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Since its inception in 2008, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body has identified a number of key issues – and recommendations to address them

Key issues

During their first term from 2008 to 2011 the Elected Body identified a number key issues with recommendations to address them.

Key Issues - 2009 Report

The Elected Body identified 6 key issues as follows:-

- ACT Government directorates and agencies improve collection and management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data.
- The ACT Government implements a whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and development strategy.
- ACT Government directorates and agencies better inform and promote ACT Government services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.
- The Education and Training Directorate improves support for school-aged students during the transition to high school and beyond to maintain literacy and numeracy achievements.
- The Health Directorate ensures an increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers at the Canberra Hospital.


- The Justice and Community Safety Directorate pursues recurrent funding for the Indigenous liaison officer at the Women's Legal Centre.

Key Issues - 2011 Report

During 2010 the Elected Body identified a further 16 key issues and they are as follows:-

- The ACT Government must consult with the Elected Body when making any commitments to address the issue of social inclusion as stated in the objectives and outcomes of the Closing the Gap: National Indigenous Reform Agreement.
- To overcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage the ACT Government and its directorates — through a strategic policy framework — focus increased budget allocation and policy attention in the following areas:
 - education
 - health
 - law and justice
 - housing

In line with the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate provide a report on actions, funds



allocated and expended to-date, based on the framework goals as shown below:

- Improve all Australian justice systems so that they comprehensively deliver on the justice needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a fair and equitable manner.
- Reduce over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders, defendants and victims in the criminal justice system.
- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander feel safe and are safe within their communities.
- Increase safety and reduce offending within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by addressing alcohol and substance abuse.

Strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people communities through working in partnership with governments and other stakeholders to achieve sustained improvements in justice and community safety.

The ACT Government fund an expansion of the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body including a full-time chairperson for the next term of the Elected Body whose specific role is to liaise with the Commonwealth on development of policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.

The ACT Government transfer all administration and resources aligned with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to the Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate.

The Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body by increasing research, reporting, administrative and support services.

The ACT Government to work with the Australian Government in the funding of an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

Under the ACT Recruitment and Career Development Framework, ACT Government agencies create scholarships and/or cadetships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in:

- child care
- preschool
- teachers
- nursing

The ACT Government develops a proposal for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care and Disability facility including respite services in the ACT to service the ACT and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged and disabled population.

The ACT Government review its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and homelessness services in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

The referral pathways for the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm be developed ensuring appropriate support for families of those accessing the service.


The Education and Training directorate replicates its Skill-based Training Program — successful with Erindale College's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 11 and 12 students — to all ACT colleges.

The ACT Government create a discrete ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander foster care agency.

ACT Government agencies have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency Program for all managers and frontline staff.

The ACT Government develop a discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Small Grants Program to promote the history, culture and achievements of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and assist in their aspirations.

The ACT Government implement a linguistic program based on the model and paper provided to the Education and Training Directorate during the hearings.



Key Issues – 2012 Report

During the period since the previous report, ATSIEB identified a further 24 recommendations aligned in 7 priority areas, Health, Schooling, Safe Communities, Governance and Leadership, Economic Participation, Healthy Homes and Early Childhood.

Some of the main themes were around:

- A recommitment to the original budget allocation for the establishment of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Far, on Paddy's River to maximise outcomes.
- That the ACT Government establish an independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community controlled child welfare organisation that both will be a service delivery conduit for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as to undertake an advocacy role in relation to children that are coming into the foster care and protection environment. A shared funding arrangement between ACT and NSW Governments to fund the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled child welfare organisation as a service hub of the surrounding region should be examined as part of this process.
- The ACT Government establish a dedicated and sustainable ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Advocacy and Service organisation.

- The ACT Government hand back control of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre in Lady Denman Drive, to an appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation in the ACT as agreed by ATSIEB.

Full copies of the Hansard transcript and 2011 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body – Report on the Outcomes of the ATSIEB Hearings 2011 can be found at www.atsieb.com.au