

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ELECTED BODY

(Reference: Estimates process 2019-2020)

Members:

**MS KATRINA FANNING (Chairperson)
MS JOANNE CHIVERS (Deputy Chairperson)
MS PAULA McGRADY
MRS CAROLINE HUGHES
MR MAURICE WALKER
MR JACOB KEED**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2020

Committee contact officer:

Ms Margaret Beattie
ATSIEB Secretariat
Community Services Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

APPEARANCES

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	1
Canberra Institute of Technology	43

The Elected Body met at 9.34 am.

Appearances:

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Leigh, Ms Kathy, Head of Service

Evans, Ms Jacinta, Deputy Director-General, Workforce Capability and Governance Division

Arthy, Ms Kareena, Deputy Director-General, Economic Development

Croke, Ms Leesa, Deputy Director General

Pryce, Mr David, Deputy Director-General, Head of Access Canberra

Nicol, Mr David, Under Treasurer

Miners, Mr Stephen, Deputy Under Treasurer, Economic, Budget and Industrial Relations

Konti, Ms Bettina, Chief Digital Officer

Wright, Mr Robert, Executive Group Manager, Corporate

Mehrton, Mr Andrew, Executive Branch Manager, Social Policy

Andersen, Ms Josephine, Executive Branch Manager, Skills Canberra

Priest, Ms Jenny, Executive Branch Manager, Innovation, Industry and Investment

Kobus, Mr Jonathan, Director, Visit Canberra

Saddler, Mr Scott, Senior Director, National Arboretum Canberra

Purser, Mr David, Executive Branch Manager, Goods and Services Procurement

THE CHAIR: In opening the 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body hearings, it is only proper for us to begin with a welcome to country. I would like to ask Member Hughes to provide that for us.

MRS HUGHES: (*Ngunnawal language spoken.*) My name is Caroline Hughes and I am a Ngunnawal elder of the Ngunnawal nation, traditional custodians of Canberra and the region. I would like to acknowledge my fellow Elected Body members who are in the room with me, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us here today. I particularly acknowledge Kathy Leigh, Director-General of CMTEDD, and other staff who are here today.

I would like to address you in the words of the Ngunnawal people, my ancestors:

Yuma. Yumalundi.

Yanggu ngalawiri dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari.

Dhawura nguna ngurambangya.

Mura bidji mulangaridjinyila,

Gulambununyi naraganawaliyiri yarabininyin.

Nguna yarabi yanggu.

Yumalundi.

What I have said in English is hello—welcome. Today we are all gathered together on Ngunnawal country. This country is my ancestral, spiritual homeland. Together we are keeping the pathways of our ancestors alive by all of us walking together as one.

We may leave our footprints on this land today. (*Ngunnawal language spoken.*)
Welcome.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Caroline, not just for offering thanks for all of us but also for giving that in a couple of languages. I am sure our Hansard colleagues will be very happy for that help. What a wonderful way to start with local language for these hearings.

I also acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and that this has been and always will be Ngunnawal country. I acknowledge the incredible sacrifices over many generations of their people to maintain their relationship with country and with people, and the generosity with which they have embraced so many of us who have come to live on their country. I recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in the Elected Body and note that within the directorate, and even in staff of the directorate here today, we also have Aboriginal people with us. I acknowledge the work that they do in particular.

Thank you to the director-general and your staff not only for the very solid attendance today but also for the work that goes into preparations for the hearings. I have always thought that this is one of the most important parts of what makes the Elected Body an important function. That has been made so much clearer to me over the last 12 months, having done the work across many jurisdictions and seen that this type of accountability between community and government does not exist anywhere else in our country and is quite aspirational for many of our communities. It is wonderful to be able to be part of that.

We want to make a couple of comments. I will give you a chance to, if you want to, make an opening statement as well, director-general.

In particular, we want to provide our thanks for a few key achievements over the last year that we think are real standouts from the directorate. A lot of these questions are getting to the things that have not progressed or trying to understand how well they have progressed, but there are a few things in particular that, through our relationships, are things that give us a great sense of pride, and hopefully for your staff as well. Certainly in some of them I have seen that sense of pride from your staff as well.

The first is the development and implementation of the Indigenous procurement policy and some of the unique features of that that position it as a more mature and advanced policy than, I think, exists anywhere else in the country and that will deliver real economic benefit to our community over many years to come. The way that that has been handled and built into the system has been a real success story so far. Obviously it is only the starting phase of that story, but a significant one nonetheless.

Over the last 12 months we have also, between your directorate and us and a couple of the other directorates, done a very important job in getting Boomanulla Oval refurbished in the way that it was refurbished. Not only were we able to hold a wonderful opening event there but also there have been a couple of very significant events for our community that unfortunately have happened in that time that would not have felt right if we had not been able to host them there and have the support that we have had in doing that. The way that those projects were run in partnership and

with respect for the culture and history of that place has filled us with pride to be able to be part of as well.

Third, the work of your officers was instrumental in making sure the new national agreement around closing the gap was signed and put in place. The ACT once again led that. Unlike other jurisdictions, who kept finding ways as to why it could not be done in that time frame, your staff just found a way to get it done. We have been able to build the strength of our agreement into those national arrangements as well because of the commitment of your staff and their understanding of those agreements.

As we indicated in the lead-up to the hearings, predominantly the questions relate to the 18-month action plans and agreements. As has been consistent, particularly in the term of this Elected Body, for some of the directorates we have community-based questions that have been put to us that we always give a commitment to ask. There are a couple of things to follow up about how we are progressing on the recommendations from the last hearings as well, but they are not inconsistent with the commitments in the agreement. I understand that you have a copy of those, which might help to direct traffic as to who may need to help you with answering those.

Before getting into our formal questions—of course we have developed them as a collective but, to help with timing and things, given that this is my portfolio responsibility I will ask the lead questions and other members if they have follow-up questions may jump in as well—director-general, I would like to give you an opportunity to make a short opening statement if you would like to.

Ms Leigh: Thank you, chair. First I would also like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, the traditional custodians of this land. What I always particularly like to do at all events is acknowledge the contribution that all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of our service make to the quality of that service, whether it is the advice we give to our ministers or the service that we provide on their behalf directly out to the community. I would also like to thank the Elected Body for the support that you provide to us in trying to improve our understanding and performance in providing appropriate services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the ACT. In particular, chair, as our direct representative, we found our engagement with you extremely helpful in thinking through how we are going to achieve the different objectives that we set for ourselves. We found that very helpful and we appreciate it.

We are here to endeavour to provide as much information as we can. If there are areas where we are not able to fully provide that information immediately, we will try either to gather it during these proceedings and come back to you during the proceedings or to provide it to you subsequently. But I am hoping that we will be able to engage with you in a way that is helpful today.

THE CHAIR: Excellent. Given that our term ends in July of this year, a quick response to questions that do need to be handled outside this process would be greatly appreciated. Coming into this role, inheriting someone else's hearings report to sign off was a bit tricky, so we are trying to not leave that legacy for whoever takes these seats post us. So that would be helpful.

Ms Leigh: You certainly have our commitment that we will support you in achieving that.

THE CHAIR: Thank you; I appreciate that. Let us begin. The first few questions are questions that we are going to ask across all directorates. They relate particularly to agreements, commitments and things that are in the public-facing action plans. What has been the undertaking by the directorate to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders by 2021?

Ms Leigh: In answering this, I acknowledge that in terms of achieving this there are a lot of initiatives that support awareness of Aboriginal culture and therefore make our public service a welcoming place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work, and that that is a deeper support for achieving this over the long term.

THE CHAIR: Of course.

Ms Leigh: But because the question is specifically about 2021, I want to talk about two things that were specifically done in CMTEDD. First of all, I am pleased to say that we have just gone out for an expression of interest in the newly created position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural adviser. The emails for this expression of interest went out yesterday; that is how recent this work is. It is the result of work that has been ongoing for some time to create this role.

The thinking behind this role is that we have in our directorate, as do all directorates, a wealth of current employees who not only bring their expertise to their substantive role but also have the capacity to contribute more broadly to our directorate and our cultural competency as a directorate. It is something that we were not formally capturing, so the thinking was to formally create a role where that additional contribution could be properly recognised and properly harnessed.

The role is to provide leadership and advocacy across the directorate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and to support the delivery of our reconciliation action plan. The idea is, as I said, to formalise something we already benefit from: the contribution that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff make to our directorate's cultural understanding more broadly. This is to formalise that, to recognise that contribution and then to support a particular staff member to more formally provide that contribution.

We are leaving it open as to exactly the level of the position, but it is for executives at the senior executive level, or senior executive grade A, B and C. It is focused on a senior role, appropriately giving it the right status within the directorate. I am particularly pleased about that. I am hoping that it might be successful and be a model that then might be able to be picked up across the service. The other initiative that we have taken is an identified position in our policy and cabinet team, which is a core team for whole-of-government policy work.

Ms Croke: We have an identified position in policy and cabinet in our social inclusion and equality team. That position has been filled and we have that person in that role. She has probably been in that role for close to six months now. It has been fantastic. As I said, it is in our social inclusion and equality team. One of the key roles

of that team is to provide briefings to the Chief Minister in his role as the Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality. That has been working really well. We use her to then talk to us and provide advice to the whole division about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. But we know we have a resource and someone we can test some thinking with if we are not certain whether we are approaching things in the right way, whether we have our inclusion hats on.

We did have to go out to the market twice for that position. We were not quite satisfied with the field the first time we went around, so we engaged an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment firm and they helped us to attract the candidates.

THE CHAIR: Both of those sound like quite significant senior roles with a very distinct Indigenous focus. But the Indigenous roles within the directorate are quite limited. Has there been any work undertaken in workforce planning, for example, to identify how to have senior leaders in mainstream roles?

Mr Wright: One of the key deliverables in our upcoming stretch RAP—which has informal endorsement from Reconciliation Australia but we are waiting on formal endorsement—is the delivery of an employment strategy of which one of the key deliverables is around developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employment pathways across all employment levels. A really strong piece of feedback from our reconciliation action plan working group was to develop this across all levels, leading to guaranteed permanent positions—and we acknowledge that insecure work is an even bigger issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff than it is for the broader community—within the directorate, provide support and progress opportunities at senior levels. That is one of the commitments we have made there. The other thing, as you would—

THE CHAIR: What I am particularly interested in is things that have actually happened, not the commitments into the future.

Mr Wright: In terms of employment—and this is not all senior-level stuff—we have increased our overall workforce of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to 2.7 per cent. That is the beginning; that is not the end. But at this time last year it was 1.78 per cent for the same pay period. Part of that is about increasing the overall numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, which will lead to more people at senior levels.

THE CHAIR: That gives me a good sense of some of the activities within the directorate. Given that the directorate also has responsibility across the whole of the ACT public service, what activities have been undertaken to grow that senior leadership more broadly?

Ms Evans: One particular initiative that I think we will start to see growing more of our senior leaders is around the graduate program. That is a really important opportunity for a person who is coming into the workforce with some skills and training to enter at a level that allows them to move through the various roles.

We had one person come in in the last round of graduates, the 2020 round, who is an

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. We were really pleased with that, because it is not a very big cohort. I think we had 45 graduates in total this year, and we had that one person. We did receive a few other applications and they were unfortunately not successful this time. But we would be hoping to look at ways in which we can grow the numbers coming in through the graduate program.

THE CHAIR: But in the graduate program, as I understand those programs, they come in at relatively junior levels.

Ms Evans: They come in at about level 5.

THE CHAIR: I am particularly interested in whether there has actually been anything directly done over the last 18 months for senior leadership roles across the ACT public service.

Ms Evans: Probably the most significant thing would be the work we have done around career development programs and working with our staff around those opportunities. In the senior levels, we have had a leadership development program for participants at the SOG A/B level. We had 21 participants. That identified the expectations of senior leaders, explored different leadership styles, reviewed insights on how to motivate others, reflected on personal leadership styles—the general range of activity that you would expect in that kind of training or leadership opportunity. Twenty-one of our more senior public servants looking towards maybe an executive role in the future have now taken part in that. That has given them also some techniques and identified where they can go for further support out of that training program.

THE CHAIR: As at our last hearings, that fits with my position in that I think you do have a really strong cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the public service. So I am happy to hear that they are getting a focus and we are not just parachuting people in over the top. Whilst we might need both into the future to grow the numbers as we need to, that they are getting in focus is good to hear.

Our next question relates to experiences of racism. What we are after from the directorates is to understand what work has been undertaken to date to reduce experiences of racism and discrimination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within government systems by 80 per cent by 2028, which is one of the commitments in the public-facing action plans of the agreement. Could you explain to us how, at least in your directorate, that is measured?

Ms Leigh: I thought we would focus on the internal actions in terms of the public service and then on our contribution to the government's outward-facing actions. I will start with our inward-facing actions. I might ask Jacinta to start by talking about some of the training and cultural awareness across the service. I would like to ask Robert to talk about that within CMTEDD.

I would also like to talk particularly about our focus on language, because if we all understand and appreciate Ngannawal language, that is a strong basis for improving respect across the service. That is something that I personally feel is a strong way to improve appreciation and respect. After we have looked at both the whole of public

service measures and the CMTEDD ones, I would also like to look at our contribution outwards. I would like to ask Kareena to talk about Reconciliation Day and our contribution to that in particular. Does that meet what you are—

THE CHAIR: We are going to cover some of those areas in a range of questions, and I am conscious of the time we have available. What I am particularly after is what sorts of structures you have in place to identify when racism occurs and how you measure how you are addressing that. I get that there are a range of programs; in fact, there are some questions that will help us get to those later on. But for us one of the critical parts is how people can raise that as an issue with you and then what happens with it.

Ms Leigh: We can again talk about across the service and within CMTEDD, and our RED officers and the support we provide to people to bring forward concerns.

Ms Evans: Chair, I am not sure I can answer in terms of measuring. What I am aware of is that we have specifically, since the last hearings, been working on training around unconscious bias, to make people more aware of when unconscious bias is present. We are doing a review at the moment of the respect, equity and diversity framework. We will be building in more information about unconscious bias. We also provide specific recruitment training around that. For the panel we could certainly provide the numbers who have accessed that training. I do not think I have it in front of me right now.

THE CHAIR: For me, people accessing the training is less the issue than—

Ms Evans: How we measure it.

THE CHAIR: Yes. Do your staff surveys ask specific questions about that? If I am a staff member who has just experienced racism, how obvious is it to me how I can escalate that? How do I get it dealt with?

Ms Evans: The escalation would be could be through a RED officer, through the respect, equity and diversity officers. That would be encouraged through the process I just described. The more people who understand that they could be responding in a particular way, the more awareness. But unfortunately I cannot answer that question around the numbers.

Ms Leigh: In relation to CMTEDD, Robert will be able to talk about RED officers and also our staff survey.

THE CHAIR: Robert, in the last 12 months, how many people have made a complaint about racism in CMTEDD?

Mr Wright: In terms of racism, I do not have a stat with me but I have asked for that, chair.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Wright: Our complaints process is that we have our RED framework. We have

RED officers right through CMTEDD. We have regular meeting of those RED officers. We have the RED champion, Stephen Miners, a deputy under treasurer. That is a really strong part of our work. We also have an inclusion officer with the people in the capability team, which we went out for. We had an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified staff member as part of that recruitment process. We take that very seriously in how we respond to it.

For people making complaints from outside, we have a good complaints process for that. We work through that process when people complain about their experiences of working with the ACT government. From the outside, complaints like those usually come through to my team. They cover a variety of aspects. I am not aware of any in particular which have come up as racism but I will look at that and check on that.

THE CHAIR: I think that where there is no incidence of reporting, the reporting is the issue we need to unpack, particularly from the outside. I worry that there is not an obvious or easy system for people to be able to raise those concerns. Certainly through community contact and social media we hear lots of examples, not necessarily at your directorate but with ACT government interactions. So if it is not coming through the complaints system that you have then that is our first place to start. If we do not get that business intelligence, we cannot start to make sure that the right types of training are being offered and the numbers and types of RED officers that you have are placed in the right areas, because we do not have that baseline.

Mr Wright: In our staff survey we did ask the question “During the last 12 months, have you experienced discrimination based on your background?” That was not just limited to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. That came back at six per cent of staff. In my experience of similar numbers for things like bullying and harassment, that is below those levels. But any amount is too much.

One of the things the cultural adviser position is really important for is providing another outlet for staff to go to who understands the cultural aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life and is perhaps better placed to express those on behalf of those staff members, which is why it is important that they are at the senior officer or executive level position.

THE CHAIR: Just be mindful that it is not their responsibility for the system to be safe.

Mr Wright: It is not indeed. It is for them to provide an avenue in terms of raising that. That would then go through the usual channels. I certainly would not expect them to own that responsibility.

THE CHAIR: The next question might go towards some of the things you, director-general, were talking about before. This came through in community questions as well. How does the directorate ensure that cultural protocol to recognise Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians is followed?

Ms Leigh: It is standard practice across the directorate, and indeed the service, for an acknowledgement of the Ngunnawal people to be held at the opening of all major meetings and all significant events. The ACT government provides an accepted set of

words for that, but I think people have become more comfortable also with expanding that according to their own particular role or the circumstance of the meeting.

A thing that I have always liked to do, as I did at the beginning here, is to acknowledge our own public servants, because I think that is very important given my role. Another thing, picking up on advice from Caroline, is that we have started to use “yuma” as a way of learning some Ngunnawal language, acknowledging Ngunnawal language and doing it in a way that is really quite easy for everyone to pick up quickly. We have also been engaged in language training and a longer term project for better understanding in the public service and also supporting our Ngunnawal community in developing language competency and being able to use that as part of acknowledging the Ngunnawal people.

In addition to that, it goes to consultation in relation to the breadth of all of our public service activities and ensuring that we are appropriately engaging with and taking in the views of Ngunnawal elders and the Ngunnawal community in every part of our work. If you would like me to expand on that, I can.

THE CHAIR: That will be okay for now. We might come back to it as we progress through. I am conscious of the time for things, but if we get a chance we can come back to a little more detail on that.

How has the directorate changed its policies and programs to allocate funding or focus to address the needs of the growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population? One of our particular focuses is that, unlike many of the other population groups in Canberra, we are still a very young population. That would seem to be very different to some of the other policy pressures you are facing, so we are trying to understand how that has been captured in policy and program development.

Ms Leigh: Probably the biggest development that will be helpful for this is the government’s wellbeing program, which is going to be launched this week. I will ask Leesa Croke, who has had a key role in that, to talk about how that will then drive the government’s budget allocation, which I think goes to the core of it.

Ms Croke: I am pretty sure it is tomorrow we are launching the wellbeing project. One of the things we have been working on closely with government—and we have spoken to the Elected Body a couple of times about the wellbeing project—is how it can become embedded in the business of government. How will the domains and the indicators and what we are measuring become part of the core framework in which policy and program decisions are made? In that, we need to understand what our populations look like; what our sub-populations look like, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and we are using the outcomes framework under the agreement to help us with that; where we need to get to; what the current set of statistics looks like; and where we need to get to.

We know we are closing the gap but we have a long way to go. You are right: the population in the ACT is a young population. How do we use that information and what we know about the demographics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT to help guide the policies and programs? We expect that the wellbeing framework will be core in terms of government decision-making. The chief

has mentioned that on a number of occasions. What we are working on now is how to embed that into the decision-making process, working closely with colleagues in treasury. So whenever proposals come through for consideration, I put the wellbeing lens over the top of it to see whether we are getting to where we need to be, based on what the community have said is important to the wellbeing of Canberrans. It will be a core part of the decision-making.

THE CHAIR: Director-general, how many community events have been developed by the directorate? Obviously I am talking about community events that are relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in particular, but there may be some broader events that have had a component that is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well. Who has participated in those? Who is responsible for the delivery and management of the events? What annual budget might you have for those type of events?

Ms Leigh: I will ask Kareena to answer this in a moment. Kareena's area often supports the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in CSD and it is often a joint responsibility, but Kareena can—

THE CHAIR: They have got this question as well.

Ms Leigh: I am just saying that we are not taking all the glory for this. It is a whole-of-government responsibility.

THE CHAIR: So it is not an “under a bus” answer; it is a “we are both really happy” answer?

Ms Leigh: Exactly: we are.

Ms Arthy: Our main event, as you know is the Reconciliation Day event. Last year it was held on a very cold, rainy, bleak day but we still managed to get 3,900 people out into Glebe Park for what was actually quite a lovely event, albeit very wet. We had a whole range of performers, from The Merindas through to some local performers. We also had a reflection forest and the King Brown walk. The engagement we had with the community and people who were wanting to be involved was even better than it was in our inaugural year. Our budget for Reconciliation Day is 150,000 people. It is completely delivered—

THE CHAIR: Your budget is 150,000?

Ms Arthy: Sorry—\$150,000. I was already thinking about the next point. It is run completely by EventsACT. This year we are looking to contract out the programming side to someone with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background so that we can try to get some more content in. We are very much in the planning phase for this year's work. We are also very mindful with all the other events we run, whether it is Floriade or Enlighten, to do whatever we can to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspects into them. We certainly recognise the community in the bigger events as well.

THE CHAIR: For something like Floriade last year, was there a particular Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander focus piece, or—

Ms Arthy: Yes. We had a garden that was dedicated. It was planted by the people from the Arboretum. We had a celebration—again, it was very wet when we did it—of the actual planting of the bulbs for that garden.

THE CHAIR: For us the standalone Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events have a presence and have an audience, but the opportunity to influence and, particularly in the lifelong learning component, be able to do things like that at Floriade is important. I know through the Multicultural Festival and some of those things that where there is already a captive audience, so to speak, the ability to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and success is really important. So it is good to hear about those things in those types of events. Picking on Floriade, just because we have just talked about that, is that something that is locked in to always occur, or was having that garden a one-off?

Ms Leigh: We are totally committed to celebrating culture and community. I have not seen the plans for this year—

THE CHAIR: But you will look at those options.

Ms Leigh: Certainly from what we are talking about it is not a one-off. We are looking to embed it.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Ms Leigh: That was a great initiative and I would like to commend the head of the Arboretum, Scott Saddler, who was the key person in making that happen and bringing together a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff for the planting of those bulbs, the initial planting that I was able to attend.

THE CHAIR: Using Indigenous staff to have a say in those activities as well?

Ms Leigh: We had an event when the garden was being created where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff came together with the Floriade and the Arboretum staff to plant those bulbs in the pattern. I do not know whether Scott would like to come up and talk further about that. I do not know whether you want to take up time.

THE CHAIR: Yes, just quickly, that would be good. Where there are opportunities in other events, that would be a good practice model: not only connecting with the community but also your internal staff being part of those sorts of activities.

Ms Leigh: Perhaps Scott could also talk about the bush tucker garden at the Arboretum, which is another example of an opportunity to both engage the community and engage our allied staff.

Mr Saddler: The Aboriginal garden at Floriade was designed by Aboriginal people and then about 23 or 24 Aboriginal staff came together to plant that garden. It was based around a shield that was found in the Murrumbidgee River and is now on display in the archives. We pulled that design off that shield.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Mr Saddler: It has got huge recognition not only for this particular area but for Aboriginal staff as well.

THE CHAIR: Was the bush tucker garden at the Arboretum done in the same sort of way?

Mr Saddler: Yes. With the bush tucker garden we went through the Ngunnawal elders, and we also went through a lot of Aboriginal people from the area. There are some 4½ thousand plants now in the Ngunnawal bush garden, and we now have a basket-weaving area. We have built a basket-weaving area down the bottom. We now have an Indigenous tourism officer who can weave. We are going to do tours of the bush tucker garden and have the people sit in this beautiful circular area and basket weave, to teach, to bring that culture back in and to immerse people within that culture.

THE CHAIR: Excellent. We might move on.

Mr Wright: Chair, could I very quickly go back to the point on our concerns about racism?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Wright: I pulled out the report which goes into the diversity cohorts. With regard to the question on “treated with fairness and respect in this organisation”, the overall CMTEDD score was 78 per cent. The score for staff who identified as Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders was 94 per cent. For “I think this organisation respects individual differences, eg cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas,” the overall score was 81 per cent. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander score was 94 per cent. So that is a positive—

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is positive. But—and you might not be able to do this in this time—what it raises for me is whether the same level of information is available from exit interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Mr Wright: We have really increased the capability of our exit interviews as well. We now have one exit interview for all staff within CMTEDD, which is a change from the three we have had previously, and there is a diversity question in that. It is relatively early days but we will have that information available.

THE CHAIR: You will be capturing that? Excellent. Director-general, how is the directorate using your networks and resources to promote cultural knowledge? Without re-canvassing some of the initiatives that we have heard about already, is there anything that you would like to add?

Ms Leigh: I am particularly keen on the language work we are just embarking on. That will be a focus of our next RAP, which is approaching final approval. We have mentioned that already. That to me is something that is really exciting. It is a real

opportunity to take a leap forward in terms of our directorate's appreciation of Aboriginal culture. I think that will flow through in terms of attitude and understanding across the directorate. We have of course our cultural awareness training within the directorate, and we have a high level of engagement in that training. We could talk further about that if you would like to know about the directorate's training.

THE CHAIR: There may be something later on. We might come back to it. Just the headline items for now would be helpful.

Ms Leigh: I am conscious that I may repeat things, so are there particular areas that you would like us to go to in relation to this question?

THE CHAIR: Is there something where you can tell us a bit more about the impact of those activities, where things are changing the way people do business? In particular I understand that one of the big projects your directorate has that will impact across all of the public service is the new building. What might be happening in that space to set the tone for expectations around cultural learning?

Ms Leigh: It is a great opportunity. The two new buildings are a fantastic opportunity for us. There are two things in particular that we are doing. One is working with Ngunnawal elders to seek to have words gifted to us that we can use to name all of the major meeting rooms in those buildings, which is a fantastic opportunity because it means that on a daily basis people will be using Ngunnawal language and it will be embedded in everything everyone does every day. I will ask Jacinta to talk a bit more about that. The second thing is the opportunity for significant artwork in the building here in Civic.

Ms Evans: The government has allocated \$300,000 for the cultural project for art for the two buildings. The focus on the artwork will be for it to be symbolic in the sense of providing an acknowledgement of country, promoting—

THE CHAIR: Does that mean it has a very specific Ngunnawal requirement?

Ms Evans: Yes, it does. It will be working with our Ngunnawal community.

THE CHAIR: Good.

Ms Evans: How this will operate is that we will go out to market to engage with a culturally appropriate person to work with the community; to work up some ideas initially and to engage the artist, whoever that artist might be, from the community; and to represent the ideas that are brought forward through that process. The opportunity is there then to promote culture and stories through it. It could be a single piece of art or it could be a series of pieces. We have not determined exactly what it would look like, because we want to keep it as open as possible. The idea is that the art will then strengthen the connection that Kathy has referred to: the connection between the building as bricks and mortar and the land and the people that are there. What we are hoping for is to see that richness of culture being captured through the piece of art, representing all the views of the community.

Mr Nicol: We are also looking at names of rooms, of meeting rooms et cetera, and how we—

THE CHAIR: Yes, I think the director-general—

Mr Nicol: Sorry.

THE CHAIR: But I appreciate your enthusiasm, especially since the next question is probably for you.

Mr Wright: Just on that one, chair, the other thing that is happening is the basket that is being weaved by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the ACT public service. That will also have a key place in the new Civic office block.

THE CHAIR: All of those are good symbolic gestures. Is there anything, though, for example, built into people's performance agreements that encourages or values them to undertake learning or doing cultural knowledge activities?

Ms Leigh: My performance agreements with all of the directors-general and with my direct reports within CMTEDD have two features built into them. First there is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representation in our service. Then also I have asked everyone to have one personal commitment of something they are doing to improve their own cultural understanding. As people are rolling over their performance agreements, that is specified in everyone's performance agreement. I have asked them, following the session we had late last year for directors-general and deputy directors-general, to think about something they think will really resonate with them and will take forward their own cultural appreciation.

THE CHAIR: Perhaps it is not for this term, but could you give me an idea of when that report card is marked for those DGs? That is in their performance agreement. When have they got to sit down and say to you, "I achieved this" or "I didn't"?

Ms Leigh: We do it twice yearly—we have an annual and a mid-term review. They tend to be a bit staggered, because when people come into a role it is not lined up.

THE CHAIR: They are not all on 1 January and 1 July.

Ms Leigh: Exactly. As they roll through, my office keeps a program so that we make sure we are up to date with that so that there is not a long time frame.

THE CHAIR: Have you had many DGs who have had their mid-cycle review yet when—

Ms Leigh: We are just starting those processes at the moment.

THE CHAIR: So you cannot do in anyone yet. Not that I would ask you to name the directorates, but it would be interesting to see how well they have taken that up.

The next question is about how many contracts have been awarded to ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. If we use since the procurement policy was put

in place as the kick-off date, that might be helpful for you; otherwise you could tell me about the last 30 years and it might look a bit better than that.

Mr Nicol: I might pass to my procurement expert, David Purser, in a second. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement policy started on 1 July this year—

THE CHAIR: Last year?

Mr Nicol: Last year, sorry—this financial year. Our aim is to—

THE CHAIR: That is right: you have your own calendar. I apologise.

Mr Nicol: We sometimes have to remember that people work on calendar years rather than financial years. Our aim is to report at the end of this financial year on performance across directorates. We do not have a system that captures live data on every contract that is entered into as we go. We will be trying to put that in place for next year but we will have to work it out with a manual exercise for now.

THE CHAIR: So for next year's closing the gap report or agreement report or whatever the title of it will be, that will always be on the previous financial year data, because that is how your processes work?

Mr Nicol: That is correct. Our central system at the moment just captures contracts over \$25,000 that are entered into, and it does not necessarily identify whether it is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation—noting the difficulties we have had in specifying what is and is not a corporation. So we have to work through those processes a bit. Anecdotally, however, the data we do collect says that we are getting quite a strong response across the directorate. Our accountability indicator—which is not quite perfect, because it was designed for another purpose, which is the proportion of goods and services contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers or social suppliers, so it has social—

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is excellent.

Mr Nicol: is up to 2.3 per cent, and our target is one per cent in our midyear review. Anecdotally—

THE CHAIR: The target was one per cent for this cycle of it but you are already at 2.3 per cent?

Mr Nicol: Yes but that includes social suppliers as well, so we have got to work through—

THE CHAIR: It is fine to include them.

Mr Nicol: differentiating those two groups.

Mr Purser: I can advise that 12 contracts have been awarded this financial year with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses: six on the construction side and six on goods and services. Four of those are appointments to our new professional

services and consultancy panel—

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Mr Purser: which was an extremely competitive process. That is not an exhaustive list: there may be a number of engagements within directorates below the notifiable thresholds that we are not aware of yet. There also might be contracts that have been executed in the last 21 days that have not yet been publicly notified.

THE CHAIR: Granted that the procurement policy only came into effect on 1 July, could you also give me an idea of either the number of activities or the number of businesses who might have participated in the processes I understand you have run to introduce the policy to local businesses and to explain how to be involved? Have you got an idea of how many of those types of activities you have run?

Mr Purser: We have run a number of internal activities: more than 37 training sessions to get people aware of it. The next step is about bringing suppliers and buyers closer together, so we promoted it at the Supply Nation Indigenous trade fair on 11 February, which got a fantastic turnout in terms of both suppliers—more than 40 of our regional suppliers—and ACT government employees. We recently ran a sort of workshop, on 14 February. I do not have on hand the number of suppliers that attended but—

THE CHAIR: Was that particularly to help people understand how your tender processes work?

Mr Purser: Exactly, to assist that side. There are a number of steps we see Procurement ACT working on to help promote awareness of the policy and how we drive it into effect. We are working with directorates to understand where their spend is and the map of our regional suppliers so that we can help promote them and support the policy.

THE CHAIR: Director-General, since we sat down and made this whole-of-government agreement, each directorate, including yours, has gone away and come up with your first 18-month action plan. We are wondering how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff may have been involved in developing that action plan.

Ms Leigh: Ms Croke is going to explain—

Ms Croke: I might need to come back to you, if I can. We established a working group who represented each of the divisions within CMTEDD. I am just asking those people now if and when they engaged and who with in the development of those action plans that might have included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. I will see if I can come back to you with that answer.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. The next few questions relate to recommendations from the last hearings. Could you tell me how the directorate has developed a mechanism to capture the attainment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in the Australian apprenticeships and skilled capital programs, and what those rates look like?

Ms Arthy: The government provides a range of subsidies, particularly an additional loading of \$500 per person for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to help with the cost of training. After last year's hearing I provided you with a detailed letter with all those different statistics. I am happy to do that again, because there are a lot of statistics in relation to attainment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In general we have had a significant increase in the numbers of both people who are participating and people who are completing. I will hand over to Josephine Andersen to take you through some of the key highlights.

THE CHAIR: We are obviously interested in the attainment rate, but one of the gaps seemed to be that we just did not know. So I am particularly interested in whether we have got that part sorted and are confident that we at least know what the number looks like, because that then can help us with what we do.

Ms Andersen: We do have a mechanism for recording attainment rates of all students and of course Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners as well. That is our—

THE CHAIR: Does it uniquely identify them as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners?

Ms Andersen: Yes. If they identify themselves as such, absolutely. It is the ACT vocational education and training administration records system, otherwise known as AVETARS. With respect to Australian apprenticeships, with the exception of 2018, retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian apprentices have been equal to or higher than the “all learners” cohort. For 2019—

THE CHAIR: What is the number?

Ms Andersen: I can provide you with some statistics. In 2016 the retention rate for all learners was 50 per cent. The retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners was 54 per cent.

THE CHAIR: This might be just because this is not my area of expertise, but what is the difference between retention and attainment?

Ms Andersen: Because there is a long tail of training, it might be that for some of these years some of the learners are still actually engaged in training, so they have not quite completed their course yet.

THE CHAIR: I particularly want to know about the attainment part. I get that there are lots of numbers in all this, but how many people are getting across the line and have got their certificate so we can get them a job?

Ms Andersen: Looking at 2019, for example, at the number of people who have completed cert II qualifications, we see an 87 per cent retention rate there because those students are still in training, but 14 of those students have completed. Looking at certificate III courses we see a 78 per cent retention rate, which is really good, and 122 completions so far.

THE CHAIR: Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Ms Andersen: That is right. In certificate IV courses, for people who started in 2019 there is a 90 per cent retention rate and 126 students have completed. For diploma and higher courses there is a 91 per cent retention rate, with 391 completions to date.

THE CHAIR: This is a bit left field—I apologise, but other people are used to me doing this. If we look at that number a decade ago, do we see much of a difference between retention and attainment? Is retention about the same but we have got more kids going through, or is there—

Ms Andersen: Compared to previous years?

THE CHAIR: Are we getting better?

Ms Andersen: Yes, we are improving compared to previous years. I have some statistics here but probably not in direct response to your question. For example, 71 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices enrolling in 2018-19 undertook a qualification at level IV or above, which compares to 19 per cent for enrolments a decade earlier. So certainly there has been—

THE CHAIR: Wow! A decade earlier it was 19 per cent?

Ms Andersen: Nineteen per cent enrolled in qualifications at level IV and above—high-level qualifications. So there has been a huge increase in the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners undertaking high-level qualifications, which is really significant.

THE CHAIR: Excellent, thank you. That is the best answer so far.

Ms Andersen: I can give you some more if you are interested in retention rates for students enrolled in skilled capital.

THE CHAIR: Probably not for today but it might be something for our next catch-up. The next question I have is about the progress of the directorate's work with CIT Solutions to develop a strategy for the ACT public service to leverage the commonwealth's Indigenous apprenticeships program for recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into the ACT public service. I am wondering if that has happened and how that is going.

Ms Andersen: We have certainly started conversations with CIT Solutions about how we can leverage that very successful program. That program has a very high completion rate: about 87 per cent for students who are from the Australian public service. We have started discussions with CIT Solutions, with our workplace capability and governance colleagues, about how we can bring that into the ACT public service.

THE CHAIR: This is something we asked about a year ago, and you have started discussions. Do you have a first piece of action? I am particularly interested to know what we are going to do.

Ms Andersen: I do not want to speak for my workforce capability and governance colleagues—

THE CHAIR: Go for it.

Ms Andersen: but we are looking at the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vocational employment program and how we can work with that. The learners in that program are currently funded, most of them, through skilled capital places. To look at the model that has been employed by the Australian public service, you would have to look at transitioning that program to more of a traineeship-type program.

Mr Wright: We developed our employment pathway program, which uses Australian school-based apprenticeships as the basis and links to the commonwealth funding in that space. That provides employment training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruits. We brought in 10 at the beginning; we still have eight. We have gone back to the RTO to get another two into that program. We have them placed throughout business areas within CMTEDD. They are now supported by the RTO and also by our inclusion officer within CMTEDD. But the big change in that space is when they finish that ASBA. One thing that was pointed out in our RAP working group was about the issues of insecure employment. So at the completion of their ASBA they are offered a permanent place within our VET program. They will move into that. So it gives them a pathway. For the first time—

THE CHAIR: They are guaranteed a job, or they are guaranteed a training place?

Mr Wright: They are guaranteed a job which also is in our VET—

THE CHAIR: With training.

Mr Wright: Indeed.

THE CHAIR: The guts of that recommendation was about this: the response we were getting was that we were having trouble finding participants. So if the discussion around the apprenticeship program has not matured but you have matured a different pathway that gets young people qualifications and a permanent job, that would be meeting the spirit, at least, of what that recommendation was about.

Mr Wright: It is a start. It has been great in meeting our VET numbers as well and supporting the whole-of-government program.

THE CHAIR: We will now turn our attention to the action plans that underpin the 10-year agreement. We are very conscious to set action plans that align with the terms of elected bodies. Part of the reason for focusing these hearings around the 18-month action plans is to see how far we have got with those and to prepare us all for the next action plans, which will have a much longer cycle of about three years.

Each of these comes predominantly from your own commitments. We are just checking on how they are going. The first one is the commitment around ensuring that the ACT's institutions are culturally safe and appropriate for children while providing

options to government on the implementation of the child safe standards, which was a key recommendation from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. How have the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children been reflected in that advice? Who has had input into the development of the advice on cultural safety?

Ms Croke: We are currently consulting. I think we are pretty close to finishing the first consultation piece, which is hearing back from the community about the 10 child safe standards and what a model might look like for the ACT. That advice has not been provided to government yet. As you would recall, we have spoken to the Elected Body on a couple of occasions. In addition to that, we have approached 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. We have had face-to-face meetings or phone conversations with about half a dozen of those. I am happy to tell you the names of those organisations and give you the list of everyone we have approached. We will continue to reach out to organisations to make sure that we have heard voices.

It is important to note—and this kind of goes to the next question you raised as to how we make sure that the model is appropriate and is inclusive in terms of family safety and cultural safety—that we will work with the Human Rights Commission to help us as we roll out the education piece, which is the really critical piece in terms of implementing child safe standards. We will continue to work with the Human Rights Commission to make sure that, from their perspective, they believe that the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities have been met.

The first piece is what the regulatory model looks like. We believe that the Human Rights Commission will be that body. That is the advice that is going to government, with some thinking around time frames around the education piece and then the enforcement piece. We will rely on the Human Rights Commission to make sure that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be heard so that we have that model right. I am happy to give you details of who we have—

THE CHAIR: We might just table that or something, in the interest of time. To make sure I have understood correctly, the progress of this is tied to the broader consultation piece but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been included?

Ms Croke: Yes.

THE CHAIR: You have reached out to 35 organisations and six have responded so far?

Ms Croke: We have had face-to-face meetings with, in addition to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, maybe another three. I can list them if you want.

THE CHAIR: All the ones who have taken up the opportunity.

Ms Croke: They are Gugan Gulwan, Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation, Burrunju, and Nannies Group. We have spoken to Thunderstone Aboriginal Cultural Services and we have spoken to the whISPers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Softball Corporation.

THE CHAIR: The next question is still on the child safety standards. It is about the implementation of those. They are intended to help repair institutional trust by ensuring that institutions adhere to community expectations. These standards will also apply to kinship care, which is an out of home care pathway most commonly utilised by our family groups. Adding to the answer you have already given, can you tell us how the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been obtained for that particular cohort: people in the out of home care system?

Mr Mehrton: The answer to this question is sort of what Leesa has already outlined in terms of the consultation we have done thus far on what the legislation of the scheme looks like. How that scheme gets implemented and how the regulator is going to work with organisations will be an ongoing dialogue with organisations, I think. There are decisions that have been made through the royal commission around what the scope of organisations that should be covered by the scheme should be. As you have identified, that includes out of home care and kinship care.

Where the rubber hits the road, so to speak, is how the Human Rights Commission is then going to look at whether particular organisations have actually met the child safe standards. Being standards or really principles based, it is not a prescriptive list of rules as to how that needs to look. The principles themselves that have been agreed by COAG are very cognisant of the different cultural settings and the need for cultural safety within those principles as a key foundation of child safety. How it works with kinship care specifically will probably be a matter for the Human Rights Commission going forward. But—

THE CHAIR: The group that particularly comes to mind at the moment when we are talking about out of home care, where there has been a large investment of their time and the government's time, is the Our Booris, Our Way committee, who understand exactly what is happening in that system and the particular concerns that our families have, both carers and family members whose children are in care at the moment. I am particularly interested in how you are not only taking into account the recommendations from that group but also tapping into the rich resource that is those people who have spent that time on that particular issue.

Mr Mehrton: One of the particular recommendations that the royal commission made was for the way governments implement the child safe standards to be cognisant and respectful of the existing work that governments and the community have already done and the other regulatory schemes that are in place. The government has responded to a number of the recommendations that Our Booris, Our Way have made, to the extent that that is embodied in—

THE CHAIR: They have, but not in the work that you are doing. When you already have this information and we have asked people in very sensitive situations to share that, rather than going through it a few times, and a committee has looked systemically at what the trust issues are, why have you not spoken to them?

Mr Mehrton: Why have we not spoken to Our Booris, Our Way specifically? That is not the stage of the consultation we are up to at the moment. We have been mainly looking at how the legislation will be formed, which is going to the specific issue

about who the particular regulator should be. The discussions about how the regulator then implements the scheme with respect to other work or systems, or what resources need to be developed, will be an ongoing piece.

THE CHAIR: I suggest that the selection of the regulator is the issue in how that will work, because that is where the trust needs to start from, notwithstanding that there are phases to this. The reason is that in the ACT what this is going to apply to really relates to out of home care predominantly. We do not have the type of hostels and other facilities where this is likely to be a day-to-day issue. So for us that is the most critical area to get right.

Mr Mehrton: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Director-General, your directorate is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard through the awards processes. Can you tell us how many selection panels as to government awards have included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island members? Do all of the ACT awards include a formal welcome to Ngunnawal country by traditional owners?

Ms Leigh: I will make some brief comments and then I will ask Jacinta Evans to follow up. In terms of whether all of our events include a formal welcome by traditional custodians, all of our external events certainly do. For internal public service events there is a vast range, from very small gatherings in the kitchen where we might present awards across—

THE CHAIR: You are not talking about the outward facing—

Ms Leigh: There is always an acknowledgement, even at those events, even if we do not have a traditional custodian present to do a formal welcome.

THE CHAIR: And the awards panels?

Ms Evans: I might need to seek a bit more advice to know the numbers of selection panels that have had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island members. I can say that—

THE CHAIR: I am of course particularly interested in the mainstream awards. It is probably assumed that the Indigenous-specific awards have separate—

Ms Evans: In terms of the commitment we have to that, I know that Mr Gary Shipp from the ACT Heritage Council was on the honour walk selection panel this year. There are some of those mainstream opportunities that are external that we can point to.

THE CHAIR: Can you have someone look at how many panels we have had in the last 12 months and then how we might have been represented on those?

Ms Evans: Certainly. In terms of hearing the voices, I think that commitment is coming through in the recipients of awards. In the ACT Public Service Awards, of the seven there were four recipients who were Aboriginal people or whose projects were specifically around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.

Ms Leigh: I will ask Kareena to follow up now on the external-facing awards in relation to these questions.

Ms Arthy: We manage four major awards. They are the training awards, sport awards, export awards and tourism awards. Three of those are part of a national competition. The sport awards is one of our local ones. Certainly at each of those events we have a welcome to Ngunnawal country provided. I particularly thank Ms Hughes for the work she did with us last year on the sport awards, because we had spoken Ngunnawal language as a voiceover as part of the community audio and we had it on some of the trophies and in the program booklet, which was wonderful and outstanding. That was terrific. For the training awards we have a specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander category and we have at least one member of the community on the panel. It is usually the previous winner. I want to acknowledge that our winner last year, Taylor, went on and won the national category, which was also fantastic. So we do have a very strong focus on making sure that we do—

THE CHAIR: And the other three panels?

Ms Arthy: Sport awards—we did not have any last year. We do not have a specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander award at present. The export awards—

THE CHAIR: The idea is not that there is a specific award; it is that people understand what it takes for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person, the barriers that they need to overcome in the mainstream to achieve what looks like the same as someone else. The only way we can do that is by having people on the panel to explain it.

Ms Arthy: We will take that back to the people who do that.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms Arthy: The export awards and tourism awards were managed separately from government—the panel process. We will have to go back to the organisers to see if there were any people on the selection panels. We do not have that information here for those two—

THE CHAIR: You say that it is separate. But it is still a contracted service, so could you require in a new contract that that representation is there?

Ms Arthy: Yes, we could. We will also take that on board.

THE CHAIR: Within the action plans, the directorate is committed to examining unconscious biases that may exist in recruitment processes and taking action to mitigate them in order to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the ACT public service. Can you give us a quick outline of how that examination was undertaken? What did it find? Has any action has been taken about that?

Ms Evans: That piece of work is underway but I would not say that an examination has been undertaken. The piece of work has started with the review of the RED

framework. The next phase will be considering unconscious bias in the recruitment process.

THE CHAIR: Will that be completed in the 18 months of this action plan?

Ms Evans: It will be, because that is the commitment we have made.

THE CHAIR: The next question relates to the development of a commitment around cultural standards and protocols. We want to know how that is being done. How are ACT staff being engaged in the process? How have the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and especially Ngunnawal people, been engaged in that process?

Ms Leigh: I will make some comments, but I would then like to provide some additional advice in writing to the committee.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Leigh: Our communications and engagement staff have been fully involved in some of the coronavirus work and they have not been able to be here, so I apologise for that.

THE CHAIR: That is okay.

Ms Leigh: Communications and engagement staff are currently updating the engaging Canberrans document, which is aimed at supporting the public service to engage confidently with our community. That work is underway. The other thing I would mention is that you are probably aware of the your say panel, which is an initiative by the government to more effectively engage with the community and to make sure that we are actually engaging across the whole community.

Some of the traditional ways of engaging with the community often meant that only people who had the time to go to a meeting et cetera could be engaged. We are making sure that the panels that we recruit for that are representative. We are monitoring the actual membership of those panels. If the panels have used any particular piece of research, we are also monitoring who from the panel engages in that particular research.

Currently, 33 members of the panel, which is one per cent of the panel, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Of course, it is not mandatory to identify. We have a plan, over the next 12 months, to increase that. It is something that we are very aware of. That is a key way that the government is engaging, so we think it is really important that we have a focus on that. As I say, we have not got there yet. We are aware of that, and we are measuring and monitoring it, and we have a program for the next 12 months to improve it.

THE CHAIR: For that panel?

Ms Leigh: When I say “panel”, it is some hundreds of people, and it is being used for community engagement. Over time, the panel will be turned over.

THE CHAIR: The question is directly about cultural standards and protocols for the organisation. How does someone know when to use an acknowledgement of country versus a welcome to country, and what is important about Ngunnawal people? What are some standards around doing meaningful and respectful engagement? I understand that your panel is one way of reaching out, and it will need some components to it. What is the strategy that sits under that that can guide all of your staff?

Ms Leigh: Yes, that is the thing I mentioned first, the engaging Canberrans document, which we are currently working on.

THE CHAIR: If you are currently working on it, are there plans to speak to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in its development?

Ms Leigh: As I said, if I could, I would like to provide that in writing.

THE CHAIR: Okay; thank you. The next one comes back to the social inclusion and equality portfolio. Given that, from the previous answer, I understand you have had an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific role in that team for about six months, we are interested to know what initiatives or activities have been generated, even going back for longer than that person's tenure, that relate specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Ms Croke: If I think about the three key activities that that team has been involved with over the last 12 months, there was the development of the ACT's first LGBTIQ strategy and the action plans that sit underneath that—the capital of equality. There is the wellbeing work that we have been doing, and the child safe standards. They are three of the key policy pieces of work—

THE CHAIR: What was the second one?

Ms Croke: The LGBTIQ strategy, and underneath that is the capital of equality action plan; then there are the child safe standards and the development of wellbeing. One of the things that we have tried to do in all of that is to engage and consult with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, while noting that, more often than not, there are a lot of people who want to have a similar conversation with the community at about the same time. We have been trying to make sure that we coordinate that as much as possible. When we have spoken to the Elected Body on wellbeing, we have tried also to have conversations about other key policy pieces of work that we have been working on. They are three of the key initiatives that that team have been working on.

THE CHAIR: Has the LGBTIQ strategy been finalised?

Ms Croke: Yes, and the capital of equality document is public.

THE CHAIR: Does that have specific commitments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Ms Croke: Yes, it does. No; I was just thinking about a transgender position. I am confusing myself. Can you give me a couple of minutes and I will have a quick look?

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is fine.

Ms Croke: Andrew has it.

Mr Mehrton: There are a couple of initiatives in the action plan. They are not specifically about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have identified the intersectionality between LGBTIQ people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as an area where we are not where we want to be in terms of our understanding or development.

There are a couple of actions, particularly around examination of the health sector and health services, which is a big issue for LGBTIQ people. Also, it is an area where there is a lot of work going on to improve those services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have identified specifically in a number of our actions that we have an overarching body of work but we need to specifically focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within that, as a focus area.

We have also had a number of discussions with the ministerial advisory council for LGBTIQ affairs about the need to have more representation on that council from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They will be doing a specific bit of training around not only cultural competency but also a concerted effort to recruit and fill a number of vacancies we have at the moment with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, which we hope will drive the work going on as well.

THE CHAIR: Would it be fair to say in that space that the strategy will allow for specific actions, that there is some work happening with the peak advisory group to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in it, and that will inform the initiatives and actions that fall out from that?

Mr Mehrton: Yes, that is right. We have a grants program, for example, where we set priority areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people focus areas for the next round of grant funding.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Mr Mehrton: We are trying to thread it into the existing body of work with a specific focus.

THE CHAIR: Excellent, thank you. Director-General, are you able to give us the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed through the employment inclusion program since the last hearings? Does that represent an increase in the past five years? We are also keen on getting the retention rate.

Ms Evans: That is the program that Mr Wright referred to earlier. We had 10 people come in.

THE CHAIR: Is that actually the school-based apprentices?

Ms Evans: Yes, they are basically the ones ending up with a permanent position in

the public service. In terms of retention, we had 10 people and one did not complete, so nine of the 10 completed the program. The one who did not complete withdrew for personal reasons, so it was good retention.

In terms of previous years, my understanding is that the data would be mixed up with our Skills Canberra and apprenticeship data, so I do not have a specific number. But I think Ms Anderson has a lot of data, so we can provide that information at a later date, if that is all right.

THE CHAIR: Not a problem. One of the things that I might suggest in your next action planning process is just to link those two things.

Ms Evans: That is right, so that they come together. I have good news that the 2020 process is underway. We have had 32 applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for that inclusion.

THE CHAIR: For 10 positions again?

Ms Evans: We have not determined yet how many positions. Directorates have made positions available, but it would be determined by the number of people who both want to take up a position and fit those roles.

THE CHAIR: Given that that is in many director-general's performance agreements now, I am assuming that there is potential for an increase. The next question relates to working with vulnerable people registrations and drivers licences. One of the commitments was around consultations to be undertaken to identify and remove specific barriers to those two processes as a starting point to looking at some of the service offerings of the ACT government and how our community are, or are not, accessing them. Can you tell us the findings from that and what actions you have taken to address those?

Mr Pryce: My colleague the chief digital officer will talk to this question too. She will talk more about the customer experience focus that we are doing in part of that process, which will go some way to the question. Another point I want to make is that, working with our colleagues in CMTEDD, we have an intern from the University of Canberra doing data analytics to help identify what are the barriers that we see in this space, not just for working with vulnerable people but also for drivers licences. That work has not yet been finalised, but it will inform our ongoing service delivery in this space.

The other thing I just wanted to highlight and flag is that the Commissioner for Fair Trading, who administers the working with vulnerable people checks under the act, is required to have a number of independent advisers. One of them must be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. We do have a person who does provide advice direct to the commissioner when undertaking risk assessments or considering any role limitations or conditions that may be applied. Again, it is very much a focus of the work that we do.

As we work to bring in a new scheme, our focus has been very much on our service delivery and how people can apply and go through the process much simpler. We are

looking to improve inclusion not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders but the whole community, because there are a number of vulnerable groups.

THE CHAIR: I get that, Mr Pryce, but the commitment in the action plan is to consult with our community to remove specific barriers to those two. We will get to the data in just a second but, given that this action plan only has a few months to run, I am particularly interested in what consultation has happened, with whom, what have they told you and what are you going to do?

Mr Pryce: We have undertaken consultation and my colleague the chief digital officer can go through that in more detail.

Ms Konti: The work that we are doing with Access Canberra and with the Community Services Directorate is around improving the working with vulnerable people registration process, as well as to introduce screening processes for the NDIS in July this year. The way in which we have gone about this particular program is different and new to the ACT government. We are actively going out and seeking to consult and co-design the new registration form with representative groups right across the community. This is very much the citizen experience of actually undertaking the registration rather than necessarily addressing any cultural barriers to being able to attain the registration form.

THE CHAIR: What would be cultural barriers to attain a registration form?

Ms Konti: I do not know. I am just trying to differentiate the experience of actually applying for a registration and getting one.

Mr Pryce: Some of it is around documentation to support the application. Some of it is about—

THE CHAIR: Yes, but that is not a cultural barrier.

Mr Pryce: No, as in—

THE CHAIR: As in, if I have a birth certificate or not, it is not to do with my culture; it is about access to a government service. I am trying to understand the difference between the service not being appropriate or fitting in with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and—

Mr Pryce: And then there is a fear—

THE CHAIR: Excuse me.

Mr Pryce: Sorry.

THE CHAIR: I am not sure what would be a cultural barrier to being able to attain the services. How I hear those words is that certain cultural practices would mean that you cannot get a working with vulnerable persons check.

Mr Pryce: And of course we try to do that. I just will try to clarify that, chair.

THE CHAIR: That cannot be the basis for not getting services.

Mr Pryce: No, no. One of them is fear, as I understand it, because obviously a lot of these people have them in relation to care relationships and—

THE CHAIR: That, again, is not a cultural issue; it is a trust and respect issue between how a service is delivered and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is not because of our culture. It is because of—

Mr Pryce: No, no, I am not saying it—

Ms Konti: It was me who misspoke. Going back to the service delivery and the registration form process, we have recruited a number of people through the your say community online services panel. Six per cent of the people that were recruited to conduct user-based testing with the new process are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

THE CHAIR: Has there been any consultation with some of our service organisations who obviously have a requirement for staff, for example, to have a working with vulnerable people check to talk about what they see as some of the issues in getting people through those processes?

Ms Konti: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

THE CHAIR: Say I am running a sports team or club, an Indigenous rugby league club—I am biased to rugby league, so we pick that—have we gone to not just the people who are applying for it but the organisations who might see this a bit more regularly? Rather than just an individual's lens, are we approaching people who are understanding the system a bit more broadly? It might be for the timing of things, it might be access to records or it could be a range of things.

It would seem with consultation efforts that you cannot talk to everybody and for as long as you would like, but that some groups within our community might be able to give you a broader perspective quickly on what barriers currently exist in the system to get our people through.

Ms Konti: I do know that we have engaged one or two organisations who rely on the working with vulnerable people registration card. I cannot say whether they were Aboriginal organisations or not, but we do know that there are improvements that we can make. Whether they be employers or volunteer organisations, we need to create that feedback loop with them to ensure that, when government becomes aware of circumstances that might change a person's working with vulnerable people registration, we are able to make contact with the organisation to alert them so that they can make appropriate decisions.

THE CHAIR: Are the same processes being undertaken with drivers licences?

Ms Konti: Drivers licence consultations have not commenced yet.

THE CHAIR: The reason I am picking on these two things is that in your action plan they are committed to be completed in these 18 months. Who is responsible for delivering on that and what is the plan to do it?

Mr Pryce: As the chief digital officer said, the working with vulnerable people is our first priority because there is a delivery time frame for this year.

THE CHAIR: And it is a mystery on who you get to talk to.

Mr Pryce: I am sorry—

THE CHAIR: There is a specific commitment to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and at the moment just using the your say panel is not able to identify whether that is an Aboriginal organisation or not, or whether you are getting enough Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in. I want to know: what is the consultation plan for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to identify the barriers to those two processes, which is your commitment in the action plan?

Mr Pryce: Yes. We will deliver the drivers licence one as part of the action plan, but that work is still in development and we certainly take on board the further feedback you have given today.

THE CHAIR: You got three months.

Mr Pryce: Yes. It is a—

THE CHAIR: When will that be done?

Mr Pryce: I do not have a time frame now, chair.

THE CHAIR: Thanks for that. Next is a question that goes towards employment. We have talked a little bit across this in a few of the earlier questions, so you do not need to repeat that. I am comfortable with the entry level work that you have talked about and some of the senior leadership sorts of things that you have done, but in addition to that are there any other activities that have been undertaken during the period of this current agreement to support and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within the directorate, and how has that gone?

Ms Leigh: I will ask Mr Wright for some specific additional comments.

Mr Wright: Chair, I do not have any specific additional things on employment. What I can say is that we have also been doing a lot of work with the SES cohort around their cultural awareness. At the last senior executive planning day in November there was a smoking ceremony and there was bush tucker, and a project done down there where people got to experience that. We also listened to AIATSIS talk about the “bringing home” project, which is bringing home those artefacts from overseas. So we have taken the last—

THE CHAIR: The repatriation work?

Mr Wright: Repatriation, correct. We have undertaken to do that at a senior executive level because they are, of course, the key component of getting a better recruitment across the organisation. We have got a lot to come, but you do not want to talk about stuff in the future. There is a lot to come in that new space, chair.

THE CHAIR: I certainly do want to talk about things to come in the future, but in the hour and ten minutes I have left, maybe not today. But can I say, it is encouraging to hear that all of the effort is not about doing things to or for us but actually having a look inside the system about what needs to make it a safer and more appropriate place for people to come and work.

The next question I have got is about a commitment for identifying some options so that our voices can be heard throughout the ACT budget process. As the Elected Body, we have the opportunity to talk to cabinet. We are aware of that as one commitment to things, but how, through the budget process, have you been able to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to be heard in this current budget process?

Mr Nicol: I might start. As you said, chair, I would not underestimate the role and influence the body has, both in your presentation to cabinet, your meetings with directorates, bimonthly generally—

THE CHAIR: We know about those.

Mr Nicol: Yes. You know, but I would encourage you and the community to feed through that information because it is an information and a contact point that is not duplicated anywhere else, to be honest, across government. The other major mechanism is our annual budget consultation process and I will pass to Mr Miners to talk through that.

Mr Miners: The budget consultation process we run is a broad budget consultation; it is not specifically targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, but it does provide an opportunity for them.

THE CHAIR: And your action plan commenced creating options for us in that process?

Mr Miners: Yes, in that we certainly seek to get Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander submissions through that process, and in the last year we did receive some. There were certainly a number from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific bodies, as well as some from a range of broader bodies that targeted specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and concerns.

THE CHAIR: What activities, and what did you do differently to make that happen?

Mr Miners: We go out and advertise that through our normal means. We have also undertaken various things at different times, but one of the key things we do is often go out and talk to major industry groups. For example, we actually spend a lot of time talking to groups like ACTCOSS because they can get a broad reach across various

communities. But we can certainly look more at that in terms of how we make sure people are aware of that process, and advertising that process so that people come through it.

THE CHAIR: Mr Miners, we signed an agreement about a year ago. Your directorate signed up to an action plan to deliver on things over an 18-month period. In my maths, that is one budget cycle. We are almost at the end of that, so I want to know, against the action item that says you are going to look at options, what you are doing. This is about doing something differently. What did you do differently?

Mr Miners: The major thing that is being done differently is the thing that Mr Nicol mentioned earlier, which is actually getting the Elected Body's voice to be heard more clearly through the process.

THE CHAIR: That is not actually different. We did that last budget cycle as well.

Mr Miners: That is the budget cycle I am talking about. We are still in the current budget cycle at the moment through that process. That is the major change we have made to try and make sure those voices are heard.

THE CHAIR: But it is not a change; we did that before this agreement was signed off. We have done that two or three times.

Mr Miners: Okay. From my understanding, those questions and those concerns were raised prior to that, but we can certainly look at that. That, for us, is making sure there is a very clear voice through that process—certainly the access to cabinet. I believe you got a fairly large period of time in cabinet in the last budget cycle. That was the key thing to making sure that those voices are heard through the process.

THE CHAIR: So the answer is that there is nothing in addition to that.

Mr Miners: There is nothing in addition to those processes that I believe have made a big difference to getting those voices heard.

THE CHAIR: It is not about making a big difference; it is about the effort that you have made to hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in the budget process.

Mr Miners: The other point I would make is that our budget group is certainly aware of the action plan. As part of their processes this year they did some work in terms of working on their own culture to be thinking about these issues. They brought in Murrimatters—Scott Goringe—to talk with them and focus on the culture within budget group to help them develop their own culture but also to raise awareness of those issues.

THE CHAIR: That is great, but it is disappointing that a key action item of the agreement has had no activity on it. The next question is about the requirements under the cabinet processes being strengthened to consider the impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and to consider submissions that contribute towards meeting the outcomes of the agreement. These are particularly around more general things that come through the cabinet process, but also having a lens of

whether there is an opportunity for these to make a contribution to outcomes under the agreement. Given, again, the timing of this, this is probably more of a question about the mechanics and how the system may have changed for that, rather than expecting an initiative or an example to come from it, but has anything changed in that process that helps to have that filter?

Ms Leigh: There are two things I will mention and then I will invite Ms Croker, if she wants to add anything. We have long had a triple bottom line in our kind of process, but that has been refined. Sometimes these processes become processes.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Leigh: So, it has been refined to make sure that it is actually actively making a difference, and that includes putting an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lens over each cabinet submission. The additional thing that we mentioned before, which I think is going to make the big difference going to the future, is the wellbeing framework. That work has been undertaken now over many months and, as we mentioned, that will be launched tomorrow. So that is going to completely reframe and that will also contribute to the budget process.

THE CHAIR: Yes. I think Ms Croke explained a bit earlier that that is the sort of lens that sits over it, but we do have a strong component that that is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes. The thing, when we have had these discussions before, is that we understand that, particularly as a small jurisdiction, our agility with a budget is quite restricted. The purpose of this lens—and I think it is what you are trying to do with wellbeing things as well—is, if we are already going to spend money on X, how do we also within that get outcomes that meet the agreement?

We are very well aware that there are not going to be a lot of new line items that stand alone to the agreement. In fact, our philosophy would be how do we embed it into the system and the normal way of doing business? Given that that is a big system change and that you have got the wellbeing things happening, is there anything in addition to that that gives the agreement lens, not just the outcome lens—how the outcomes framework might be used in it?

Ms Croke: Whenever we are briefing the Chief Minister for cabinet processes, or briefing any ministers for cabinet processes, we try to think through the triple bottom line, which includes a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in that briefing. That is probably something that we universally do. But I do think the real opportunity will be through the new wellbeing framework, where we will actually have measures that we are going to be reporting against which will go to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes as a population group. That is really where the opportunity will come to actually shift the way we think about briefing ministers for cabinet and especially the Chief Minister, as chair of the economic committee of cabinet.

THE CHAIR: Particularly from my point of view, making these subtle changes to the process is to remind all public servants that Indigenous-specific programs are only ever meant to complement the mainstream service delivery that we are entitled to, the same as every other Canberra resident. To say why and where those questions are coming from, it is to change people's thinking of: "That's okay; that gets handled over

in this other special, unique office,” when actually it is all our responsibility. That is where that is coming from.

The next question is different again, I guess, about the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on ACT government boards and committees and how that may have changed over the last 12 months. There are also some questions, just in the interests of time, of where we have got people in those governance arrangements, what might have been done to better support them or develop them in those roles.

Ms Evans: As of February this year we had 23 appointees identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in statutory offices, boards or committee roles.

THE CHAIR: Out of a potential how many?

Ms Evans: I do not know what the total is, but what I can tell you is that is 2.9 per cent of all appointees, up from 1.8 per cent in 2019, so we are seeing a slow increase there.

THE CHAIR: Good.

Ms Evans: In the interests of time, I could talk a lot about the difference the diversity register has made, which is a whole-of-government register, but I will not go to that detail. But I think that certainly is helping.

THE CHAIR: It is good that that is working.

Ms Evans: It is making a difference to people being able to find the roles that are available and those boards being able to find people with particular diversity. The next question is around the training opportunities. Certainly, across government there are a whole range of opportunities in mentoring, in what is on the calendar around training. We are working as well with colleagues in Procurement ACT, looking at specific training for boards and committees. But it is not identified around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at this stage.

THE CHAIR: Okay. In our write-up, it will probably come out as a recommendation that sounds a little bit like this. Where people register for the diversity might be the point at which there is an opportunity to see if they are quite ready or not and also to have a look at how long people sit on that register without being picked up. For me, that might be the best place to start, if we have got good numbers starting to sign up to that. The worst thing that could happen is we get a third of our mob really excited about that, they go their way, fill out all the forms, get on the register and no-one ever gets a guernsey. It sounds like people are getting guernseys, so that is good. But how do we make sure they are ready for that? Many will probably already be.

Ms Evans: Thank you; that is good advice.

Mr Wright: Chair, I know that OATSIA have got a partnership with the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

THE CHAIR: They do and we will let OATSIA speak to that.

Mr Wright: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: Our next question is about the programs in place across the ACT public service that assist Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to apply for positions. I understand that, for one of the recent entry level intakes, our secretariat in particular reached out and ran, for people who many have been interested, an opportunity to be helped with how to get the application in shape. Is there anything more formal in the pipeline to make sure that the process maintains its merit but is understood well by our community so that they do take on those opportunities?

Ms Evans: One of the programs I have not mentioned that I think is appropriate here is that we ran a program for the mentoring of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This was for both Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people to engage in the mentoring training.

THE CHAIR: For internal staff?

Ms Evans: Yes, for staff. Basically, it outlined for them the mentoring relationship, the skills required to be an effective mentor, cultural awareness, coaching models, techniques for reviewing outcomes and included a guest speaker with experience in mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The idea being that, as we develop people who are able to mentor, then we can start to encourage staff mentees who will have people who are culturally appropriate to work with them for that career development opportunity. Looking at resumes and applying for jobs would be part of that.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Evans: But that is probably the only specific program that I am aware of.

THE CHAIR: The next question is, hopefully, under the economic development stream of the directorate, but it would not be the first time I have got that wrong, so I apologise if I have made some assumptions. Within the agreement, we commit to 65 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young being engaged in employment or training by 2028. Are you able to give us an idea of what the current rate is against this measure and what strategies are in place to help us to achieve that result?

Ms Arthy: The closing the gap measure, as you know, is for participation, education, employment and training. The advice I have is that the actual way of measuring the target is still under discussion between all the different layers of government, so we do not actually have in place the mechanisms to do the total target at the moment and how it is travelling against the 65 per cent. In the interests of time, what I can do is provide you the statistics that we do have, particularly when it comes to training, and to give you an idea of one that we have got, is that—

THE CHAIR: Ms Arthy, yes, I do agree that that final number and even date are still under negotiation nationally, but my question is more around the fact that we know

that we are not at the rate that we want to be for our young people in these types of activities and what strategies we are putting in place to help bridge that gap.

Ms Arthy: Yes. The education element would need to be directed to education.

THE CHAIR: Of course.

Ms Arthy: For the training side of things, I understand CIT are here, but I think we outlined earlier some of the programs we have around school-based trainees. We have outlined how we have actually increased participation significantly and we have actually increased outcomes significantly.

THE CHAIR: Do the school-based traineeships refer about 10 kids—and we have got, in year 12 this year, between 90 and 100?

Ms Arthy: That has to go to the education department; that is not directly us.

THE CHAIR: What I am getting at, though, is they are about to come out of that pipeline.

Ms Arthy: To give you some comfort, the number of apprentices identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2008 was 243 in the ACT. In 2016, which is the last information that we have that is comparable, it was 473. Compare that to the non-Indigenous population, where the number of apprentices actually went down, we are actually achieving enormous increases.

THE CHAIR: Yes, we are, but one of the earlier questions today was around our demographics being different to others. If we just have a parity of the general population number of, say, three per cent, it would be wrong for our kids because the age group that we are talking about—under-24s—is more than half our population. It needs to be in the six to eight per cent parity range for it to be apples and apples.

Ms Arthy: Yes. What I can do is a cut of all of our statistics that we have, and I can provide it to you out of session.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Arthy: I just do not have anything here. Because we do not have the agreed way of measuring against the 65 per cent and it goes across education and us, I just do not have that information here. But we can certainly provide you a cut of whatever data we have that demonstrates progress.

THE CHAIR: I am more interested in the strategies we have for a growing Indigenous youth population still not having parity in employment and training. What are the levers, both policies and programs, that we are going to target to fix the gap?

Ms Arthy: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The numbers will tell us there is a gap and they will tell us there have been some good improvements—and granted that—but my fear is that because our

young population is growing that good effort will get drowned by the gap widening, just because of the volume that we are talking about. On pure numbers I think we are making really good progress, but relatively is that just holding water?

Ms Arthy: Okay.

THE CHAIR: The next question, I am sure, will be for you as well. Across the agreement so far, how many new cultural tourism opportunities have been created, and how many of those might be Ngunnawal specific?

Ms Arthy: I will invite Jonathan Kobus, who is head of tourism, to answer this one.

Mr Kobus: I will focus on the activity that we have done over the last 12 months in relation to opportunities for promoting Indigenous experiences. Through VisitCanberra's everyday activity, there are a range of mechanisms that we use to promote both a national Indigenous story and a more localised Indigenous story through our campaigns and publications. For example, we produce an annual visitor guide; we print 150,000 copies of those. Across different experience sets, we promote a localised Indigenous experience as part of that, and the businesses that deliver those experiences for people, so that people know how to engage with them.

From the international side of things, one of the great opportunities for local Indigenous business is the growth in international visitors to Canberra. Fourteen international flights now come into the city. We are looking at ways to support business development and enable businesses to access the international market and deliver experiences to international visitors.

As a specific example, for the last two years we have incorporated an Indigenous business each year in an accelerated program that we do in partnership with the Australian Tourism Export Council, which is a national body. That enables local Indigenous businesses to be international market ready; it teaches them how to structure their businesses, set up commissions and those types of things.

THE CHAIR: In the interests of time, and whilst all of that is interesting and important, how many new opportunities are being created and how many of those are Ngunnawal?

Mr Kobus: What I was describing was an opportunity. We have increased the sale of local Indigenous products through our visitors centre at Regatta Point.

THE CHAIR: I want to know how many businesses you are working with, how many are new operations and how many of those—

Mr Kobus: I do not have an exact figure for the number of businesses, but across our visitors centre and those other programs, there are between five and 10 businesses that we would be working with to enable those opportunities.

THE CHAIR: Will you be able to come back to me with how many are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and how many are Ngunnawal?

Mr Kobus: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Probably over the next few months, in our catch-up, we are particularly interested in this: when we put an effort into starting up businesses—and this will be the same for all tourism operators here—what do we have in place for the impact of a decline in tourism because of factors outside our control, to sustain these businesses over that period of time? How will these businesses be considered in any of those types of initiatives as well?

Mr Kobus: Yes, certainly.

THE CHAIR: In the review of the whole-of-government employment strategy, I assume that an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy has been undertaken. Again, have any findings or next steps been identified?

Ms Evans: No, I can say that it has not happened. I am aware of some work that has been done, that I mentioned earlier, about reviewing the RED framework as the first stage. A working group has been established for that work. There is the intention to seek the views of the Elected Body around that, as well as working with representatives of our inclusion network. We will be working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees around the work. But the review of the overall framework has not taken place.

THE CHAIR: Again, this is another one that is a commitment in 18 months, not 10 years?

Ms Evans: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will finish in July, which will mean—

Ms Evans: It needs to be completed.

THE CHAIR: To get things finished, with this current agreement, they need to be well and truly underway by then.

Ms Evans: Chair, my apologies; I have only been in this role very briefly. I understand there has been some work done in the lead-up. There was a bit of a changeover between Meredith and I. I absolutely take your point that this work needs to be progressed.

THE CHAIR: It is on the radar?

Ms Evans: It is on the radar.

THE CHAIR: It just has not happened yet?

Ms Evans: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We look forward to hearing about its progress.

Ms Evans: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: We have probably covered a little bit of the next one: there is a unique component to work experience opportunities for young people, which was committed to in the agreement. Granted the ASBA is not work experience, but it does relate to young people. Have any other opportunities been created for young people for work experience since the agreement was signed?

Ms Evans: Coming back to the positions that we spoke about, those 10 positions, it is currently open at the moment for young people to apply for the training positions.

THE CHAIR: Within the action plan, where you have made commitments around work experience, are you just talking about ASBA?

Ms Evans: Within the individual directorates they would be picking up work experience, more than the training opportunities, because the work experience opportunities are cleared by individual directors-general.

THE CHAIR: For your directorate, which has a commitment to work experience numbers, what does it look like?

Mr Wright: I do not have those numbers in front of me. I will take that on notice and come back to you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I appreciate that. The next lot of questions sit more in the business development space. Obviously, particularly with the procurement policy kicking off on 1 July, it is important to make sure that our community's businesses are growing and up to speed, so this next lot of questions relate to some of the initiatives that are in that space.

At our last hearings we were given an undertaking that a key focus for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business development entrepreneurship program going forward would be achieving the unmet internship and trainee target. Could you provide an update on what activities have been undertaken over the past 12 months to address that? And what have been the outcomes?

Ms Priest: Chair, and Elected Body members, my commencing in the role here was late January, so I am getting very quickly across the portfolio and the work that has been done in this space. From what I understand of the program that has been in place, while initially it was intended to deliver one of the internship and trainee targets, through the course of the first year it became apparent that the provider was not able to deliver on those elements within the resources provided, so the second year of the program actually does not include that requirement. What I can say, and what is most important, and the thing that I have been focusing on since being in the role, is that we are about to embark on a review—in fact, we are undertaking a procurement process at the moment—of the entire Indigenous business and entrepreneur landscape in the ACT, including the work that has been currently undertaken over the last few years by the current provider.

We want to understand whether or not the needs are being met; if there are gaps, what

are those gaps; and how can we sharpen our pencil moving forward into the next period. I know there are a number of questions here about what has been delivered in the past period. I can talk to those things as well.

THE CHAIR: We will get to those in a second. Given that you only started in the role in January these are perhaps commitments that you are not across. Particularly in our hearings report we pulled out from the *Hansard* the commitment. Granted, whatever the contract arrangements had been delivered might not have covered it, but certainly the commitment that was given to us was that over these 12 months the traineeship and internship targets that we were expecting would be a primary focus. I am just wondering what happened to that.

Ms Priest: What I can say is that the government has continued to work collaboratively with the supplier to ensure the program is meeting unmet needs and is accessible. So that has been the focus. Whilst the intern and traineeship targets have not been included, the focus has been on entrepreneur development delivered through the yarning circle, entrepreneur workshops—

THE CHAIR: I get that, and I will get to those components which have other questions, but we were given a very clear undertaking, because we made it very clear at the last hearings that we expected to see those internships and trainee targets met, particularly because we knew the procurement policy was coming and the importance of these deliverables.

Ms Arthy: Chair, if I may?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Arthy: The commitment is still very much there. As you know, this particular program is contracted out. We have been working with the contractor, and it just has not proven possible, as Ms Priest said, to meet those targets.

THE CHAIR: Through that contract arrangement, but that does not mean it could not have been done another way.

Ms Arthy: That is true. The way that we are tackling it, though, is to do, as Ms Priest said, a general review of what the landscape is and how we can best deliver it, because we are not experts in this area at all. That is why we are now doing the review so that we can look at what we can do differently to be able to deliver it. So there is definitely no diminishment of a commitment; it is just that we have not been able to figure out how to deliver it, which is why we are doing the review.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I accept that that is where we are at. I assume that that review can be done in time for the next action plan, the next three-year cycle, to have some solid commitments so that we can then have a procurement process and have those contracts deliverables.

Ms Arthy: Yes. And we would welcome input from the Elected Body or anyone to that review. We are still just going through the procurement side of that as well.

THE CHAIR: I understand.

Ms Arthy: We see this as a really important review, because I think we need to reset how we approach this, because I think we are missing some opportunities.

THE CHAIR: Certainly. These next half dozen questions are not from us; these are community-based questions that we have received, trying to get clarity on the program and where it is at and those sorts of things. So understand that these are not specific action plan questions. These are the community-based questions that we get. Given the timing, you have the questions in front of you, Ms Priest and others. What we are really interested in, I guess, is over the last 12 months, what has been the impact of activities that have been run but also that relationship between the entrepreneur centre and the business development side of the program.

Ms Priest: Sure. In terms of the impact, again the information before me is that we have had a total of 22 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses engaged in individual mentoring. So the focus has been on upskilling and bringing the skillset of those businesses up, and improving that over the course of the program, including the development of a strategic plan. It is just helping businesses to get themselves organised around that side of things.

Nineteen specialist business advice sessions have been delivered—specifically targeted focused business advice sessions. There have been eight workshops, including youth entrepreneurship; website building; social impact business; supply chain engagement; workshops for those thinking of starting a business—really that early end thinking in terms of Indigenous entrepreneurs; digital marketing; practical tendering; and procurement, which has included some support assistance through the procurement people.

THE CHAIR: Within that data is it easy to ascertain how many were existing businesses that needed help, or how many, because of these programs, have started?

Ms Priest: What has the actual uplifting benefit been? That is a really good point to make. I do not have that information before me. I think if we do not have it now, we absolutely need to make sure that, in any research that we are doing, we measure better the outcomes and the results of the program, not just that we delivered these things.

THE CHAIR: If some of it is to move existing businesses to higher value contracts—the small-value contracts for start-ups—that is okay. It is just trying to understand—

Ms Priest: What has been the process and the trajectory of those businesses moving through the pipeline?

THE CHAIR: Yes. That is right.

Ms Priest: Yes, understood. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trade show was held on 31 October, which was attended by around 220 people. Thirty-six businesses registered and participated in the showcase. That was like, “Come and see what is on offer,” and trying to get that follow-through.

THE CHAIR: And was that ACT government specific?

Ms Priest: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Good.

Ms Priest: It was attended, as I said, by 220 people, including businesses and the people that were coming to see what might be available and what might be interesting to them in terms of future procurements and engagements. That is pretty much the extent of the last couple of years worth of the program.

THE CHAIR: The final question that you have got in front of you is about whether an independent review has been undertaken, but I understand from the evidence so far that you are in the process of getting that sorted.

Ms Priest: That is right. We plan to have that review completed by June. As Ms Arthy has said, we would certainly be looking to make sure we engage with the right parties in that, including the Elected Body and others out there in the landscape who are potentially able to provide the services.

THE CHAIR: Could I just ask one last question in this space on the business development program? What is the level of support that the ACT government provides to the entrepreneurship centre?

Ms Priest: My understanding is that through CEBRA there is a day of the week that is available to the entrepreneurship program. As is provided for the rest of the people who engage with CEBRA, there is a day a week that is available to—

THE CHAIR: For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses?

Ms Priest: Yes. Correct.

THE CHAIR: Which day of the week is it?

Ms Priest: I do not know. I would have to check.

THE CHAIR: What I am getting at is: is it every Monday or is it seven hours over the week? How do businesses know?

Ms Priest: I think, given that it is a one-on-one service and it is provided through Yerra, it would be one day for efficiency, but I will check that and come back.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mrs Hughes: It would be good to have the stats on how many people are accessing it each week as well.

THE CHAIR: Yes, its utilisation. We might move onto the CIT component. I understand, director-general, that you will probably leave us at this point, given that

CIT does have its more than capable executive team here. I appreciate the efforts of the officers who have been with us this morning.

Appearances:

Canberra Institute of Technology

Cover, Ms Leanne, Chief Executive Officer

Sloan, Mr Craig, Chair, CIT Board

Ryan, Mr Paul, Executive Director, Industry Engagement and Strategic Relations

McKenry, Ms Paula, Executive Director, Education and Training Services

Law, Ms Catherine, Teacher, Yurauna

Whale, Mr Andrew, Executive Director, Corporate Services

THE CHAIR: I welcome our Canberra Institute of Technology representatives. Apologies for being a little bit late this morning. We took a bit longer on some of our questions with your colleagues than we had anticipated. We have done a formal welcome this morning in acknowledgement. I note that our member Monahan is not with us today due to sorry business and will not be here this week, so we are down to the six of us.

We did give the opportunity for the director-general to make a short opening statement, but given the unique nature of yourselves within the organisation, if there is anything that you wanted to say before we start, I will give you a few minutes to do that should you want to.

Ms Cover: Thank you for having us here today. We are looking forward to the conversation. I have a couple of things to highlight for the Elected Body this morning. First and foremost is the outstanding achievements of our students in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community at CIT, and a particular mention of Taylor Williams, a CIT Solutions student who was awarded the Australian Training Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year last year. We are really proud of that.

THE CHAIR: That is excellent.

Ms Cover: That is my opening comment. I think all the other highlights the committee will draw out with their questions, and I am happy to provide those as we go.

THE CHAIR: I hope that you have had a copy of the questions to come. We will do this process a little differently from other years; the majority of questions will come from action plan listed items. We have, like other years, taken questions from the community, so anything that feels a bit left field, that is because that is where it came from or it is from recommendations from previous hearings, although I do not know that there are too many of those for you. Some of the directorates have a much longer list of homework that they needed to complete than yourselves.

Could you tell us what work has been done to ensure that a range of pathways and options are available for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans to move between the school system, the ACT government system, particularly in vocational and tertiary education, and what those outcomes might look like?

Ms Cover: I might start and then pass over to Paula McKenry to talk about some of the specifics. Obviously, the institute has about 20 per cent of students overall coming from the school system into CIT in any year and that fluctuates in terms of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort within that 20 per cent. We have very close relationships with the school sector and, in particular over the last 12 months, we have been working on a program to try to raise awareness of vocational education training options into the schools. I might get Ms McKenry to talk a little bit about that. It is not specifically targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, but the pathways colleges that we have within the institute and then the Yurauna centre are key contact points for students coming out of the secondary school system and into CIT.

Ms McKenry: There has been a pilot program in place last year and this year that has been quite successful. It is called the industry pathways program, which is particularly geared at supporting school students to transition to vocational education and training. As Ms Cover mentioned, it is not specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; however, a number of students have participated in that program. Last year there were five out of 70 students who self-identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

That program was very successful. This year it was only a pilot across four schools, but that is to be extended and we are working with schools and the Education Directorate to look at how that program might be extended, but also to evaluate that program and see if any additional support mechanism are required, any particular tailored support mechanisms that might be required for students to help them to transition into vocational education. There have been a number of students that have had very good success in that program from the four schools.

I had a particular case study here, which I would like to let you know about, who was a student from Namadgi School. The school had told us that she was not really enjoying school and had been quite disengaged from learning. She participated in the program last year, in competency-based learning that was a bit more hands-on rather than quite so theoretical, and she also was able to attend the introduction to industry days, which seemed to particularly increase her interest in education. She has now gone on this year to participate in the CIT year 12 program that is run through Pathways College, with support from Yurauna centre. Her teacher from Namadgi was very excited that the student was not going to leave after year 10, as had been her original plan.

Ms Cover: Chair, Catherine Law from the CIT Yurauna centre might also give a perspective from the Yurauna centre as well.

Ms Law: I am a CIT Yurauna teacher, Community Services. At the moment I think we have got about 60 to 70 students at CIT Yurauna, which has been a massive increase compared to last year. We have got about 15 students in year 12 that have come across to us from the mainstream course. We run the same pathways program, only it runs through CIT Bruce and we offer the support and the teachers come across and work with the students in a culturally safe environment at the Yurauna centre.

Last year we had a lot of progress with our year 10 students, which is the cert II in

general education for disengaged students that were not coping in mainstream schools, did not have the support and stuff like that. We had about eight go through and pass their year 10 last year that now have progressed on to their year 12, so they are continuing their studies.

Also, we have actually got a couple of students that are jumping in and doing subjects like promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture safety. There is one student at Yurauna that is looking at going into nursing, so that is one of the components. She is actually coming through and has been there for her year 10, is now starting year 12, and she is actually going through to do her nursing, so she has started to come through the cert III as well as her pathway. Yurauna centre are going really well with our outcomes. I cannot give you an exact percentage of success rates, but they are very high at the moment, definitely.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. We quite often comment on the success of the Yurauna centre as a model. Given that level of success and engagement without a targeted approach, is there any potential going forward? My understanding is that, with many of our students, it is within secondary schools when we start to lose them. It might be about selecting schools where the program is expanded because they have higher Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student ratios. That might be the first place to start. Also, perhaps there should be a more targeted engagement process for the community members who are a little bit more active. Obviously, the Yurauna centre has a good profile for much of our community.

I am particularly interested to hear about young people who, maybe through their family or their out of home care situation, do not have that same grapevine. How do we connect to them so that they can leverage what seem to be excellent opportunities for our kids?

Perhaps it could be an undertaking, and we might shape it as a recommendation. How do we target schools that have a large number of our kids—that might be one way to start it—while also acknowledging that there will be a cohort of students who do not have that same community engagement at the moment that the Yurauna centre offers through CIT? How will CIT have a specific strategy for that?

You have resources within CIT that can help you to shape that, but with some of these programs it should be about having that lens. I think that vocational education and training offers something that the school system either does not or cannot offer our kids at the moment. I am very interested in how we grow all of the entry points and seeing we do not just rely on the Yurauna centre, especially granted their growth rate already. We want to make sure that that can be maintained and sustained, and share that responsibility. If that is something you could build into that future strategy, members of our community would be very supportive of that approach.

Given that you are the largest provider of cert IV in government qualifications for our jurisdiction, what have you done with directorates to support employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?

Ms Cover: The body will appreciate that the institute receives an appropriation from treasury for what we call our profile hours, which is individual students enrolling in

programs; then the ACT government procures training from a variety of providers in a competitive market.

THE CHAIR: So you do not get the monopoly?

Ms Cover: No, we do not. That certificate IV has been successfully run by CIT Solutions for the commonwealth government. It is the program on which we have been working with the ACT government to contextualise for an ACT government setting. We have been progressing those conversations with chief minister's and the commissioner.

THE CHAIR: We asked your colleagues about that. I have a particular bias, given that I started my career as a cert IV trainee through ACT government programs. I know that it can work, and what it does. How do we leverage off that, if you are already doing that for the Australian government?

Ms Cover: We have been working with the ACT government. Obviously, it is not just us. We do the training component; we have got that ready. We are ready to respond. Of course, there is the employment side of things which the broader ACT government are working on, in terms of those mechanisms for work placements as well as supervisors and mentors in that space.

THE CHAIR: Do you offer programs for that as well?

Ms Cover: Specifically for mentoring and supervising, we do the training and assessment, which is the assessor qualification for teachers to do the assessment of the units of competency that are embedded in that. I do not think we necessarily have accredited training for what we do for mentors. I will let Paul answer that.

Mr Ryan: As part of the cert IV program that CIT Solutions delivers, it does include a component for the supervisors of the trainees, noting that off-the-job training is only one component, and that has to be mirrored by the on-the-job support. As a training program, as a complete package, it is acknowledged that the supervisor support is an integral part of it.

Your question was around whether it can be an employment pathway. Because it is structured as a traineeship and the public sector training package requires you to be already working within government, it is a great program for existing workers or new recruits, but it is not structured for jobseekers to go and do the cert IV as you might do in other industries, where you do the training and you apply for a job after that.

THE CHAIR: I was trying to tailor the question more towards what relationships you have with the directorates in their workforce planning to say, "We've got this program that nationally the Australian government picks up." I understood from the director-general that the other D-Gs now have, within their performance agreement, a requirement to build their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing numbers. It would seem, from a business model perspective—

Ms Cover: Yes, from a business model perspective, we are ready to go. We also appreciate, though, that the government procures services from other providers. We

are ready to go. We are talking to the ACT—

THE CHAIR: Have you talked to each of the D-Gs?

Ms Cover: No, we tend to work through the commissioner, in terms of that HR space. The strategic space of chief minister's is where the strategic board inputs the D-Gs' input—their needs around that workforce development. We have been working with the public service commissioner in that space to look at those options and programs. We are talking and progressing; I think we have a product ready to go.

Mr Ryan: The training component, looking at a cohort of maybe 16 or 18 people, could be ready for semester 2 this year. That is a July intake. As Leanne said, the training component, in terms of organising the bigger piece, is a relatively easier piece. With the conditions of recruitment, it is one-year temporary employment, pending the successful completion of the traineeship year that—

THE CHAIR: That is all outside your control.

Mr Ryan: All of that is outside. The direct answer is yes, if the directorates are ready and have their HR side in house, the institute would be ready to roll out the training component.

THE CHAIR: With the certificate package that you have at the moment, does it have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as a module? What I am getting at is that it is not just about our kids getting jobs and employment; are people who are about to enter the public service getting an opportunity to think about what their job means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Mr Ryan: The broader certificate IV and diploma of government do. But the cohort that works in the public sector is an Indigenous intake.

THE CHAIR: There are two different ones.

Mr Ryan: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The Aboriginal program is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and obviously one of the fragilities of that from your perspective is people have to have the jobs and you have got the training package. But I am thinking more broadly—and perhaps this is something post not just the certificate IV in government. How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives embedded into your mainstream programs as an opportunity for all Australians to have a better understanding?

Mr Ryan: Yes. Can we take that on notice? I am sure there is a component of a specific unit of competency within those qualifications.

THE CHAIR: Is it in particular streams rather than others? I want just a sense of how consistent that is or if you have plans for that to be gradually built on across all of your programs and eventually, when people come out CIT trained, they have had that opportunity as well. That would be of interest and would fit with the lifelong learning

component of the agreement as well.

Ms Cover: I might just add—and I am happy to take that on notice too—that it is something we have been looking at. One of the challenges for us is that the product is actually determined by industry and industries tend to isolate and not do broad, inclusive training. They tend to isolate for very technical competencies, so the training packages are very specific for colouring, or for hairdressing, or for project management, or for construction.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: We are constantly asking: how do we infuse these sorts of more broader competencies into training packages for every training package?

THE CHAIR: Again, this shows my lack of knowledge of your sector, so apologies if this is a really basic question. I get that the industries will say, “We need hairdressers who can at least do this.” Do they set the accreditation standard or is there a separate body for that?

Ms Cover: No, it is a national regulator and there is a body that gives the commonwealth government advice around the endorsed units of competency—these are the specifications about what is to be assessed, how it is to be assessed, the context that it is to be assessed in. For instance, we were only talking this morning about hairdressing, which has moved now to very specific requirements for a number of—

THE CHAIR: Uncle was not talking about hairdressing.

Mr Ryan: I do not think I was.

Ms Cover: But you want to see that as how specific some of the training packages are.

Mr Ryan: No. As an example, I asked how in the future we can embed artificial intelligence and other digital technologies into the specific training. I just happened to be talking about the hairdressing training, but it could be across any of our training. They said their specific package says that to pass the culinary unit, you must be assessed 10 times and it must be on an actual person. The industry specifies that, not the training provider. It is down to that much detail.

THE CHAIR: Are they entirely prescriptive or are there electives? Is there a service offer you can add that people can opt into? If the regulator or the industry is not going to give it the prominence that perhaps I think it deserves, is there another way for people who have an interest at least to do that, if it gives them some sort of credit and does not annoy their boss too much?

Ms McKenry: Sorry, there is no straightforward answer. It varies according to the training packages.

THE CHAIR: Of course.

Ms McKenry: Some training packages have quite a degree of electives that can be

chosen and some have fewer electives. Typically, trade training packages, not just hairdressers but plumbers and electricians as well, are much more technology focused. They tend not to have—this is a general statement—competencies or electives that deal so much with people, whereas health training packages, for instance, all have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness elements in the training packages, and they are not electives, they are actually mandatory.

THE CHAIR: Excellent. Perhaps when we get that feedback, that will give us a better understanding of even knowing where there is an opportunity and where actually, at the moment, there is not. Perhaps we will need to focus our energy on that. We are also interested in what the CIT, in the course of current whole-of-government agreement, have undertaken to deliver training outcomes for directorates and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the ACT public service.

Ms Cover: We have done some cultural awareness training in 2019 for 50 ACT public servants. That, again, is for a contestable arrangement that we have there. We also work with each of the directorates to enable their components within the agreement. Mr Ryan might talk a little bit about that and how we have been doing that.

Mr Ryan: Yes. Particularly the project we have just spoken about was a result of the last hearings. We were having ongoing conversations with CMTEDD about rolling out the certificate IV in government. Hopefully, that will bear fruit in this coming year.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: Chief minister's do procure other training, so it is not just us.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: I guess, we can talk about our part of that, which is the 50—

THE CHAIR: Yes, and that is all I expect—

Ms Cover: But, yes, there is obviously broader training being procured as well.

THE CHAIR: There are other opportunities that have come up through the agreement and this next question is off script, so I apologise for that. It is in the earlier part of CMTEDD but probably more relevant to here. Given that from 1 July we have got a new Indigenous procurement policy, what has the CIT done to prepare itself for what might be an increase in interest by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in business studies?

Ms Cover: We have been very active. I actually did bring some statistics on that because I thought you might be interested more broadly in that. We have, like other agencies across government, a target of one per cent. In 2019 we exceeded that by 1.09 per cent in terms of arrangements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Including CIT Solutions, we are currently working with nine service providers in that space. I can give you some broad areas, if you would like to know about where we are procuring or what sorts of services.

THE CHAIR: Yes, but I am more interested in seeing if people have a look across where the other opportunities are and how you are linking into that. You have already got some commitments through CMTEEDD and others around the training for businesses, in particular, things that start-ups and others need—but have there been any other changes to your offerings over the last 12 months?

Ms Cover: I might just make some general comments and then ask others to talk to the specifics. I think it is important to note the success of the connections program. On the childcare element that has gone into supporting students within the Yurauna centre training through Northside Community Service, with the connections program, again, this is another way that perhaps we can connect up with a broader set of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, rather than just the students that we have currently got through their family and community connections there.

On a different side of things, we are working with the CBR Innovation Network and we are a foundation member there. We are constantly looking for, when we are doing different programs with them, how we might reach a broader connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs or start-up businesses in that space as well.

THE CHAIR: Education Minister Berry announced last year, through the budget cycles, changes to early childhood arrangements in the ACT, which will mean more workers are needed in that space. Does the CIT then have a look at it and go, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are going to be prioritised in these increased hours. That will mean we need more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childcare workers”? It is those types of things that influence how you might go about linking those government commitments to opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

Ms Law: Currently we have got, as Ms Cover said, the childcare centre there. We have actually been working with Northside to implement more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in the childcare centre at Yurauna centre. At the moment, there is a job opportunity that is actually going that we will be interviewing for soon, for one position. We have also organised with them to have maybe up to three ASBAs to go into the child care to work one day a week.

THE CHAIR: Come to see if they like it; this is what you will need.

Ms Law: Yes; we are in the process of doing that now and working with Ms Cover. The director is looking at that as well. With that, there will be opportunities once they go into the Yurauna centre, if they want, because we have only got the three days a week, to go and actually work at other mainstream north-side centres where there are other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children or non-Indigenous children as well. We are hoping by that to get more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childcare workers into Canberra childcare centres.

THE CHAIR: Do you and the centre help support finding those placements, and how they go when they get there and those sorts of things?

Ms Law: With the ASBAs, yes, of course.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Ms Law: We will work alongside Northside, who at the moment are looking into the ASBAs to find out about funding and stuff like so that the students can be paid. We have been working with our young ones that are interested in it, in year 12, looking to go into the ASBA. If we do not have enough there, we will put it out to community as well, like we always do. Yes, we are always there to support.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Ms Law: We have student support as well, which will offer a lot of support to the students that are going in.

THE CHAIR: It is a good place to get started, especially if it is your first job.

Ms Law: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Officer McKenry, was there anything else that you wanted to add?

Ms McKenry: I wanted to come back to something that you mentioned earlier about business and the shift in procurement policy. We are aware that that might result in more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking business studies, and one of the very early things that we put in place with the help of the Yurauna centre was to run some dedicated cultural competency training for all of the staff in the business and leadership college, in recognition that that may be—

THE CHAIR: To get them ready for these new students?

Ms McKenry: That is right, yes.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Ms McKenry: And to make sure that their skills are absolutely up to date and very current, with the hope that there will be an increase in students there.

THE CHAIR: Excellent, thank you. I think that, particularly in the childcare worker space, there are some things, even nationally, that will be announced shortly, which will create an opportunity to build on that momentum. So it might be worth having a look at how to put a little bit more structure around that, given that you might have a bigger number coming soon.

Could you tell us—this goes a little bit towards that last piece of information—whether the CIT has established specific cultural focused training for our community members to undertake board training? One of the things we asked your colleagues across the directorate about—and then in other agencies—was that whilst we have a unique and significant role as the Elected Body, there are lots of other places where the government seeks advice and input on particular areas, and that is where the boards and committees come in. We have pushed to have an increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on those. We also understand, whilst

many of our people have a vast range of skill sets, how the governance of a board works, and its technical nature, might be a bit of a foreign language. So I am just wondering what you might have done in any of your board training offerings to help make those programs more accessible for our community.

Ms Cover: We have not specifically targeted any programs of that nature. We do have competencies within the training package that definitely would suit that, and I would say that we remain willing and able to respond. Should government fund some of those programs we could certainly respond to that sort of request.

THE CHAIR: Yes. The CIT, in particular, identified opportunities to promote the Yurauna centre's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural arts courses, including their benefits to students and the community.

Ms Cover: I might get Catherine to talk specifically about that particular program, but I would say that Catherine noted earlier the increase in enrolments and the steady increase in enrolments through the Yurauna centre. I think that particular program is a real attraction around the completion and success in that space. Catherine might have details of the specific course.

THE CHAIR: Before you start, can I just double-check? When you were talking about the number of enrolments, is that specifically in programs that Yurauna centre runs, versus how many students we have at CIT?

Ms Law: Yes.

Ms Cover: We know the number of students who identified, obviously, in the Yurauna centre but then there are other students outside of the Yurauna centre who have identified, which is 1,022 for 2019. That has been steadily increasing. I think our stats—if someone could help me out with it—over the last 10 years, have increased in terms of comparison to 1,022. Sorry, just bear with me.

THE CHAIR: While they are looking up those numbers—

Ms Cover: It went from 388 in 2010 to 1,022 students in 2019.

THE CHAIR: Wow! Would it be fair to say that that now also means a representation of our people across a much broader section of the things that you offer, rather than a few specific streams?

Ms Cover: Yes.

Ms McKenry: Yes, it does.

THE CHAIR: Breaking stereotypes, if you like, of what we might want to study?

Ms Cover: Yes. We would still like to see students engaged in higher levels of qualification. They still tend to be centred around the certificate III and certificate IV. Having said that, the bulk of the training that sits across the whole of the organisation is around certificates III and IV.

THE CHAIR: That is the right ratio.

Ms Cover: We have seen some shifts. In addition to the specific programs that we run through the Yurauna centre, we are seeing growth in children's services, business and accounting, information technology, fitness, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual arts, electrotechnology, automotive studies, nursing, and building and construction.

THE CHAIR: That is a really good cross-section of things, isn't it?

Ms Cover: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The other question was about what identified opportunities there have been to promote Yurauna centre's cultural arts courses and its benefits.

Ms Law: Opportunities to promote out in communities?

THE CHAIR: Yes. How do you get the message out that we have this program, and these are the benefits of it, and how you get involved?

Ms Law: Yes. A lot of advertising. Obviously, we use the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous network. That is utilised through the CIT Yurauna centre. Everyone at the Yurauna centre uses that.

THE CHAIR: Do you mean the email network?

Ms Law: Yes, the email network. We also have staff in the office that attend organisations—mainstream and Indigenous organisations—and put up posters and flyers and stuff like that when it is happening. What else do we do? I think we—

THE CHAIR: Do you get along to community events—a captive audience?

Ms Law: Yes, definitely. We always attend community events. Even though we teachers are off during NAIDOC Week, we always attend events in NAIDOC Week as well. We attend heaps of events—Indigenous and non-Indigenous events. Not only that; we—I can speak for myself, but this applies to other people who work at Yurauna too—are constantly networking, whether we are at work or not at work. So that is a good thing in the community.

THE CHAIR: Always looking for those opportunities?

Ms Law: Yes, definitely.

Ms Cover: I will just mention a couple of other things that I have been really impressed with. I do not know if it has come out of this particular program, but in 2019 the graduation ceremony that the Yurauna centre ran had incredible awards that were designed and crafted in terms of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. I thought that was a really great connection that the Yurauna centre provided.

Mr Ryan: And specifically in 2019, those courses were advertised on the CIT

website; they were in the CIT course guides; they were promoted through all the social media platforms. Further to what Catherine said, the NAIDOC Family Day, the Multicultural Festival and general community groups were all avenues of promotion for those courses.

Ms McKenry: And there were a couple of extra projects that we got to do last year, which really highlighted the cultural arts. One of those was the Orange Wolves project.

Ms Law: Yes.

Ms McKenry: That was a CIT-wide project, but one of the six buses that were decorated was done specifically from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

THE CHAIR: I have to apologise; I do not know what the Orange Wolves is. Was it decorating buses?

Ms McKenry: It was a city sustainability renewal project.

Ms Cover: City Renewal Authority.

Ms McKenry: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: It sounds like Utopia.

Ms McKenry: There was six buses for a period of two weeks in the city centre. We used those buses to help students showcase their work.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms McKenry: One of them was decorate on the outside—

THE CHAIR: Featured—

Ms McKenry: and the inside was all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural arts. That gave an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Yurauna centre, but also from across CIT, to work in and demonstrate that art in that space. The other thing I would just like to mention was that CIT Yurauna and the Northside Community Service together were nominated for a Banksia sustainability award last year.

THE CHAIR: That is right, yes, and were finalists.

Ms McKenry: That also highlighted the works.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is an excellent outcome as well. Thanks for that. The next question is just to understand—and maybe if we use the period of the agreement—if Yurauna centre's success is what we are hearing and the numbers are going up, what additional support is being provided to them to enhance their service offer to the community? Apologies, because I write this assuming everyone is here the whole time,

and I forget that you are not here in the morning. One of the things for us that is a bit of a critical focus is that more than half of our population is 24 or under, which hits quite a big range for people coming through for your programs.

I am being mindful that—and it is great that they are 2½ times the rate in a decade, which is a really good growth number—the number of our kids in the age group that we are going to need these for is growing quickly as well. In what has happened over the course of the agreement, has there been any additional support or growth or how are you taking into account what our demographics look like in future planning for that centre?

Ms Cover: I would refer back to the connections program, which I think is a great example of that additional support that has come into that program. Generally speaking, the budget has reflected that the steady growth, if you like, in that sort of space.

THE CHAIR: As in more students and the resource then follows?

Ms Cover: Not necessarily, because the funding that funds the Yurauna Centre is through the profile, which is the appropriation that we get on an annual basis.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: There is always a variance. It is not on a completions per capita basis or anything like that.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: But the Yurauna centre budget, which a majority of those services are serviced through, has remained sort of steady. Proportionately any efficiencies that we have had to apply across the organisation have not impacted the Yurauna centre as they have in other areas, because we are conscious of trying to keep those services there.

They are more broadly outside the Yurauna centre to cater for other students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, but not necessarily coming in through those services through the Yurauna centre. We have increased fee relief in terms of ways that students can have their fees either waived or subsidised or loans taken out in that space. Then in the broader student services there are wraparound services to deal with counselling or other services—mentoring et cetera.

THE CHAIR: The reason for my question—and this might give it a bit better context and I have made an assumption here; I have not tested this with many people beside a few community people that I have spoken to—what I worry about is that the Yurauna centre's specific programs are growing at a rate, and resources might reflect that. If the success of that is that more of us are doing more courses, it is highly likely that many of us, even though we might not be doing a Yurauna centre specific course, go in and utilise the centre, its leadership, its people and those sorts of things.

How do you work out the utilisation of those resources? Whilst it might not be in

specific delivery that the centre does, it will have a role with all students potentially who come through, even though they are doing courses with other schools and units. How do you sort of try to average that out?

Ms Cover: We certainly try to just respond, as we get that information in terms of demand on any given year and the services that are needed. An example would be if there is an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers coming through the Yurauna centre for our training programs in our certificate IV qualification, we make sure we have got additional spots for those teachers to be trained in there.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: We do not do it on a proportionate basis. We could do more around trying to work out those statistics around the access into the broader services that are available to all students that we suspect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are actually accessing.

THE CHAIR: Even if I come through one of those mainstream programs, I am going to bug them, just check in on things, have I done this properly, that sort of stuff.

Ms Cover: Yes. I think the budget does reflect that kind of growth in terms of, not so much perhaps outright growth, but a stable or steady budget that has been apportioned to the Yurauna centre each year and has reflected the growth in services, not just within the Yurauna centre but more broadly. In terms of new opportunities, the body would be aware that ACT government has recently announced a new campus to be built in Woden town centre.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: I think that could be a great opportunity for us to think about how we actually better connect up to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that are across the breadth of our organisation, in addition to the great work that the Yurauna centre does.

Ms Law: Also, on that, we actually have a Yurauna centre student support officer and we have a mainstream student support officer. Our mainstream student support officer will attend other campuses as well. She will meet up with students and offer support for students, especially for apprentices that are in Fyshwick and cannot leave on those days, or over at Bruce. She will go out there and she will offer any support. That could be support around making sure Indigenous scholarships have gone through to assessments—any support. She does student support weekly with the students and offers that.

THE CHAIR: You have really got some structure to help support?

Ms Law: Yes, we definitely have structure. We do not just support our Yurauna students; we make sure that we do support our mainstream Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as well.

THE CHAIR: And we get that. I just worry that you do that at a stretch. If you have

got funding lines for that, you have got that visibility and of course that is across all of your business units. It is just to make sure that this success is measured and grown and sustainable.

Ms Law: In saying that, when you were talking about capacities, they will be talking about classroom capacity and stuff like that. If we get a heap of people come in, do we have the room?

THE CHAIR: It could be any of those things.

Ms Law: At the moment community services is at capacity. For our classroom it is at capacity. Our cert IV is growing very big. Our year 12 is massive. To say nothing against CIT or anything, but our centre is getting small compared to the cohort that we have got coming in—how many students.

THE CHAIR: That is what I am getting at, just knowing the numbers, potentially in the pipeline over the next decade.

Ms Law: Yes.

THE CHAIR: And getting ready for it.

Ms Law: It will become too small very soon and the thing we do not want to have to do is to have to push people away either, because if they are ready to study now and you turn someone away, they might not be ready to study when you have room. At the moment we are pretty good. But it does look like it is going to get a lot bigger real quick.

Ms Cover: Thanks for that comment; it is really appreciated. We have been in discussion with the Yurauna centre about how we actually scale up the services so that they are not just housed at the Reid facility. How do we support those across other campuses as well, which is why I mentioned the—okay, it is not until mid-2020s—new campus at Woden. I think it is another opportunity for us to think about where the best place for Yurauna centre is to service the community in that broader perspective as well.

THE CHAIR: That is certainly important and something for planning. It creates an opportunity to reset that a bit as well and I know that even just 12 months ago the landscape looked a lot different, so our questions to you about that were very different to today. The theme of is being fit for purpose and meeting the needs of community and the CIT as well, that is in the scope of where it ends up and how it works across your campuses, I am sure.

Mr Sloan: I would agree with those comments. I think that is probably at the heart of where we are at the moment with our new campus: to work out what is the best place and facilities for the Yurauna centre. But certainly, from you, chair, if there is any recommendation that the government should give us more funding to put towards the centre, it would be greatly appreciated.

Ms Law: That would be amazing.

THE CHAIR: I come from wheat country, so when I say silos I understand how they are connected underneath and are agile and those sorts of things. I do not mean that you stand alone and are not connected. We want to ask a few of the questions that we are asking all of the directorates, which I think are important and would have been part of the questions emailed to you in advance. The first is around how the CIT, in particular, is looking to increase the number of senior roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the organisation.

Ms Cover: The body would be conscious that we have identified positions, and I am pleased to report that the number of employees who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified has actually been increasing, which is great. We are obviously working with predominantly the Yurauna centre in supporting the work. I particularly acknowledge Caroline Hughes, who is our director of the Yurauna centre, and the work she does in leadership across the community, building language and the work that has been undertaken particularly in the last couple of years. The leadership there is of great benefit to us.

THE CHAIR: To all of us.

Ms Cover: Yes, for all of us to have that leadership there and to attract students and to be really an iconic centre of excellence around all things to do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and that integration, increasing awareness, engagement, not just within the vocational education training sector but across the ACT, the region. Of course, Australia has really absolutely been a real example of Caroline's leadership in that space and I do want to acknowledge that. It is also backed up by some incredible senior capability within the Yurauna centre—Katherine and Roxy and other senior members within that space. We are looking for opportunities not just to attract—

THE CHAIR: Here is the problem: You have done so well at that; now I want you to do it up close.

Ms Cover: Yes. We have seconded staff from across other directorates from time to time to grow their capability. Then we have to give them back, but that is okay, as long as they continue to grow and expand in that space as well. Caroline has been involved in the leadership program that we have been doing for all of the senior management across the institute in the evolving together program, which has been quite specialised around contemporary organisational transformation and exposure to that.

THE CHAIR: Have those secondment opportunities been in senior roles? I am particularly interested in who is setting the standard or how many people we might have on the board or some of those sorts of things; what that looks like.

Ms Cover: The work that I have been talking about in terms of the strategic compass and transitioning the organisation for fit-for-future readiness in terms of the way that the landscape in VET has been changing, Caroline has been very involved in for CIT.

THE CHAIR: I guess it is just to put a line in the sand as those opportunities come

up as to how we might grow even more leaders, not just within a very specific service offer, which obviously needs strong leadership from our community, but—

Ms Cover: Which is why that earlier program that we made reference to and that we are ready to activate, I think also lends itself to growing and broadening those leadership positions at senior levels.

Mr Sloan: I would say, from the board position, we are very mindful that we do not have representation on the board at the moment. We do not control all the positions on the board, but we did flag that there is a gap sitting on our board. We are exploring the opportunity potentially of how to find an up-and-coming female leader within your community. It might actually be a good development program to put that person on our board and also represent a different demographic for us as well, which would be great on a lot of fronts.

THE CHAIR: One of the key focus points of the agreement is around an inclusive community and at its core is to address systemic discrimination and issues of racism in our community. I am interested in how the CIT, within its complaints handling system and other operating systems, captures complaints around racism and discrimination. What does that, numbers-wise, look like for you and how do you measure that?

We have got a target by 2028 in the agreement, but the first phase is really for people to be better, to look at your systems and, like we said to the directorate this morning, if the answer is that we have zero then perhaps the first issue is that the system that we have got to capture it might not be right. I do not want to presume things, but from what we hear—and it might not even mean that those incidences have occurred—if no-one is talking about it then perhaps they do not feel like there is anywhere to talk about it.

How does the CIT, for its students, for its staff and for the community, capture incidences of discrimination or racism, particularly as it relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? How do you measure that? How do you use that as business intelligence to shape how you set your standards?

Ms Cover: The issue has extensive reporting and monitoring systems, both for the student body but also for staff, which are reported to the board and reported to the executive management committee on a regular basis. This reporting is very well publicised, very accessible, and there are lots of different ways of actually making complaints and reports— extensive advertising and promotion of that. We do get lots and lots of complaints from students and community members, as any organisation like ours does, but I am happy to say that I think in 2018 we reported one claim of racial discrimination and in 2019 zero.

THE CHAIR: I worry about the numbers that we are talking about. That is not to say perhaps that the incidents occur, but for a large number of people and knowing what community, social media, all of those sorts of things are like at the moment, how do you feel assured that that is capturing what there is?

Ms Cover: It is not to say that we do not get complaints from Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander students or staff or—

THE CHAIR: They are about other things.

Ms Cover: Yes. We do have lots of complaints—when I say lots, I mean that we have a proportion that you would get from the community with such an organisation, so many students.

THE CHAIR: I think that is a good assurance. If people know how to use the complaint system and they are actively using it, but this is not the topic that comes up. Have I understood that?

Ms Cover: Yes.

Ms McKenry: Can I clarify, too, that it may be that by the time it is reported to the board and senior management there has been some action taken already and so that matter has been dealt with.

THE CHAIR: I would hope so.

Ms McKenry: Or it has been resolved and so it does not reach that level.

THE CHAIR: What about with your staff survey results? I understand, at least for the broader directorate, they have a specific question. I do not know if CIT participates in the same staff survey or something different. Is there a way of asking staff how they feel in the workplace, or if they have issues?

Ms Cover: Certainly, because we do not do the same collective survey. We customise that for CIT and certainly there is an opportunity for us to ask specific questions around that, yes.

THE CHAIR: What do people say?

Mr Ryan: And we do. Sorry, that was different question. I was just going to add a little bit more to the complaints component.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Ryan: On a positive side, the new cultural awareness training includes a bystander training component. That was delivered in 2019 by student services to a range of students.

THE CHAIR: Is that basically to help you call out poor behaviour? Is that what that is about?

Mr Ryan: Yes, and so that is what gives me more encouragement that there is more likelihood that, as a result of the bystander training, people, if they witness anything, would feel comfortable using the complaint.

THE CHAIR: They can raise it as well?

Mr Ryan: Yes, part of the training is to not be a bystander but to actually report. Also, the RED framework has had some increases around reporting any problems, which include not only racism but disability and things like that.

THE CHAIR: Is your RED framework data and system part of the broader directorates? We have heard a bit about that.

Mr Ryan: Correct; yes.

THE CHAIR: Is there anything, particularly in your staff surveys, that goes to that? Is there a question that is just for CIT or would your answer to this be caught up in that bigger net?

Ms Cover: Certainly not caught up in the bigger net around that. There is the reporting that we do through the commissioner, which is caught up around that.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: I might take it on notice unless one of my colleagues can answer that.

Mr Ryan: We do have our own staff survey.

Ms Cover: Sorry, yes, but to your question—

THE CHAIR: I am referring just to what staff say about this.

Mr Ryan: Whether there is a particular question about that, we will take on notice.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms McKenry: I think the other thing that makes us unique is that we have the CIT student association, which is separate from us. That is another body, an independent body, that any student or staff member can go to if they have a complaint, if they are a bit anxious, perhaps, about raising it within the organisation.

THE CHAIR: Yes, there are other channels.

Ms Law: Yes. As well, our student support encourages feedback—because we are all part of CIT—if people need to put in complaints and stuff like that. A lot of students build good rapport with our student support and feel they can open up to them, as well. So we have got that component from the Yurauna centre, as well, that helps with that process if people are struggling or have been a victim of racism or anything like that. That is encouraged.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I am sure there is a positive answer to this, given your relationship with Ngannawal elders groups, but how does the CIT ensure that cultural protocols to recognise Ngannawal people as traditional custodians is followed?

Ms Cover: We make sure that it is embedded in terms of acknowledging, at all of our

internal meetings that we have, and anything that we are doing that has external people at it as well. I think that it has become just very—

THE CHAIR: Business as usual.

Ms Cover: It is business as usual for us. Also, when I look at the time I have been at the institute over the last couple of years—the engagement of staff at NAIDOC Week celebrations, the Yurauna centre graduation and the engagement of the executive team—the presence of senior leadership when they do appropriate acknowledgement and their visibility at those sorts of activities also reinforces it for other staff.

THE CHAIR: Yes, absolutely.

Ms Cover: That also builds an expectation. I am very confident that it is BAU in terms of acknowledgement.

Ms Law: The United Ngunnawal Elders Council and the Ngunnawal people are regularly invited to Yurauna centre and CIT. We have a lot of involvement. Also, one of our components that is taught in the mainstream, which is to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety, speaks about Ngunnawal community and how we are on Ngunnawal land. That is taught, so it is implemented a lot in Yurauna centre and in the mainstream throughout our community services and health courses.

THE CHAIR: In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander components of those courses, where they exist, Yurauna centre has had a chance to look at and say—

Ms Law: Well, it can only be taught by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. So, yes, it is taught by Yurauna centre staff.

THE CHAIR: So you guys are pretty confident of the quality and—

Ms Law: Yes, and we are actually overlooking it—monitoring it—at the moment, and going through it. We are reviewing it.

THE CHAIR: Reviewing it to see if it is fit for purpose?

Ms Law: Yes, just to make sure that it is up to date, current and everything is good.

Ms Cover: I think an extension of that is that in 2019 the Yurauna centre worked really closely around our graduation ceremonies, and there has been incorporation of awareness and integration into that ceremony, which has been a really powerful thing for all of our community to see. At the highest pinnacle of celebration of the institute's outcomes, to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence and acknowledgement there has been—

Ms Law: There is one more thing—the child care. That has a lot to do with Ngunnawal people as well. There are a lot of Ngunnawal words and stuff like that used throughout there.

THE CHAIR: In the centre?

Ms Law: In the childcare centre, yes. It is beautiful. You should come and see it one day; it is lovely. There has been a lot of consultation with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council about what can be used in there and what cannot. It is just a nice culturally safe place and it does reflect Ngunnawal, as well.

THE CHAIR: Excellent.

Ms Cover: The only other thing I will say—just acknowledging again Caroline’s leadership—is that Caroline has introduced new words not just to the senior leadership group but the whole of the organisation at any time she is doing that. So that has been really—

THE CHAIR: She does that for us, as well.

Ms Cover: So that has been a really strong engagement and that inclusive nature of all of us joining in has been great.

THE CHAIR: I have just two more questions and I promise I will then let you go because we are a bit over time. The first relates to how CIT has gone about implanting the Indigenous procurement policy and if you have had any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses win contracts since 1 July?

Ms Cover: I might ask Mr Whale to answer that, since he has not answered anything specific. I did touch on it earlier, but do you want to expand on that, Andrew? I mentioned earlier that with CIT Solutions we have, in 2019, procured nine service providers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander association in that space. Are you okay to talk a bit about the kinds of services we have been procuring?

Mr Whale: Yes. As Leanne mentioned earlier, there is a target set across government for one per cent of all procurement spend to be in the Indigenous area. We achieved slightly over that, which I am pleased to report. Of the nine contractors there is quite a good range from straight out consulting through to messaging and project management and construction, survey tools et cetera. So it is a broad range that we have managed to tap into. Every contract we put out, we go through Procurement ACT and directly approach the relevant boards and bodies and areas to try and get—

THE CHAIR: Have you quarantined any procurements just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses? It has only been going since 1 July; it is okay if you have not.

Mr Whale: Not as such. But there are some where we have known—not as formally as quarantine—that there are clearly some strong providers. So we have targeted them rather than quarantined it. We have got a huge contract that is about to go out at the moment for cleaning services. We will address them, but their capacity would be the thing we would be talking to them about in that tender. But it is definitely a key part of it.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I will check with members to see if they have questions, but I have one last question—all but one last question, to be honest. In the

development of the agreement and your contribution to the action plan, were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff involved in that process?

Ms Cover: The answer is yes—where we have been involved, yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Cover: But remembering that—

THE CHAIR: You have a limited scope in that space, but your staff have been involved. Were there any other questions from members before we finish for today? Can I thank you for your time and your patience with our timing today. It has been great to have this opportunity to speak directly to you—we quite often just get a few minutes as part of the broader directorate—and to acknowledge the success of CIT, and what that can mean for all of our community but obviously for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here, both as students and as other economic participants. Thank you.

Hearing adjourned at 12.59 pm.