

COMMUNIQUE – MEETING NO. 2 – 25 AND 26 FEBRUARY 2020

The Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA (the Council) held its second meeting on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 February 2020 at Dumas House in West Perth, chaired by the Co-Chairs Ms Gail Beck and Mr Martin (Marty) Sibosado.

The first day of the meeting was dedicated to formal Council business, while the second day focussed on the development of a strategic work plan to meet the Council’s objectives for 2020.

Key items discussed and considered by the Council included the following:

Terms of Reference and Charter

The Council endorsed the Terms of Reference and the Charter, subject to minor updates. The Council noted the Terms of Reference were deliberately narrow to align with the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*, while the Charter sets out in detail the role and responsibility for the Council.

Once finalised, these documents will be published on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet’s (DPC) website at www.dpc.wa.gov.au.

Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest

The Council endorsed the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest documents. These documents are available on DPC’s website.

Individual members declared interests, however, these will be recorded in a confidential Conflict of Interest Register.

2020 Meeting dates

Members agreed to meet in Perth for the remainder of the year to ensure it meet its substantial work agenda. While the formal meetings will be held in Perth, the Council agreed that future consultation on the development of a new engagement structure would be undertaken with Aboriginal communities across the State.

The Council’s 2020 meeting schedule is available on DPC’s website.

Presentations by Agencies

A number of presentations were made to the Council, either providing information or seeking advice in relation to consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders as follows.

Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI) presented a proposed marketing approach for attracting local, other state and international tourists to visit Western Australia.

Members provided valuable advice and feedback to JTSI for consideration in finalising the marketing approach, before it seeks endorsement by the State Government.

JTSI also gave a presentation to members on the draft *Biodiscovery Bill*. Members noted the Bill may have a large impact on Aboriginal people, and that JTSI is seeking feedback from Aboriginal people with a particular focus on issues relating to ‘traditional owners’.

Members also noted it is important that any research into and the development of resources occurs in a way that protects the interests of, and benefits for, Aboriginal people.

The proposed legislation will set out processes to ensure lawful acquisition and fair sharing of any benefits arising from the use of Western Australian biological resources and or traditional knowledge.

The Council encourages all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make a submission to JTSI.

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

In March 2018, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs launched a review of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*, with the intention of introducing a new bill in the first half of 2020 to modernise the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) provided an update to members on the review and the consultation that has occurred to date.

Members noted that DPLH would use the feedback, together with written submissions, to draft the proposed *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2020*. DPLH indicated that further public consultation would be undertaken in 2020.

The Council encourages all Aboriginal people to participate in the next round of DPLH consultation.

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Members were given an update by DPC on the progress of the Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Project – Aboriginal Data Sovereignty and Governance.

The Council noted that DPC is working closely with the WA Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee (WAHEC), which has extensive experience in the use of data in a research context. DPC has collaborated further with WAHEC to develop a number of key themes, identified from written submissions, for inclusion in the draft legislation.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Ben Wyatt MLA, joined the Council on the second day to discuss the Council's work priorities for the remainder of 2020.

In response to the Minister Wyatt's announcement on 25 February 2020, that he did not intend to stand for re-election, members of the Council spoke of their genuine respect for Minister Wyatt and acknowledged the significant contribution he has made during his time as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Members all agreed that despite the slow progress in previous years, they were now seeing a noticeable shift in how governments are engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve economic and social outcomes.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for 29 and 30 April 2020.



Ms Gail Beck
Co-Chair



Mr Martin (Marty) Sibosado
Co-Chair