

2025

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

TABLING STATEMENT

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE
IN THE ACT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**Presented by
Tara Cheyne MLA
Attorney-General
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Mister Speaker

The Government remains committed to reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system, including through meeting its targets under the Closing the Gap Agreement, and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028.

As part of that commitment, the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, from the University of Technology Sydney, was engaged to conduct an independent review into over-representation.

I am pleased to present the ACT Government's Interim Response to Jumbunna's Final Report, which was published on 30 July 2025, and copy of which is being tabled today.

In developing this report, the Jumbunna Institute undertook extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations, as well as non-Aboriginal organisations with First Nations programs and staff.

I thank each and every person who contributed to the Jumbunna Review. I recognise that this process is not easy. Each person who contributed has brought cultural knowledge and lived experience that cannot be replicated by government agencies or external experts. These contributions, individually and collectively, lay bare the multifaceted and interconnected drivers of over-representation – including intergenerational trauma, systemic institutional racism and lack of cultural safety. Talking about the justice system often means revisiting pain – pain from past injustices, from discrimination and from loss. I also reflect that some of the recommendations in here are not new, and that there is inherent harm in having to share the same experiences to reach the

same conclusions and recommendations, when implementation of these recommendations is what would have avoided the experiences. We are deeply grateful for the strength of those who are willing to speak, and we commit to hearing and responding to what has been shared.

The 99 recommendations in the Final Report identify specific and, in many cases, structural issues that require careful and coordinated action across the whole of Government – including corrective services, community supports, policing, courts and sentencing, the administration of bail, youth justice, child protection, and education.

The Interim Response reaffirms the ACT Government's commitment to working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to reduce over-representation in the criminal justice system.

The ACT Government will prioritise working with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led governance arrangements that can oversee the prioritisation and implementation of recommendations, including working with the Elected Body and with relevant Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

I appreciate that this Interim Response is a little unusual. This, together with the regular reporting on the recommendations as we work through responding to them, reflect the interrelated nature of recommendations, the need for genuine coordination, and that many recommendations cannot proceed without others first being implemented. I am hopeful that the approach we will take provides transparency on the progress of implementation while we go

about this significant undertaking across Government to achieve coordinated systemic and transformational reform. Once again, I thank all individuals, community organisations and government agencies who have generously contributed to the important work of the review. Your contributions are driving meaningful change.

Together, we will continue to build a justice system that is inclusive, culturally safe and equitable for all.