Framework) sets out the objectives for performance management and development in the ACTPS and applies to all employees. It also aligns with Learning and Development to effectively build employee capability and actively encourage good performance.

Managers and supervisors of staff across the ACTPS can and do include detail regarding career development pathways in the learning and development component of individual Performance Development Plans.

This recommendation will be considered in the context of both the review of the RED Framework and as part of the continuous improvement review of the Performance Framework scheduled for 2014-2015.

Recommendation 12

4.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service develop an induction program for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees that augments the induction program for all new staff. At a minimum the program should alert these new employees to structures and processes in place for their benefit such as networks, buddy systems and mentoring.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Stage One of the review of the RED Framework highlighted that all directorates have included the RED Framework in directorate-based induction for all new staff:

The adoption of the RED Framework is further evidenced by all directorates reporting that RED is promoted to new staff through induction. Outlaying these principles and behavioural expectations at the beginning of employment indicates the RED Framework is embedded, and operates as 'business as usual'.¹

JACS provides an innovative example of an induction program to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees, which provided the following initiatives:

- the co-chair of JACS Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) welcomed the trainees and provided an overview of RAP at one of their induction training sessions;
- trainees were introduced to former trainees and encouraged to have mentors;
- trainees were also encouraged to participate in RAP meetings and ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander network;
- JACS developed a Welcome Pack for the trainees – which covered a wide range of topics ranging from leave management to understanding payslips, superannuation and budgeting;
- trainees met the Director-General and Deputy Director-Generals two times during the reporting year;
- trainees were also provided a job rotation during their traineeship;
- trainees were offered training in job application and job interview programs; and
- trainees were encouraged to participate in events of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Another initiative exists in the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) which has developed an induction process for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are introduced to the TAMS Aboriginal Liaison Officer and will be provided the opportunity to join the ACT Parks Murumbung Yurung Murra mentoring network.

Accordingly, the ACTPS will consult with the Indigenous staff network for their views on relevant matters for inclusion in whole-of-government induction.

These matters will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework, however, directorates have made some initial suggestions, including that a whole-of-government Induction Program should include bi-annual meetings/workshops to assist mentoring, buddy support and networking, and the program should involve directorate-specific input. The concept of providing whole-of-government elements for local induction will also be considered.

¹ P.3 – Stage One: Report on the Governance and Environmental Review of the RED Framework – April 2014

Cross-Cultural Training

Recommendation 13

4.37 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service review its cross-cultural training and take necessary steps to ensure it is of the highest standard, with benchmarking as appropriate.

Government Response: Agreed

A review of the current cultural awareness training will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework.

The content of the current Cultural Awareness training which is promoted via the Shared Services Training Calendar was developed in 2012 and is currently provided by a single provider under the ACTPS current Training Panel of Providers.

Approval for a new panel of providers has recently occurred and as a result contract negotiations will commence with an increased number of providers who would be able to provide relevant training.

Recommendation 14

4.38 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service ensure all staff undertake cross-cultural training so that they all possess high levels of cultural competence and that data on this training together with an assessment of its impact be reported in directorate and agency annual reports.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Stage One of the review of the RED Framework has indicated the principle of *diversity* (as defined in the RED Framework), has been adopted and embedded across the ACTPS, and operates as 'business as usual'. Particularly, Stage One indicated that the principles of the RED Framework provide a major part of directorate induction programs for new staff.

Directorates are supportive of cross-cultural training, and have indicated the importance of the training through the following examples:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training is classified as Highly Recommended for all staff in the Health Directorate under the Essential Education Policy. It should be noted that this is the most strongly recommended category within the policy short of the category Must Complete;
- 142 managers and staff within JACS undertook Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training from 1 July 2013 to 20 April 2014, bringing a total of 594 employees since the program was offered;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training was also delivered to all new operational staff of the ACT Corrective Services as part of induction; and
- JACS also support staff to participate in cross-cultural programs outside the ACTPS. These include the 2014 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) National Indigenous Studies Conference, What's Up with my Mob? and Red Dust Healing Workshop.

In this regard, the Government is interested in forming closer links with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to gain better understanding of its culture and customs, to enhance cross-cultural understanding relevant to the ACTPS, and the citizens we serve.

Accordingly, this recommendation will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 15

4.37 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service ensure all work environments are properly prepared for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This may mean additional cross-cultural training programs for the managers and/or supervisors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The Government will consult with the Elected Body to finalise the Toolkit for managers and supervisors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (Recommendation 4 refers).

The Toolkit will be an initial source of information for managers and supervisors of current and future employees who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent to facilitate appropriate cultural understanding and assist with embracing employee's background and knowledge base in order to enhance team diversity and inclusion.

The Toolkit and revised Recruitment Guidelines will encourage managers and supervisors to undertake all available cultural competency training.

Given the interest for ongoing cross-cultural training across the ACTPS, all related recommendations relating to facilitating an increased understanding and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Supporting the ACTPS Indigenous Network

Recommendation 16

4.39 The Committee recommends that, until the end of the current ACT Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, the ACT Public Service report to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body on a six-monthly basis providing data and information on the effectiveness of cross-cultural training.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The government currently reports on aspects of the Employment Strategy at Elected Body Estimates-style Hearings, Budget Estimates hearings, and Annual Report hearings on an annual basis.

Cross-cultural training is also reported in the annual ACTPS State of the Service Report.

This recommendation will be further considered in line with Recommendation 13 where the ACTPS has agreed to review its cross-cultural training to ensure it is of a high standard. In this context, the concept of how to benchmark in this area will be considered.

Recommendation 17

4.58 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service ensure induction programs for all new ACT Public Service employees include effective training on the handling of racism and bullying.

Government Response: Agreed

The Government has worked hard at outlining expectations regarding workplace behaviour, resulting in the ACTPS Code of Conduct and its supporting documents, including the RED Framework.

In the context of the review of the RED Framework, and in the interest of continuous improvement, the content of RED training will be revised and updated where necessary pending the reviewed recommendations, to include appropriate content regarding handling all forms of bullying, including racism.

However, given the diversity of workplaces across the ACTPS, the requirement for directorate-based inductions remains ongoing. Specific examples of directorate programs include:

- The Health Directorate covers the handling of workplace behaviour strongly within its Orientation and Induction programs;
- RED Framework and Workplace Bullying and Harassment Awareness training is mandatory for JACS employees. Managers and supervisors are required to participate in the RED Framework and Bullying Prevention and Management Program. The two programs are facilitated by WorkSafe ACT or approved trainers by WorkSafe ACT; and
- As outlined at the response to Recommendation 12, Stage One of the review of the RED Framework reported that all directorates promote the RED Framework to new staff through in-house induction.

Recommendation 18

4.64 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service take steps to ensure the ACTPS Indigenous Network is revitalised and recognised as a valuable resource to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACT Public Service.

Government Response: Agreed

The ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network (the Network) have met three times in the 2013/14 period.

OATSIA conducted a survey of the Network to gauge interest, numbers, work areas and frequency of meetings. In response the Network voted to meet four times a year.

A Working Group for the Network with representatives from CSD, ACT Health, ETD, JACS and the former EDD has been established. A major focus for the Network is on peer support and mentoring, however there will be opportunities for the Network through the working group to take forward significant issues.

CSD through OATSIA in conjunction with the Network Working Group is working to identify how best to support all directorates to develop their own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee networks to look at service delivery and employment issues at directorate-level. Some directorates have established their own networks to support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Recommendation 19

4.65 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service Indigenous Network meet regularly to discuss issues associated with the implementation of the ACT Public Service Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Government Response: Agreed

The Employment Strategy has been raised by the Network as being a significant issue for members. As service delivery and employment issues are at directorate-level, OATSIA is working

in partnership with CMTEDD towards identifying strategies to support all directorates to develop their own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Networks.

It has been suggested that feedback from the Network meetings could be provided to the Strategic Board and their sub-committees for consideration.

Recommendation 20

4.66 The Committee recommends that the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report on the operation of the ACTPS Indigenous Network in the annual report of the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

OATSIA is within CSD and as such reports its activities in the CSD annual report.

OATSIA is willing to provide input into the ACTPS *State of the Service Report* on the workings of the ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network. This will provide a central reporting mechanism for ACTPS performance against the Employment Strategy.

Recognition and Celebration

Recommendation 21

4.81 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service Strategic Board actively encourage NAIDOC week celebrations on a Service-wide basis.

Government Response: Agreed

Directors-General promote NAIDOC week celebrations and attendance by employees at these events. This also includes identifying the provisions by which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees can access special leave to attend cultural events.

Events during Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week are also promoted by OATSIA, who hold numerous cultural events.

During 2014 Reconciliation Week, the Head of Service (as Chair of the Strategic Board) actively encouraged all employees to attend events, and highlighted the opportunity for all staff to learn about and share our unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Cross ACTPS initiatives which facilitate the celebration of cultural dates of significance include:

- ACTPS enterprise agreements which provide for one day paid leave per annum to attend NAIDOC week activities. The leave can be broken into periods of less than one day and taken over various days;
- In addition to leave to attend NAIDOC week activities enterprise agreements also provide up to 10 days unpaid leave over a two year period to attend ceremonial obligations under Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander law;
- The definition of “immediate family” under ACTPS enterprise agreements recognises people identified through Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander kinship structure;
- In 2013-14, staff of JACS participated in events including the 36th Annual Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) Luncheon, NAIDOC Ball (including ACT NAIDOC Awards ceremony) and the Art exhibition at Southside Community Services Inc; and
- On 15 July 2013 ACT Corrective Services organised the AMC Family Day as part of the NAIDOC celebrations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees. The celebration was also attended by representatives from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, family members and children and ACT Corrective Services staff.

Recommendation 22

4.83 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs develop innovative approaches to celebrating the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACT Public Service.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

OATSIA is able to disseminate achievement information through its newsletter and other networks.

The Government will continue to look at ways to showcase the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and in relation to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. In 2014, six employees and an Executive Director were awarded under the *Respect, Equity and Diversity* category for promoting awareness about reconciliation at JACS.

Further innovative approaches to celebrate the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will be developed in consultation with the Commissioner for Public Administration and OATSIA, and considered in the review of the RED Framework.

Training and Mentoring

Recommendation 23

4.92 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service examine ways of working with the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre for the delivery of innovative diversity and mentoring training for all ACT Public Service employees.

Government Response: Agreed

The Government is committed to innovative ways to retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and will further investigate this recommendation in the context of the review of the RED Framework which is currently underway.

It should be noted that JACS is investigating this concept, and CMTEDD will monitor progress, including continuous improvements in the area of diversity and mentoring training.

Recommendation 24

4.94 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service ensure mentors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are drawn from those ACT Public Service employees who are respected within the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

As discussed in the ACTPS Submission to the Inquiry, mentoring, buddying and coaching programs currently in operation in ACT Health are being monitored centrally with a view to possible whole-of-government adoption/implementation. The operation and success of the buddying component of the CSD facilitated traineeship may also be considered in this context.

More broadly, this recommendation will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework, which is currently underway, including a process for matching mentor to mentee, dependent on role, skills and expertise, and a program to train mentors (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 25

4.108 The Committee recommends that the all ACT Public Service directorates and agencies ensure they have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment action plan with implementation underway during 2014-15, this to be managed by the proposed Project Team (Recommendation 1).

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The ACTPS Submission to the Inquiry outlined that, the ACTPS as a whole, led by CMTEDD and the Strategic Board, will continue to focus effort on identifying/investigating initiatives or measures that could be adopted to improve on our current achievements. With this in mind, and as discussed at Recommendation 1, this recommendation will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework.

The Committee should note that:

- ACT Health has their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Action Plan 2013-2018 currently in operation; and
- JACS launched their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2012-15 on 29 June 2012 in conjunction with the Directorate's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Plan builds on the RED Framework, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement, and Employment Strategy. Progress reports were updated half-yearly and included in JACS response to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Assembly Hearings.

Recommendation 26

4.115 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service establish a Work in the Assembly Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees along the lines of the current Work in the Assembly Program which is open to all ACT Public Service employees at the Administrative Service Officer 6 or Senior Officer Grade C levels.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Directorates have indicated support for such a program, including opportunities for employees to learn more about the Assembly by participating in the *Introduction to the Legislative Assembly* and *Budget Process* programs.

This recommendation will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework, and in consultation with the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Accountability and Reporting

Recommendation 27

5.6 The Committee recommends that the ACT Auditor-General conduct a performance audit of the implementation of the ACT Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in 2016 which encompasses implementation of recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services.

Government Response: Noted

This is a matter for the Auditor-General.

Recommendation 28

5.12 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service take prompt action to ensure the wider collection of data, including exit surveys, relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the ACT Public Service.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

As discussed at Recommendation 10, the Government aims to improve the collection of exit survey data for workforce planning and reporting purposes. The committee should note that some individual directorates collect exit data, including exit survey data for internal workforce planning.

This recommendation will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework, including how the Government can better encourage relevant staff to self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent through their HR21 profile.

Recommendation 29

5.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service Commissioner for Public Administration enhance the usefulness of his State of the Service Report by including analysis and interpretation of data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Government Response: Agreed

The Commissioner has recently reviewed the structure of the annual ACTPS State of the Service Report with a view to providing a narrative of the ACTPS's progress over the reporting period, including in relation to data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Recommendation 30

5.31 The Committee recommends that the ACT Public Service ensure information relating to the implementation and performance of the ACT Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People that is reported to the Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body also be reported to the Legislative Assembly to facilitate examination at annual reports inquiry hearings and/or Estimates Committee hearings.

Government Response: Agreed

Progress of the RED Framework and the Employment Strategies are currently reported:

- in the annual ACTPS State of the Service Report;
- at the annual Elected Body Estimates Style Hearing; and
- Estimates and Annual Report Hearings.

Indigenous Leadership Program

Recommendation 31

6.20 The Committee recommends that the Australian Capital Territory Public Service review the merit of implementing an Indigenous leadership program similar to that proposed by the New South Wales Public Service Commission and report its findings to the Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Legislative Assembly.

Government Response: Agreed

Directorates have indicated support for an Indigenous leadership program as a vehicle to increase the capability of current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait and to increase the

attractiveness of the ACTPS to aid in the attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Initial investigation of the program has commenced, and the recommendation will be considered in the context of the review of the RED Framework (see Government Response to Recommendation 1).