



Australian Government

Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council

Warren Mundine
Chair

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

In accordance with the requirement of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council's (the Council) Terms of Reference to report annually to the Government, via letter to the Prime Minister, I am pleased to submit the 2015 annual report on the Council's activities. This report covers Council's advice to government and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the period 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2015.

Council's purpose is to provide advice to the Government on Indigenous affairs, and focus on practical changes to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Within our broader remit, the Council has been tasked to focus on advice relating to improving school attendance and educational attainment, creating lasting employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the real economy and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Council's Achievements

Council's focus on the Government's priority areas over the past twelve months is evidenced by the considered advice provided to yourself, former Prime Minister Abbott and Ministers during Council meetings and out-of-session meetings.

Council has met a total of 12 times since its establishment. Council met with former Prime Minister Abbott eight times, including the visit to the Torres Strait, and has met once with you. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, and Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, have also met regularly with the Council.

At these meetings Council has discussed and provided advice on Indigenous reviews and processes including:

- the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia
- deregulation
- the COAG Investigation into Land Use and Administration (including Native Title),
- opportunities for economic and enterprise development in Indigenous communities
- the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy; and

- the Employment Parity Initiative.

Council also received briefing and provided advice on a range of matters, including:

- the quality of school education
- Closing the Gap
- the Empowered Communities model
- the Remote School Attendance Strategy
- the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and review
- initiatives to address domestic violence, including the Cashless Welfare Card and \$100m Women's Safety Package; and
- Constitutional reform.

Council engaged with Government on key Indigenous policy issues and sought briefings and discussions with Commonwealth departments, state and territory government representatives, peak bodies and key stakeholders, in consideration of key reviews and processes.

Working Group Achievements

To support the development on key priorities, Council has established three working groups in support of the Government's three priority areas; Education, Employment and Economic Development and Community Safety, to consider in greater detail policy initiatives, reviews and implementation processes. These Working Groups have consulted with key stakeholders and have reported back to Council and provide considered advice on the efficacy of current Government initiatives, gaps in service delivery and stakeholder views.

Education Working Group

The Education Working Group convened via teleconference five times over the year and has provided specific advice to Council on:

- options for further improving school attendance
- quality teaching in remote Indigenous communities
- higher education
- ABSTUDY reforms; and
- the integration of early childhood services in response to Recommendation One of the Forrest Review.

Working Group members will continue working on these priorities, as well as exploring ideas for improving literacy into 2016.

Employment and Economic Development Working Group

The Employment and Economic Working Group met via teleconference four times and face-to-face once, and focused on a number of work priorities over the past year including:

- improving support for Indigenous businesses
- better targeting funding arrangements to support Indigenous employment
- improving remote employment
- achieving employment parity and the Indigenous Procurement Policy

- the effectiveness of the Community Development Programme, including linking training to real jobs; and
- increasing Indigenous employment in the Commonwealth public and private sector.

The Working Group will continue to focus its attention on similar issues into 2016.

Community Safety Working Group

The Community Safety Working Group met via teleconference five times and also held men's and a women's expert forums over one day with Indigenous leaders, business representatives and sporting codes to discuss issues concerning changing social norms, the role of frontline staff and professionals and improving support for victims of violence. This drove a body of work progressed by the Chair aimed at addressing concerns around high levels of tolerance of violence and the potential role that sporting clubs can play to address this. Teleconferences and meetings were held with the NSW Deputy Commissioner of Police, CEOs of the Coalition of Major Professional and Participatory Sports, and domestic violence organisation No More, White Ribbon and Our Watch with whom a Statement of Intent to work more collaboratively was also brokered. The Chair also attended a range of additional meetings with Ministers and advisors (e.g. Minister Payne, Minister Cash, Minister Nash etc) to discuss these issues. The Working Group has considered current policies and potential options for reducing alcohol misuse, reoffending – particularly in relation to violent offences and child abuse and neglect. The Working Group has also focused its advice on areas for improvement including:

- improving support for victims of domestic violence through improving support mechanisms and frontline services
- prevention and early intervention of family violence
- normalising the reporting and disclosure of family violence
- stronger police presence in remote Indigenous communities; and
- alcohol management.

In 2016 the Working Group will focus on providing advice on the COAG Advisory Panel's communication campaign, the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Protect Women and their Children and the Third Action Plan of the National Framework to Protect Australia's Children.

Consultation and Engagement

In accordance with Council's Terms of Reference, Council has engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including existing advocacy bodies, to ensure that the Government has access to a diversity of views. Members have sought the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through a range of mechanisms including:

- attendance at community and other events, where members have made formal presentations on Indigenous policy issues, participated in forums, panels and Q&A sessions;
- speaking engagements and attendance at conferences, forums and workshops conducted by representative and advocacy groups, peak bodies, academic and research institutions;
- visits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote, regional and urban settings;

- through Council members' own professional and social networks; and
- through all forms of the media, including social media, print, television and radio.

Council has proactively sought to consult with peak bodies and state and territory governments through the activity of Council's Working Groups on Education, Employment and Economic Development, and Community Safety and plans to undertake specific community engagement in 2016 to help inform its advice to Government.

By way of example, in addition to consultations undertaken through the Working Groups, the Chair has participated in approximately 48 out-of-session events and meetings including with state and territory governments, academics, community representative bodies and individuals. Other council members have participated in at least 21 other out-of-session engagements.

Through the media, Council has raised awareness of its work, encouraged discussion and sought community feedback on Indigenous issues. Through the Chair and individual members, Council has utilised television, radio, newspapers and magazines, as well as social media.

From 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2015, 506 items of correspondence were received by Council. Around a quarter were requests for meetings and invitations to forums, conferences and events. Of the 44 invitations and meetings accepted by Council, sixteen per cent related to education, school attendance and early childhood, sixteen percent related to health, drugs and alcohol and mental health, twenty six per cent related to culture, twenty one per cent related to economic participation and employment, and thirteen per cent related to the prevention of violence, justice and community safety.

Council shares your commitment to making a real and significant difference to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We look forward to continuing to provide advice on these key priority areas to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Yours sincerely

section 47F



Warren Mundine

18 January 2016



Document 2

Australian Government

Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council

Warren Mundine
Chair

The Hon Tony Abbott
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

In accordance with the requirement of our Terms of Reference, I am pleased to submit the first annual report on the Indigenous Advisory Council's activities. This report covers Council's advice and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the period from December 2013 to November 2014.

Council's purpose is to provide advice to the Government on Indigenous affairs, and focus on practical changes to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Within our broader remit, you asked us to focus on improving school attendance and educational attainment, creating lasting employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the real economy and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Council's focus on the Government's priority areas over the past twelve months is evidenced by the considered advice provided to yourself and Ministers during Council meetings.

Since you announced the establishment of Council on 25 September 2013, Council has met with you five times, including its inaugural meeting on 5 December 2013. Council also met on three further occasions during this period (eight times in all). The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion and Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, have attended all meetings.

At these meetings Council has provided advice on a range of priority issues, including the Remote School Attendance Strategy, the Review of Indigenous Training and Employment Programmes (Forrest Review), the development and implementation of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, Constitutional Recognition and quality teaching in remote Indigenous communities.

Council also received briefing and provided advice on the Commission of Audit, the Indigenous Business Australia and Indigenous Land Corporation review, proposed amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act, the Native Title Act, the Empowered Communities initiative, the Review of Australia's Welfare System, the Federation White Paper and the structure of the new PM&C Network.

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Council engaged with Government on key Indigenous policy issues and sought briefings and discussions with Commonwealth departments, state and territory government representatives, peak bodies and key stakeholders, in consideration of key reviews and processes.

To support the development on key priorities, Council has established three working groups to consider in greater detail policy initiatives, reviews and implementation processes. These working groups have consulted with key stakeholders and have reported back to Council and provide considered advice on the efficacy of current Government initiatives, gaps in service delivery and stakeholder views.

The Education Working Group has provided specific advice to Council on options for further improving school attendance and quality teaching in remote Indigenous communities. Working group members will continue working on these priorities, as well as exploring ideas for improving literacy, in 2015.

The Employment Working Group has focused primarily on providing input to the Forrest Review. Since the release of *Creating Parity – The Forrest Review* the working group has supported the Forrest Review Implementation Feasibility Taskforce through the consultation process and considering the outcomes of consultations. The working group has also played a significant role in developing advice to Government on responding to the Forrest Review recommendations. This work is likely to take up much of the working group's time over the ensuing months as Government further develops its response to the Forrest Review recommendations.

The Safety Working Group has considered current policies and potential options for reducing recidivism and incarceration rates, especially around transition to training and employment for Indigenous people who have had contact with the justice system. The Safety Working Group has also expressed interest in further exploring initiatives for supporting victims of family violence. In 2015 the Safety Working Group will focus on family violence and recidivism.

Council is looking forward to the release of the Empowered Communities initiative report and the suite of reform principles and recommendations to the Australian Government from the Empowered Community Leaders across eight regions. Council may establish a new working group in 2015 to focus on the recommendations of this report.

Council members have sought the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, community members and advocacy bodies through a range of mechanisms including:

- attendance at community and other events, where members have made formal presentations on Indigenous policy issues, participated in forums, panels and Q&A sessions;
- speaking engagements and attendance at conferences, forums and workshops conducted by representative and advocacy groups, peak bodies, academic and research institutions;
- visits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote, regional and urban settings;
- through Council members' own professional and social networks; and
- through all forms of the media, including print, television and radio.

Council has proactively sought to consult with peak bodies and state and territory governments through the activity of Council's working groups on education, employment and community safety. The Employment Working Group has participated in public and community consultations on the recommendations of the Forrest Review.

By way of example, in addition to consultations undertaken through the working groups, the Chair has participated in approximately 100 out-of-session events and meetings including with state and territory governments, academics, community representative bodies and individuals. Other council members have participated in at least 24 other out-of-session engagements.

Through the media Council has raised awareness of its work, encouraged discussion and sought community feedback on Indigenous issues. Through the Chair and individual members, Council has had exposure to television, radio, newspapers and magazines, as well as social media.

Since establishment to 30 November 2014, 751 pieces of correspondence were received and considered by Council – around half were requests for meetings, invitations to forums, conferences and events. Of the 110 invitations accepted by Council, fourteen per cent related to education, school attendance and early childhood, fourteen per cent related to health, drugs and alcohol and mental health, twelve per cent related to economic participation and employment and ten per cent related to the prevention of violence, justice and community safety.

Council was pleased to take on the additional role of Ministerial Advisory Council on Deregulation for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. In this role, Council has advised on ways to reduce the administrative and compliance burden on Indigenous communities, businesses and service providers, including specific advice on reducing red tape related to governance, environment, heritage and land management regulations.

Council shares your commitment to making a real and significant difference to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We look forward to continuing our work in 2015.

Yours sincerely,

section 47F

Warren Mundine
12 December 2014