



Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021

QUESTION ON NOTICE

ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA: To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Ref: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, CSD Annual Report 2020–21, pp. 65–67, 161

In relation to: the Treaty Process

1. In a letter dated 15 December 2021, Minister Stephen-Smith wrote that she hoped that a facilitator for the treaty process would be appointed ‘early in 2022’. Has this appointment occurred, and if so, who is the facilitator? If the appointment hasn’t been settled yet, when should it be? Have there been any delays in making this appointment?
2. In the same letter, the Minister wrote that, to date, conversations about Treaty in the ACT have been guided by the United Ngunnawal Elders Council’ and, ‘under the principle of self-determination, we will be seeking a broader conversation with those who claim a connection to the ACT and region’. Has the government in any way communicated to Ngambri leaders/people that they can expect to be included in the treaty process?
3. Apart from Ngambri, what other Aboriginal groups who claim a connection to the ACT and region will be included in the treaty process? Has the government communicated this intention with any of them?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–

1. Yes, a facilitator has been engaged. On 11 February 2022, a contract was executed with Karabena Consulting to engage the services of Professor Kerry Arabena to facilitate community conversations about what a Treaty process would look like for the ACT.

Karabena Consulting is a 100 per cent Indigenous owned business and Supply Nation accredited. Professor Arabena was engaged through a single-select process due to her experience and skills in this field, and her well-established and trusted relationships with the Canberra community, which is fundamental to the success of this project. Based in Victoria, Karabena Consulting has a level of independence from the Canberra community, whilst also being familiar with the ACT, receiving endorsement from the United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC), and having valuable experience engaging with other traditional custodian family groups.

2. Professor Arabena, in the role of facilitator, will be having discussions with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who claim a traditional connection to the ACT. Conversations about Treaty in other jurisdictions have shown that it is important any initial exploratory process and community conversations are independent of government. Professor Arabena has trusted relationships within the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and is therefore well placed to lead this initial process.
3. People who identify and Ngarigu (or Ngarigo) also claim traditional connection to the ACT. All community members who claim a connection to the ACT will be included in the conversations about Treaty. The Government will be guided by Professor Arabena as to how this is undertaken.

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

Signature:



Date:

18/3/22

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