

BUDGET 2016-17



ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STATEMENT

Overcoming disadvantage requires a range of interconnected and holistic support services to heal from the past and allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to reach their potential.

The ACT Government's commitment to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage is guided by the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015 – 2018 focus on building and sustaining strong families. The Agreement's focus is supported by seven key focus areas and quality life outcomes:

- > Cultural Identity
- > Healthy mind, healthy body
- > Feeling safe
- > Connecting the community
- > Employment and economic independence
- > Leadership
- > Education

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

As part of a collaborative effort, Education Directorate staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers and Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation have worked together to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This collaboration has led to an increase in the number of students applying to participate in the NDIS from 58 students (39% of potentially eligible students) in August 2015 to 95 students (56% of potentially eligible students) in May 2016.

INITIATIVES

Through the 2016-17 Budget the Government will provide coordinated support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives within the Community Services Directorate. The Government will also provide resourcing to increase awareness of the Elected Body's role in representing the views and concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the ACT. In particular, this role will include building greater connections with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to share their views and concerns on matters of significance with the ACT Government.

In keeping with the advice of the Elected Body, this Budget includes new initiatives that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and address Indigenous disadvantage in the ACT through: strong connections to culture; supporting people through the justice system; through healthcare; and by ensuring career opportunities:

- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services in the ACT will receive **\$1.06 million** in additional funding. This funding will extend the service to support additional specialist outreach programs and extend selected existing programs.
- > The Strengthening Ngunnawal Culture and History in Schools initiative will provide **\$300,000** for a new 2 year pilot to increase opportunities for local youth to build their connection and engagement with Ngunnawal culture and history. Educational programs involving guided nature tours for local youth in schools will be undertaken during the school term.
- > The Government recognises the need to expand opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. The Kickstart My Career Program will support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at risk of leaving school. The program will develop culturally appropriate Flexible Learning Options to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in nationally accredited and vocational training in culture and land management. The total cost of **\$651,000** will be met from the existing resources of the agencies involved.

- > The Justice Reform Program comprising of the Aboriginal Justice Partnership, Justice Reform Strategy and Justice Reinvestment Strategy is working to develop a whole of government framework to deliver services and support to offenders with high and complex needs and their families. The Justice Reform Program will drive key reforms with a key focus on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our justice system. A **\$1.99 million** package, which includes \$1.3 million from the Confiscated Assets Trust Fund, will support the Indigenous Guidance Partner for adults undertaking Restorative Justice, the Justice Reinvestment Trial, a pilot bail support service, a life skills program supporting sentencing options at the Galambany Court and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience reports to inform courts' sentencing decisions.
 - Indigenous Guidance Partner to Adult Restorative Justice Referrals – is a program which funds an Indigenous guidance partner (IGP) and vehicle to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults referred to restorative justice. The adult specific IGP supports adult offenders' understanding, participation, accountability to victims and accessing and maintaining contact with support services, intervention programs, training and employment opportunities (such as apprenticeships) as a result of their involvement with restorative justice.
 - The Confiscated Assets Trust Fund allows proceeds of crime forfeited to the Territory to be used for priority criminal justice initiatives. The Attorney-General is directing these funds to key initiatives under the Justice Reform Program:
 - ▷ **\$850,000** will be used to support a Justice Reinvestment trial that targets services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to improve life outcomes and reduce or prevent contact with the justice system. The funds will be directed towards Aboriginal run organisations, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, and ACT Policing to build engagement with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It will also provide funding for brokerage, transport and other supports. The 2016-17 Budget also provided \$76,000 to employ a trial coordinator, based in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, to oversee the operational and evaluation requirements of the trial.
 - ▷ **\$400,000** will support a trial bail support service to coordinate and facilitate access to appropriate support services in the community, including emergency accommodation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be a key focus for the trial. By reducing barriers to the grant of bail the trial will allow individuals to remain part of the community. This is vital in maintaining family ties, promoting continued employment and supporting long term rehabilitation.
 - ▷ **\$50,000** will be used in a trial of specialist reports prepared for sentencing courts aimed at shedding light on the cultural and social issues confronted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- > Support for the arts and culture sector will build the capacity of and develop and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community within the ACT. The Government will provide funding of **\$100,000** for work with artists and cultural organisations to build their capacity.
- > The Government will invest **\$107,000** in additional mentoring and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the ACT Public Service to improve their career development outcomes.
- > The Government will also establish a new position for an Aboriginal staff member to manage the recently created ACT Parks Aboriginal Advisory Group, and provide leadership and mentoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, conduct high-level stakeholder engagement and oversee operational, cultural interpretation and visitor service programs.

We look forward to the broader ACT community working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT to build strong foundations, resilient families, and to support them to achieve their personal life goals, whatever they may be. Together we can bridge the gap and ensure all Canberrans receive the opportunities to achieve equitable outcomes in all aspects of their life.