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MEDIA RELEASE

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body: End of Year Report Card

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body has completed its scrutiny of the ACT Government's delivery of services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT community in 2010/11.

The process, which was a two day 'estimates style' hearings process, involved all nine ACT Government Directorates, including the Canberra Institute of Technology and ACT Policing.

Rod Little, Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, said that the 'estimates style' hearings was an opportunity for members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to raise community concerns with decision makers in the ACT Government Directorates at the highest possible levels.

"The process gives our members a chance to pass on community concerns about the effectiveness and the cultural appropriateness of the delivery of services and programs in a formal setting" said Mr Little.

Elected Body Members had analysed the 2010-11 Annual Reports for each Directorate and were guided by other key documents, including the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement, the Elected Body's previous two reports and the ACT Government's response to those reports.

"This is really about making sure the checks and balances against report recommendations are being delivered on by the various Directorates.

"It's an opportunity to hear about how the ACT Government is responding to the needs of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

"Importantly, the process is about measuring the progress in closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage".

Mr Little emphasised during the hearings that all recommendations contained in the various reports are critical priorities for the local community.

While there was good progress in some areas such as employment and housing, Mr Little said that while the two day hearings were a formal way to keep ACT Government on track, there should be more opportunities for monitoring progress.

“We believe that directorates should be updating the Elected Body on a regular basis throughout the year.

“More regular reporting would be a more effective way to see what was working well, and where the shortfalls were, and these could be addressed quickly”.

Mr Little said that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the community valued the process of accountability greatly.

He extended the Body’s appreciation to the Directorates for their co-operation and contribution throughout the hearings, particularly their willingness to take on advice offered by the Elected Body Members.

Statement Ends

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