



Your ref: D1709824

Our ref: 1353

Mr Darren Foster
Director General
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
AboriginalPolicy@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr *Darren* Foster

DISCUSSION PAPER – AN OFFICE FOR ADVOCACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS IN WA

Thank you for your letter dated 2 July 2018 requesting input from the Transport Portfolio in regard to the proposal to establish an office for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia.

The Portfolio recognises the need for a different service delivery to meet the needs of Aboriginal people, in particular, Aboriginal people in regional and remote WA; and acknowledges that the Government has room to improve the design and delivery of solutions which focus on the 'aboriginal experience'. Past initiatives to improve service delivery for Aboriginal people have been linked to initiatives of the Government of the day, and the Transport Portfolio welcomes the appointment of an independent advocate.

The Portfolio would like to see the office advocate for improved leadership in this area and would like the types of services provided by the office to include;

- ensuring better integration of services for remote and regional Aboriginal communities;
- acting as a conduit to Aboriginal groups when agencies are conducting engagement or collating the needs of the community;
- working with agencies to build capacity and capability in Aboriginal communities;
- building connections for organisations to meaningfully engage for operational outcomes;
- advocacy for Torres Strait Islanders, some of whom are residents of WA;
- improved practical assistance and guidance to assist Aboriginal people through the various processes of government, including in the areas of procurement and employment in order to achieve a greater representation of Aboriginal people in these areas;
- provision of services to provide Aboriginal people, including youth, with familiarity and exposure to government and parliamentary processes;

- consideration of gender bias and any specific needs amongst Aboriginal women and girls;
- supporting the recognition of cultural knowledge and connection to country including Aboriginal sites, places of special significance and the protection of cultural heritage; and
- liaison with established community service organisations currently engaging with Aboriginal communities to understand and provide support for the 'aboriginal experience'.

The name of the new office should be easily recognisable and highlight the intent of the office. Suggestions include 'Advocate for Aboriginal people' or 'Commissioner for Accountability in Aboriginal Affairs'.

An independent body such as the Equal Opportunity Commission could be involved in the appointment process for the office holder.

The Transport Portfolio is committed to supporting the Government in closing the gap to resolve many of the deeper systemic issues for Aboriginal people and supports the establishment of an independent statutory office to advocate and be accountable for Aboriginal people's interests in government policy and performance.

Yours sincerely



Richard Sellers
Director General Transport

4/19/2018