



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Laura Nuttall MLA

Addressed to: Mr Andrew Mehrton, Executive Branch Manager, Social Policy & Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs

In relation to: Capital of Equality Grants 2

Hearing: 20 February 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 63–64

Transcript provided: 26 February 2025

Answer Due: 5 March 2025 5:00:00 PM

Mr Mehrton took on notice the following question(s):

MISS NUTTALL: Beautiful. I am happy to continue the trend, actually, and ask about the Capital of Equality Grants Program. The CMTEDD annual report, I think it is page 202 in the pink highlighted section, states that 21 per cent of all awarded projects under the Capital of Equality Grants Program are either led by or benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people. Could you please explain how "benefits" is defined for this purpose?

Mr Mehrton: I can take a notice some detail, but I think "benefits" in the context of that annual report is whether the grant is either led by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, specifically.

ANDREW BARR MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Across all streams of the Capital of Equality Grants Program (the Grants Program) applications led by or for the benefit of the LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are prioritised.

Recognising the historical under-resourcing of LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives, the Capital of Equality Grants Program actively works to bridge gaps in grants accessibility.

The Connection Fund (stream 1) and the Partnership and Capacity Building Stream (stream 2) are the two streams in which community projects are funded.

When submitting an application for either of these streams, an applicant is required to identify whether their proposed project directly benefits or engages LGBTIQ+ people in Canberra from one or more diverse priority communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are explicitly listed as a priority community. Guidance is provided to all applicants to ensure that projects

demonstrate active, purposeful, and planned engagement, outlining the specific benefits for this community rather than listing priority cohorts without substantive engagement.

The assessment process is undertaken in accordance with established criteria and is conducted based on merit. However, the grants assessment process acknowledges that merit is not a one-size-fits-all concept. The Office recognises that different communities are at various stages of development and capacity building. This approach ensures that funding decisions are made with an awareness of the historical and systemic barriers that have created an uneven distribution of privilege, prioritising equity rather than uniformity.

Applications made by non-Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCO) or individuals are carefully reviewed to determine whether there are any benefits to the community. An application is deemed to demonstrate benefits to the community when clear and meaningful outreach or engagement approaches are planned.

If an application lists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a priority group by stating that their project is open to all LGBTIQ+ community members but does not provide details on how this group will be meaningfully engaged, it is not considered as directly benefiting this community. This determination is made with an understanding that a one-size-fits-all approach is not always effective and that tailored, community-led engagement strategies are necessary to ensure meaningful inclusion and impact.

The LGBTIQ+ Leadership Stream (stream 3) supports individual community leaders to undertake a range of professional development opportunities. Applications made by LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person are prioritised for funding.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature: 

By the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA

Date: **3.3.25**