

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT NO. 6 OF
THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE *LISTEN TO THIS: A REVIEW OF LISTEN TO US: A
REPORT BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE***

Recommendation 1

That improving the [outcomes for] Aboriginal children and young people, and their families, must be seen as core business for all agencies.

Noted.

The Western Australian Government is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people, and their families, and is currently undertaking two major reforms which support this commitment – the Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Reforms (AYSIR) and the Regional Services Reform (RSR).

The AYSIR were developed in response to a 2013 review of Western Australian Government expenditure on programs and services for young Aboriginal people. The review found that despite large amounts of expenditure, improved outcomes for Aboriginal young people were not being achieved.

Implementation of the AYSIR commenced in July 2015 and requires all Western Australian Government agencies to review services provided to Aboriginal children and young people that are delivered directly by State Government agencies or indirectly through State Government funded service providers.

The AYSIR aim to improve outcomes and certainty for youth services and programs, and ensure Government funding delivers better results for young Aboriginal people and the community. Government will prioritise investment in programs that help young people build resilience; and facilitates their engagement in education, training and employment.

The RSR aims to ensure that the \$800 million per annum invested by the Western Australian Government in the Kimberley and Pilbara is efficient, effective and sustainable. It further demonstrates the Government's commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. Following this initial focus in the Kimberley and Pilbara, the RSR will be progressively implemented in regional locations across the State. The RSR aims to improve the way services are provided to Aboriginal communities to ensure children grow up in communities that are safe, that have education and employment opportunities and social and economic stability.

Recommendation 2

In accordance with Recommendation 1, that the Government of Western Australia, through the Premier, commits to a whole-of-government priority for agencies to develop guidelines specifically tailored for direct consultation with Aboriginal children and young people. These should be informed by an understanding and respect for the diversity of Aboriginal children and young people and their communities, their language, their culture and their histories.

Noted.

The Western Australian Government acknowledges the value of the Commissioner's review and work in this area which has informed the development of the AYSIR Investment Priorities and Principles (IPP).

Culture is a key theme identified in the Commissioner's Review and this is clearly reflected in the AYSIR. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs work on the relevancy of culture for the design and delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal people informed the development of practice guidelines on the incorporation of culture into the design of programs for Aboriginal young people.

The principle of consultation is also imbedded in the IPP, with guidelines recommending that Government agencies identify mechanisms to engage with individuals, families and communities in the planning, design, delivery and review of Aboriginal youth programs. It is for individual agencies to decide how they implement the AYSIR.

The IPP implementation guidelines also recommend that Government agencies apply the *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy* (DCSPP) in the implementation of the Reforms. The DCSPP aims to ensure citizens are engaged in the ongoing planning, design and delivery of community services through direct and indirect methods of consultation and representation in the development of service delivery.

Recommendation 3

In accordance with Recommendation 1, that the Government of Western Australia, through the Premier, commits to a whole-of-government priority for agencies to develop consultation mechanisms so that views of Aboriginal children and young people can always be taken into account in policy development and service delivery

Noted.

Mechanisms are in place for consultation with the community. As discussed in response to Recommendation 2, the IPP of the AYSIR recommend that Government agencies identify mechanisms to engage with individuals, families and communities in the planning, design, delivery and review of Aboriginal youth programs.

Consultation with Aboriginal people forms part key component of the RSR. Eight Aboriginal leaders have been appointed to the joint Strategic Regional Advisory Councils that have been established in the Kimberley and Pilbara to provide high-level strategic advice on, and identify opportunities for, changes that could be made to Government expenditure, policies, programs and governance to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in its region.

Additionally, District Leadership Groups will develop mechanisms to engage at a local level in order to decide which services will best assist their communities, and to deliver a more collaborative approach to regional service delivery.