



Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by **Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA:**

Reference: Hearing on 15 November 2023, Annual Report of Community Services Directorate

In relation to: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Supporting Implementation of the Uluru Statement

The Annual Report mentions future work 'supporting the implementation of the *Uluru Statement*' (p. 65). During Estimates hearings, I was told that 'the ACT Government is considering the most appropriate, culturally safe mechanism to progress planning on the Eminent Panel' (Estimates 2023 QON 219).

1. What progress has been made so far on developing a mechanism for the establishment of this panel?
2. Does the minister have confidence that this Eminent Panel can be established before the current term of government ends?

Minister Stephen-Smith: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Government continues to work through options that the community is comfortable with in the establishment of the panel. These conversations have been low key and targeted to ensure we understand the community's aspirations, particularly noting the impact of the recent Referendum process and outcome on the community.
2. The ACT Government is working in line with the wants and needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in genuine partnership to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Members of the community have indicated that they are not ready for the establishment of the Eminent Panel at this stage due to a number of other priority issues that have arisen.

The community will set time and pace for this journey and ACT Government will adhere to this with commitment and respect. Healing and truth telling should not be confined to election timelines and may extend into the next term of Government if it is determined by community that this is required.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

Date: 29 / 11 / 23

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