



## UPDATE

### FROM THE CHAIRPERSON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

**25 JULY 2018**

The Aboriginal Affairs Co-ordinating Committee (AACC) was established under section 19 of the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* to effectively coordinate activities of all persons and bodies, corporate or otherwise, providing or proposing to provide services and assistance to persons of Aboriginal descent. The AACC enables whole-of-government co-ordination on strategic government initiatives and policies that affect the lives of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

The meeting of the AACC on 25 July 2018 has been rescheduled to August 2018.

Since 1 July 2017 DPC has led a number of key activities in the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio to inform areas for renewed strategic focus of the AACC. These include:

**1. Aboriginal Policy and Co-ordination Unit-** the *Aboriginal Policy Unit* and *Land, Approvals and Native Title Unit* have been amalgamated as part of the broader government reform agenda for WA. Reflecting the intent of the Service Priority Review recommendations for Aboriginal Affairs, APCU aims to transform the relationship between Aboriginal people and government to deliver mutual and enduring benefits. APCU's mandate is aligned to the following work streams:

- *Reform & Strategy* - developing a whole-of-government Aboriginal Affairs strategy that focuses on: engagement; leveraging economic opportunity; and reforming systems.
- *State Agreements* - shaping the way the State approaches and engages with Native Title groups to resolve claims and leverage community defined opportunities.
- *Recognition & Partnership Projects* - partnering and building relationships with communities to deliver positive outcomes.

**2. Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing-** APCU has led the whole-of-government response to *Learnings from the Message Stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas*. The response forms a first step in the Government's ongoing commitment to improving Aboriginal youth wellbeing.

**3. Closing the Gap Refresh-** the Closing the Gap Refresh (CTG Refresh) agenda was agreed to at the second Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in 2016. DPC has carriage of the WA Governments response and has undertaken the following activities since 1 July 2017:

- *Aboriginal Community Engagement* - the APCU has completed a program of community engagement in over 10 priority locations through workshops hosted by Aboriginal Organisations, working with over 180 people.
- *COAG Special Gathering-* the Closing the Gap COAG Special Gathering brought together prominent Aboriginal leaders, policymakers and senior decision makers across Government. The WA delegation successfully communicated the State's position to the Commonwealth audience and underscored unique challenges WA has in remote service delivery.
- *Technical Expert Submissions* – APCU led two submission rounds for technical expert advice from Government Agencies, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and non-Government peak-body organisations to shape WA's response to the CTG Refresh. The data synthesised has informed prioritisation and development of potential targets



at Commonwealth-led Technical Workshops attended by more than 150 Aboriginal leaders, subject matter experts and national data custodians.

- *Closing the Gap Senior Officer Group* – DPC is establishing a Closing the Gap Senior Officer Group (CTG SOG), comprised of Agencies with a human service and economic development remit, guided by the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council and the AACC. The SOG will support development of WA's whole-of-government position on the proposed targets and ensure alignment to government commitments and reform priorities ahead of 4 October COAG.
- *Deputy Senior Officials Meeting 19 July 2018*- WA's position, priorities and aspirations for the CTG Refresh elicited significant alignment on key issues from members, helping to forge relationships with other jurisdictions in the lead up to COAG in October 2018.

**4. Office for Advocacy and Accountability Discussion Paper**- APCU is currently leading consultations around the recently released discussion paper on the proposed office for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal affairs.

APCU has distributed the discussion paper to all State Agencies, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, local governments, native title bodies, remote communities, town-based reserves, key Aboriginal organisations, academics, and non-governmental organisations. Formal submissions close on 7 September 2018 and direct engagement at officer level is encouraged.

APCU plans to convene a workshop for key government stakeholders to review the consultation feedback in September/October. A consultation summary report is planned for publication in November. A Cabinet submission is anticipated for February 2019.

Darren Foster  
**Chairperson**  
**Aboriginal Affairs Co-ordinating Committee**