



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Jo Clay MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
27 October 2021

Asked by Dr. Marisa Paterson MLA on 27 October 2021: Mick Gentleman MLA took on notice the following question(s):

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In relation to:

DR PATERSON: Thank you, Chair. My question, I am aware of a sort of Caring for Country Program that was working with detainees, indigenous detainees, a few years ago. I was just wondering if there is any current work like a Caring for Country Program working with indigenous detainees at AMC?

Mr Gentleman: I have not got it in the back of my head. I might pass onto the Commissioner.

Mr Johnson: Thank you, minister. Look, there are a number of programs being run at AMC to support indigenous detainees. I think that particular program was being run out of legal policy in JACS but I am aware we have got a number of programs running that support indigenous detainees. So I might check with Richard or Karen on the understanding of that, where that has been run out of, but it is being run, is my understanding.

But the point to be made, though, with this, at this stage because of COVID and the restrictions on accessing detainees, it has been difficult to run programs less. We can run them online and most of these programs have their best effect if they are done in person. So again once we can work out the next stages with COVID-normal we will return to action. We are delivering those programs which have had to be paused.

Mr Glenn: And Dr Paterson, if I jump in there, I might need to take on notice the details of that program. However, we can come back to you on that but, as Commissioner Johnson says, the COVID environment has made that difficult. But we can provide you with more information.

Mick Gentleman MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Unit at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) coordinate a number of cultural programs, services, events and special initiatives such as Art Exhibitions. The approach taken in terms of cultural program delivery in the AMC has four main themes: Elders, Yarning, Art, and Culture & Land Management (CALM).

The CALM program has run in the AMC for around six years and has collected two NAIDOC awards. The CALM acronym appropriately reflects the emphasis provided by additional aspects of traditional

culture included in the program. Core to the program has been a Certificate II in Foundation Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways which includes Horticulture/Land Management Vocational Educational & Training elective stream. The program also has maintained a focus on language, literacy and numeracy foundation skills and readily attainable conservation and horticulture outcomes.

Some cultural aspects that have been covered at different stages through the CALM program over the years include:

- Traditional language education
- Basket weaving
- Traditional conservation and land management practices
- Traditional cultural art and artefact creation
- Traditional cultural dance and music
- Horticulture / Land Management / Conservation training
- Bush tucker plants being propagated and then planted into the jail gardens
- Aboriginal Family history tracing.

COVID-19 restrictions have presented a number of challenges to the delivery of many programs and services within the AMC in the past 18 months, including the CALM program. The AMC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Unit are currently undertaking preparatory work on the CALM program with a view to reintroducing it into the AMC in early 2022 for both men and women, in partnership with a number of external cultural service providers, taking a particular focus on horticulture, traditional land management and conservation or simply put “caring for country”.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature: 

Date: 8/11/2021

By the Minister for Corrections, Mick Gentleman MLA