

2020

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

STATEMENT

**Government Response to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Elected Body Report on the Outcomes of the
ATSIEB Hearings 2019 Ninth Report to the Act Government**

**Presented by
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Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
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I am pleased to present the Government Response to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body 2019 Hearings Report (the Report). Firstly, I would like to thank the Elected Body for providing the ACT Government with critical advice and expertise as we work together to achieve equitable outcomes for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Government Response covers the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Hearings held on 28 and 29 March 2019 and it is the Ninth Report to the ACT Government. The fourth Elected Body provided the Report to Government on 26 September 2019 and on 24 October 2019 I tabled the Report, as required under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* (the Act).

Over time, the Elected Body hearings have proved to be a successful way to bring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community's concerns and issues directly to the attention of senior officials and decision makers in the ACT Government. The hearings are driving real improvements to service delivery, policy development and better outcomes as a result.

The recommendations made by the Elected Body reflect the focus areas of the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028*. The ACT Government Response was compiled with input from all directorates and relevant agencies.

The Government Response covers seven whole-of-government recommendations and 17 recommendations for specific directorates and agencies. The Government has agreed to 17 recommendations; agreed-in-principle to a further three recommendations and noted four.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subcommittee of the ACT Public Service Strategic Board and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement Inter-Directorate Committee will monitor the implementation of the Report's recommendations.

Some of the agreed recommendations include the ACT Government committing to develop pipelines to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people achieve their careers

aspirations, including further training, education and employment and tracking the outcomes of their initiatives through targeted survey work.

The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Vocational Employment Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People is an entry-level program providing diverse employment opportunities at the Administration Services Officer Levels 1-4.

The ACTPS Graduate Program is actively promoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and graduates with adjusted eligibility requirements and support provided through the application and onboarding process. Both of these programs will be subject to annual evaluations to review their effectiveness and identify potential areas for improvement.

In addition, the ACT Government has agreed to ensure it meets its employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will include culturally inclusive practices in all recruitment processes.

Service-wide employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are incorporated into personal performance agreements between the Head of Service and Directors-General. The number of employees who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander currently represents 1.8 per cent of the ACTPS workforce.

The ACT Government has agreed to take measures to ensure that all case workers allocated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care have completed cultural awareness and competency training.

The ACT Human Rights Commission has agreed to develop a community engagement plan as part of implementing its Cultural Safety Strategy and will ensure this is provided in line with the Elected Body's *Protocols for Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

Success in delivering such initiatives will be due to the role the Elected Body plays as a voice to the Government and Legislative Assembly. It amplifies the community voice and holds

the government to account. Importantly, it ensures policy and services are delivered in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Once again I would like to thank the Elected Body for continuing the positive partnership with the ACT Government to address the needs and life aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.