

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD HEALTH SURVEY

5934. Hon Shelley Archer to the Minister for Communities

I refer the Minister to the Report on the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey, carried out by the Kulunga Research Network at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research. I draw the Minister's attention to Recommendation 1 of the Report, namely, 'Reorient existing Indigenous health, education, family and community development policy frameworks and strategies to improve the human development opportunities for Aboriginal people', and I ask —

Will the Minister advise the House what progress has been made in respect of this recommendation?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

The recommendations of the Health Survey are not solely directed to the State Government, however, the State Government has undertaken significant reform in relation to issues of human development opportunities for Aboriginal people, and particularly Aboriginal children. These reforms are fundamental to the outcomes of the functional reviews of both the Department for Indigenous Affairs and the Department for Community Development, and subsequent creation of the Departments for Child Protection and Communities.

With the creation of the Department for Communities, the new Family and Children's Services Division will have responsibility for leading the State Government's Early Childhood Agenda, a key plank of which is new policy direction for preventative services for families with children. The new Department for Communities also has a renewed focus on the development of partnerships across the community, corporate and government sectors, as well as a new agenda of social inclusion and community participation.

In addition, the Department for Indigenous Affairs will establish a whole of Government policy and accountability function to ensure that targeted and mainstream services are meeting the needs Indigenous people, with Indigenous children being a priority focus. The Government is also, through the Department for Indigenous Affairs, Department for Communities and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, involved in negotiations on the COAG agendas on early childhood and indigenous reform, both of which link to wider productivity and well being agendas. Reform is at the core of these initiatives and the WA Aboriginal Health Survey (to which the State Government contributed \$1million) has been a valuable resource in informing our endeavours.