



# COMMITMENT TO ABORIGINAL YOUTH WELLBEING

PROGRESS REPORT 2022 & 2023



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We respectfully acknowledge and pay our respects to Aboriginal people across Western Australia and recognise their continuing connection to their lands, families and communities.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal cultures and to Elders, past and present. We acknowledge the diversity and strength of Aboriginal people and communities today and recognise the continued impacts of colonisation.

We would particularly like to acknowledge Aboriginal young people together with their families and carers who have contributed to and will continue to influence the development of the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing.

We remember those we have lost to suicide, and the impacts this has on their families, friends, loved ones and others affected by their passing.

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

### Aboriginal People

Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander acknowledging that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Reference to Aboriginal people throughout this document is respectfully inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.

### Social and Emotional Wellbeing

The traditional Aboriginal understanding of health is holistic and does not refer to the individual, rather it encompasses the social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of the whole community. The social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) of Aboriginal people is strongly influenced by their connection to family, Elders, community, culture, Country, and spirituality. These connections work together to provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal people and helps individuals to maintain and enhance their SEWB.

### Suggested citation

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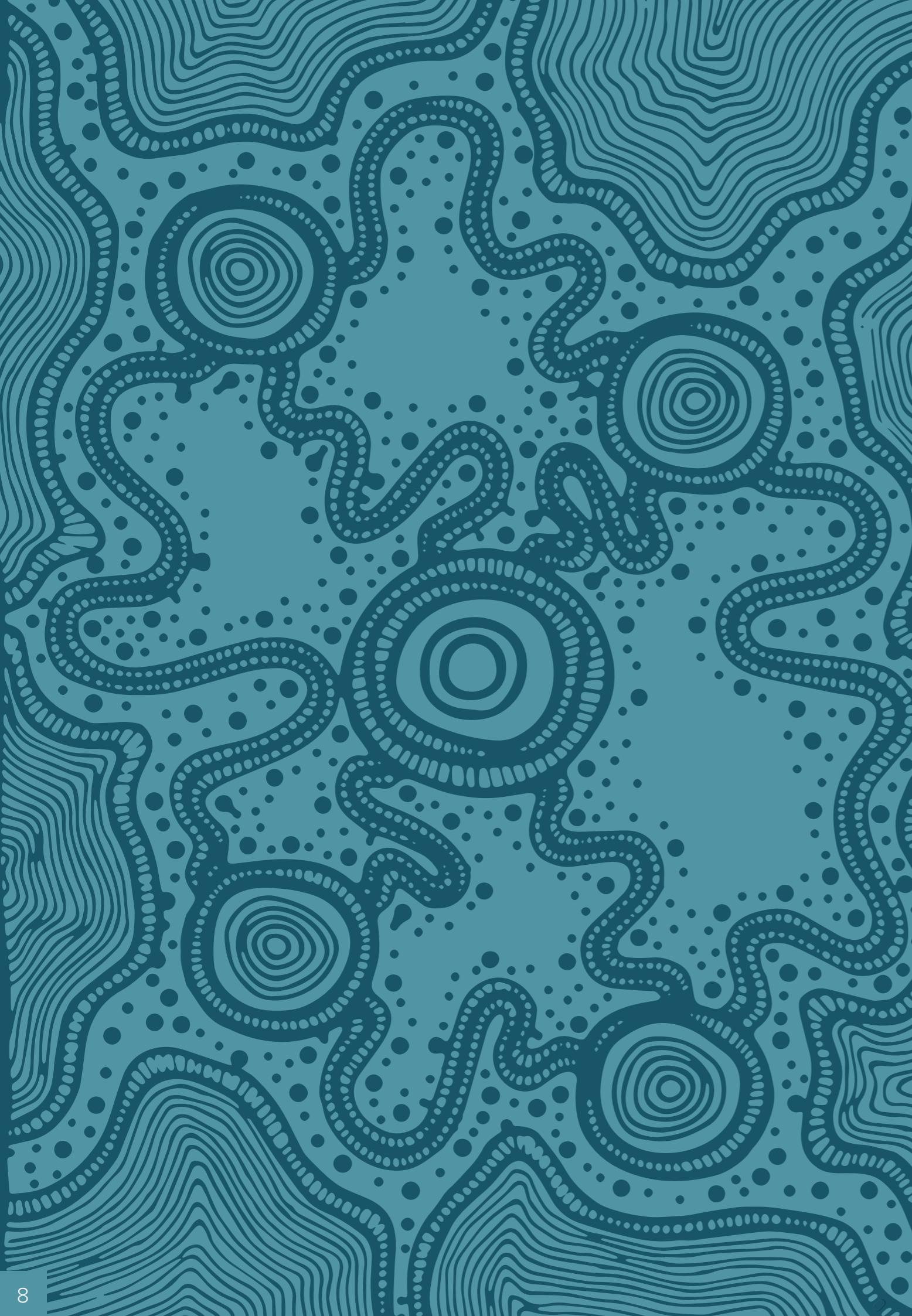


## ACRONYMS LIST

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<b>ACA</b> - Aboriginal Cultural Awareness
<b>ACCO</b> - Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation(s)
<b>ACCHO</b> - Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation(s)
<b>AOD</b> - Alcohol and Other Drugs
<b>AHCWA</b> - Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia
<b>ATSISPEP</b> - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Report
<b>CDP</b> - Community Development Program
<b>CEO</b> - Chief Executive Officer
<b>CLO</b> - Community Liaison Officer(s)
<b>EYL</b> - Empowered Young Leaders Aboriginal Corporation
<b>EYN</b> - Kimberley Empowered Youth Network
<b>FASD</b> - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
<b>HNPP</b> - Health Navigator Pilot Program
<b>KALACC</b> - Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre
<b>KAMS</b> - Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services
<b>KAYWSC</b> - Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee
<b>KDP</b> - Kimberley Data Project
<b>KEMH</b> - King Edward Memorial Hospital
<b>KJJS</b> - Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy
<b>KSP</b> - Kimberley Schools Project
<b>MFPF</b> - Multifunctional Police Facilities
<b>RIFIC</b> - Regional Insights for Indigenous Communities
<b>SEWB</b> - Social and Emotional Wellbeing
<b>SIDE</b> - School of Isolated and Distance Education
<b>SPIMHP</b> - Statewide Perinatal and Infant Mental health Program
<b>SSSMAP</b> - Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Programs
<b>SSSMYP</b> - Strong Spirit Strong Mind Youth Project
<b>UWA</b> - University of Western Australia
<b>VSU</b> - Volatile Substance Use
<b>WA Police Force</b> - Western Australian Police Force
<b>WA Country Health Service</b> - Western Australian Country Health Service
<b>YACWA</b> - Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
<b>YPPA</b> - Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020-2025

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## MINISTER'S FOREWORD

### Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Progress Report 2022 and 2023

The impact of suicide is far-reaching and long-lasting. It has a devastating effect on families, friends, and services, which ripples throughout communities. Statistics do not do justice to the grief experienced by the many Western Australians impacted by suicide, and the deep sorrow felt by Aboriginal communities after the loss of a young Aboriginal person.

The Western Australian Government remains committed to working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people, to make change and improve the lives of young people and their communities. This promise is outlined in the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing, the State Government's response to the State Coroner's Inquest into the 13 deaths of children and young persons in the Kimberley, and Learnings from the Message Stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas.

I am pleased to release this progress report for the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing, which highlights the work being undertaken across Western Australia to help reduce the rate of suicide and enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of young Aboriginal people. It sets out the progress for 2022 and 2023, against the 86 recommendations from the Inquest into the 13 deaths of children and young persons in the Kimberley region and the Message Stick Inquiry report.

In September 2021, the State Government released the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy Western Australia 2021-2029, which outlines a high-level framework for future State Government policies, plans, initiatives, and programs that contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal people. It is built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working. The goal is for Aboriginal people, families, and communities to be empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure environment.

Meaningful consultation and partnership with Aboriginal peoples and communities must be at the core of every program, project and initiative that aims to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal young people. For the State Government, this means walking together by drawing on, empowering, and being guided by the knowledge and strength of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

We remain driven to address the needs of Aboriginal young people, support their healing, empower them to be strong in culture, resilient in mind and help provide restored pathways for their futures. In working together, we can improve the lives of Aboriginal people and families in Western Australia.

Handwritten signature of Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson BA MLA.

Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson BA MLA  
Minister for Health; Mental Health

# INTRODUCTION

The Western Australian Government's (the WA Government's) Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Progress Report, September 2021 (Progress Report 2021), outlined the initial steps being made by the WA Government to progress activities under the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing (the Commitment). The Progress Report 2021 highlighted the WA Government had commenced adopting a whole-of-government approach to help deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal young people.

The Commitment was released in March 2020 and outlines how the WA Government will work towards reducing the rate of suicide and improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people across the state.

The Commitment is the WA Government's response to the *State Coroner's 2019 Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young persons in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia* (Coroner's Inquest), and the 2016 Parliamentary Inquiry, *Learnings from the Message Stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas* (Message Stick).<sup>1</sup>

While the two reports are Kimberley specific, the WA Government has taken a statewide approach to ensure the learnings of these reports are applied where possible across all Aboriginal communities. The Coroner's Inquest and Message Stick reports provided a glimpse into the tragedy of death by suicide among Aboriginal young people in Western Australia. The reports outlined a combined 86 recommendations that highlighted the need for the WA Government to work more closely with Aboriginal peoples and communities, to ensure provision of culturally based programs to improve the lived experiences of all Aboriginal young people. Aboriginal-led solutions and culture are central to achieving meaningful outcomes and improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people across Western Australia. The WA Government recognises the continued resilience of community and remains committed to working together with Aboriginal people by listening and learning with respect.

The Commitment captures the 86 recommendations under 12 key commitments that will contribute significantly to the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people in Western Australia. These 12 commitments were identified through community workshops and address the broad intent of the recommendations and outline a holistic and long-term approach to Aboriginal youth wellbeing. WA Government agencies will drive these commitments, working in partnership and taking guidance from the Aboriginal community.

<sup>1</sup> The Commitment and related documents are available online from:  
<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/aboriginal-youth-wellbeing>

## why do we have progress reports?

The Mental Health Commission coordinates the annual reporting of the Commitment, collating information from across all WA Government agencies as a transparent account of efforts being undertaken. The first annual progress report, released in September 2021, outlined the initial steps being made by the WA Government to progress the associated activities under the Commitment and highlights the adoption of a whole-of-government approach to help deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal young people.

The annual progress reports provide an overview of the current progress of programs and initiatives being implemented and delivered by the WA Government and outline any future directions. The progress reports are an important way of ensuring the WA Government is being accountable to the Aboriginal communities and families that continue to be impacted by suicide.

## what is in this report?

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Commitment and the associated recommendations for the combined 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 period (1 July 2021 – 31 June 2023).

It highlights several key actions made against the 12 commitments and updates related to the 86 recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest and Message Stick reports. These updates highlight areas that still need to be strengthened and renews the WA Government's commitment to Aboriginal youth wellbeing.

## RECOGNITION OF THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted young people in Australia.<sup>2</sup> The full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Aboriginal young people across Western Australia is complex and is not yet fully understood. However, it has been recognised that for some Aboriginal young people, the pandemic has exacerbated several risk factors for suicide including social isolation, long-term unemployment, and family conflict.<sup>3</sup>

COVID-19 also resulted in disruptions to the delivery of services. This created additional barriers for Aboriginal young people attempting to access health, mental health, and community services. A review of Western Australia's COVID-19 Management and Response highlighted testing and vaccination requirements as contributing barriers for Aboriginal people accessing government COVID-19 response programs.<sup>4</sup> Although the effects of the pandemic remain an ongoing challenge, the WA Government will continue to work with communities to ensure the best possible outcomes related to the Commitment are achieved.

<sup>2</sup> Biddle N, Gray M, Rehill P (2022). Mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 period in Australia, Australian National University. Available from: [https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2022/7/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_during\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_period.pdf](https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2022/7/Mental_health_and_wellbeing_during_the_COVID-19_period.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> YACWA (2020). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People: Experiences of COVID-19. Available from: [https://www.yacwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/YACWA\\_PositionPaper\\_AboriginalTSI\\_SEP20\\_PROOF6.pdf](https://www.yacwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/YACWA_PositionPaper_AboriginalTSI_SEP20_PROOF6.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Review of Western Australia's COVID-19 Management and Response July 2023. Available from: <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2023-08/reviewofwascovid19managementandresponseaccessible.pdf>

## KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2022 AND 2023

Since the previous release of the Commitment progress report, the WA Government has continued to actively deliver on actions to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people across the state, this section provides an outline on a number of key deliveries by the WA Government.



## Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029 and Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan

In September 2021, the WA Government released the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the first Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan.

The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy outlines a high-level framework for future state government policies, plans, initiatives and programs that contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal people. It is built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working.

### ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY

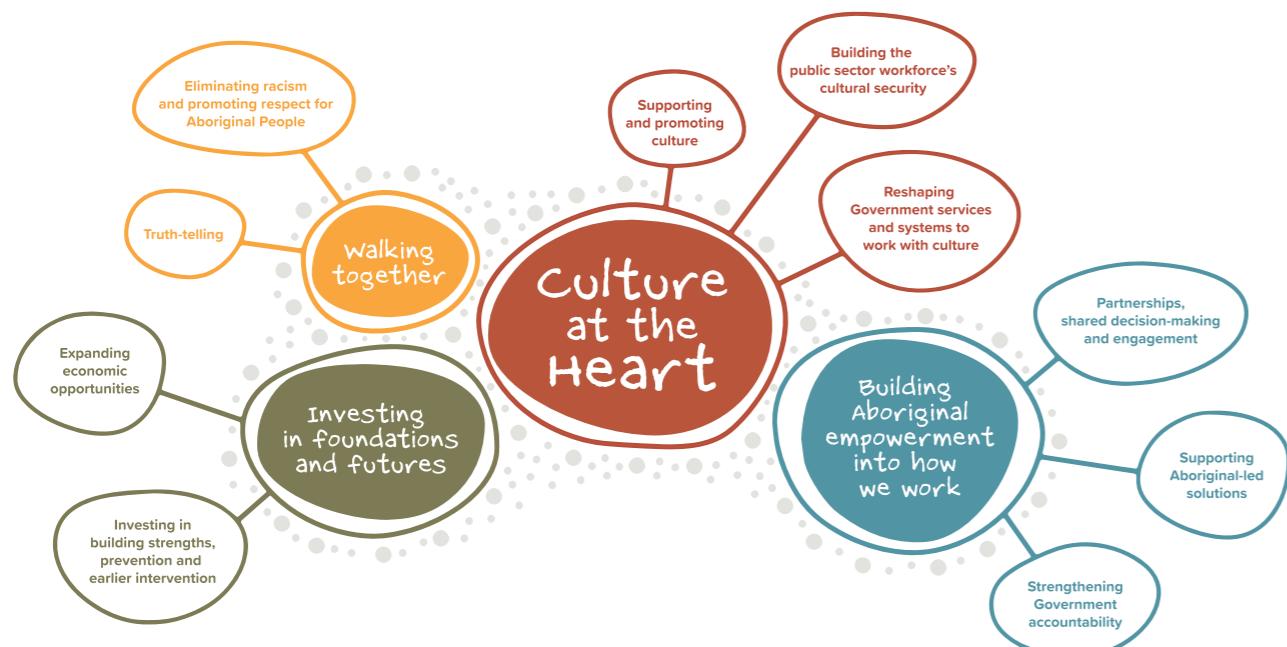


Figure: Visual depiction of the key elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029.

Source: (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2021)

The first Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan details the actions that the WA Government is currently undertaking or developing, relevant to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement CtG). This first step provides a baseline to build from and enables Aboriginal people and the broader public to clearly see what the WA Government has said it will do to deliver on its commitments.

### Since release of these milestone strategies, the WA Government's key progress in the reporting period includes:

- A streamlined and strengthened whole-of-government coordination and decision-making mechanisms to support the implementation of the National Agreement CtG over the longer term. New governance structures have built ownership of the National Agreement CtG across all of government in recognition that responsibility for implementation is shared across the public sector.
- These governance structures have been instrumental in supporting Government agencies to participate in the development of national partnership actions required under the National Agreement CtG, including further development of Closing the Gap targets, the negotiation of four Sector Strengthening Plans and the establishment of five discrete national Policy Partnerships to facilitate joined-up work on national priority policy areas.
- Release of the first Annual Report on Closing the Gap in October 2022.
- The Aboriginal Expenditure Review was released in August 2023.
- The second Western Australian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, covering 2023-25, released in 2023.
- The WA Government is leading the development of a place-based partnership in the East Kimberley with local Aboriginal organisations, local governments and the Commonwealth Government, focused on early years outcomes.
- Contribution to the development of four national Sector Strengthening Plans, in the priority sectors of health, early childhood care and development, housing and disability services. These plans provide high-level priorities for government to strengthen Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in these sectors.
- Participation in national partnerships that will establish joined up approaches to the following priority policy areas: justice; early childhood care and development; social and emotional wellbeing; housing; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.



## Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025

The Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021–2025 (Suicide Prevention Framework 2025), launched in October 2020, provides the structure for a coordinated approach to address suicide in Western Australia. It prescribes targeted activity under the four streams of Prevention/Early Intervention, Support/Aftercare, Postvention and Aboriginal People. Total funding of \$50.4 million was allocated, including initial funding of \$32.3 million, with an additional \$8.3 million as part of the COVID-19 Immediate Recovery Response, and \$9.8 million for the Aboriginal people stream.

### Key progress on the Suicide Prevention Framework 2025 in 2022-2023 include:

- The Mental Health Commission provided funding for a range of projects, programs and services organised under the four streams. These programs have aimed to provide support, services and activities targeting several at-risk populations throughout multiple geographical regions across Western Australia.
- Program examples include suicide prevention coordinators, peer support for LGBTIQA+SB youth, the Think Mental Health public education campaign, Schools Response program and Gatekeeper training.

## Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans

Funding of \$9.8 million over a four-year period was announced in July 2020 for the Aboriginal People stream of the Suicide Prevention Framework 2025, to develop Regional Plans. These plans prioritise a culturally secure SEWB approach to suicide prevention. In 2021, the Mental Health Commission engaged ACCOs across the 10 Western Australian health regions to consult with Aboriginal peoples to develop the plans. The community-endorsed Regional Plans outline the strategies and activities to be developed and implemented within each of the health regions.

The culturally secure development of the Regional Plans was underpinned by three guiding principles:

- Nothing for Aboriginal people without Aboriginal people;
- Aboriginal-led solutions; and
- Cultural understanding and respect.

### Key milestones on the Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans in 2022-2023 include:

- Regional Plans for the 10 Western Australian health regions were developed and finalised. The plans are unique, and the activities proposed within them differ in each region, to reflect local experience, existing resources, priorities, and community preferences. Development of the plans included a culturally secure community engagement process conducted in each region, ensuring that local Aboriginal communities had input into identifying and prioritising suicide prevention activities that were relevant for their own community. This approach recognises that for Aboriginal peoples and their communities, SEWB is the foundation for a holistic concept of physical and mental health.
- Implementation of the Regional Plans in each region has commenced, with the first 2 years of work complete. This work is being led by the Community Liaison Officers, who are currently reviewing the existing Regional Plans and will work with their local community to update the plan with their priorities and agreed actions for the next 12-month period.

## Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Program

Local Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) are responsible for the implementation of Regional Plans. The Commission funds a CLO within an ACCO in each of the 10 health regions. It provides ACCOs dedicated activity funding of \$100,000 to implement activities and components as identified in each Regional Plan.

The CLO positions have been placed with ACCOs that have a strong connection to the Aboriginal community and are well positioned to implement SEWB activities. The CLO Program commenced on 1 July 2021.

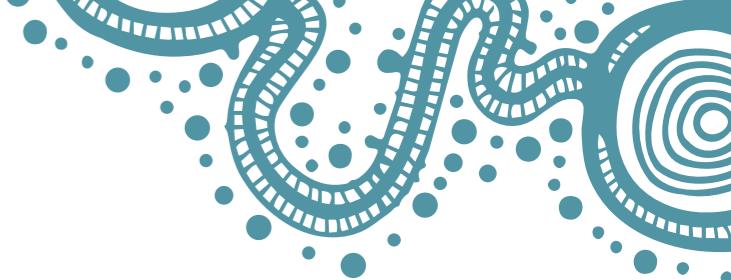
The high level of community engagement in this program, even in remote areas, demonstrates the relevance of addressing SEWB. The program has led to an evidence-informed and community-led approach with advice coming directly from Aboriginal people. The effectiveness of the CLO Program is dependent on continued engagement with the Aboriginal community which is made possible through the establishment of regional local governance groups to guide CLOs in appropriate suicide prevention activities.

### Key milestones and achievements on the CLO Program in 2022-2023 include:

- Majority of organisations ensured that Aboriginal people were employed in the CLO positions.
- The CLO Network meetings were initiated whereby the CLOs could meet online on a monthly basis to share their knowledge, ideas and experiences working with community.
- The CLOs have led the implementation of the Regional Plans and commenced a review of their plans annually in conjunction with their local governance structures.
- A Suicide Prevention Workshop was held in June 2023 and involved Suicide Prevention Co-ordinators and CLOs from around the state coming together to share successes and ideas to continue to work collaboratively across the state.

## Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model of Service Pilot Program

In July 2022 the Government committed \$17.6 million over a three-year period for a SEWB Model of Service Pilot Program (the Pilot). The Pilot is a culturally secure program that aims to increase access to SEWB and healthcare services to improve holistic health outcomes for Aboriginal peoples of all ages. Developed by the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) in consultation with its member services, the Pilot includes the delivery of SEWB health education programs and services by a multidisciplinary team, and a seed funding component in each region to develop community activities. It is being piloted at sites in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Midwest, Goldfields and South West health regions.



The Pilot is being implemented under the four pillars of:

- culturally secure prevention and community development;
- psychosocial support;
- targeted interventions; and
- supported coordinated care.

It is anticipated that this approach will improve SEWB service delivery, leading to the implementation of Aboriginal community-controlled health, SEWB support and specialist services in communities. The University of Western Australia (UWA) has been commissioned to undertake a research study to assess the effectiveness of the Pilot.

The Mental Health Commission will continue to work collaboratively with AHCWA and UWA to implement and evaluate the Pilot.

#### Key milestones and achievements on the Pilot in 2022-2023 include:

- Tender for the Pilot was awarded to in June 2022. Implementation of the Pilot has commenced at all five sites.
- The research being undertaken by UWA is led by Professor Pat Dudgeon, and is a collaboration between UWA, AHCWA and the Mental Health Commission. The study has commenced, with a final report due on 31 March 2025.

### Young People's Priorities for Action

The Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020-2025 (YPPA) was launched on 16 December 2020. The YPPA guides the Government, the mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector, and other stakeholders across the community in supporting and responding to the mental health and AOD needs of young people aged 12 to 24 years. The YPPA builds on previous plans, strategies and frameworks developed by government and non-government organisations.

On 13 May 2022, the Mental Health Commission released the YPPA Report on the Implementation 2021. The Report provides an update on progress made since the launch of the YPPA (December 2020) to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken, including the Mental Health Commission partnering with the Youth Mental Health Sub Network and the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) to ensure that young people were represented and engaged in the development of the YPPA Report on Implementation 2021.

#### Key milestones and achievements of the YPPA between 2022-2023 include:

- The Department of Health is leading the Birthing on Country project (Connected to Country, Birthing on Country, On Country We Grow) which aims to provide long term direction for the delivery of culturally safe maternal and newborn services for Aboriginal women, newborns and their families in Western Australia.
- The Office of the Chief Medical Officer through the Sustainable Health Review Recommendation's 3a and 25 is establishing and implementing the Aboriginal Health Practitioner Project within Western Australia Health.
- The Kimberley Community Alcohol and Drug Service operates an annual Beautiful Bumps program promoting alcohol abstinence during pregnancy, as well as other community education and activities during Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder week.
- The Deadly Thinking and the Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid programs are delivered across regions through engagement with local schools and ongoing collaborations across local service providers and Aboriginal communities.
- In the Midwest, the Community Alcohol and Drug Services provide weekly AOD counselling sessions at Geraldton Headspace and in partnership with Headspace and Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service deliver "Back on Track", a fortnightly program aimed at young Aboriginal men at risk of AOD and mental health issues.
- The Kimberley Community Alcohol and Drug Services are based in Kununurra and provide outreach to communities such as Kutjunka and Kalumburu.
- As part of the 2021-22 State Budget, funding was allocated for a collaborative project designing an on-country residential facility in Broome as an alternative to detention, targeted at young people who are at risk or involved in the justice system.

The YPPA Report on Implementation 2021 is an across agency commitment to support the delivery of current and future YPPA initiatives and includes a commitment to annual reporting on progress. A 2022-23 progress update is in development.

### Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Youth Project

The Mental Health Commission's Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Programs received funding of \$9.27 million for a four-year period (July 2021 – June 2025) to deliver the statewide Strong Spirit Strong Mind Youth Project (SSSMYP). This project is an expansion of the previous Strong Spirit Strong Mind Metro Project.

The SSSMYP aims to improve the SEWB and prevent AOD related harms amongst Aboriginal young people aged 12-25 years across Western Australia. The following are key deliverables of the project:

- **Deliverable 1:** Public education campaign;
- **Deliverable 2:** Develop a model of service for a culturally secure metropolitan youth outreach program;
- **Deliverable 3:** Provide community grants for culturally secure activities that aim to improve SEWB among young Aboriginal people, including preventing and delaying the early uptake of AOD; and
- An Aboriginal Youth Reference Group and Community Specialist Reference Group will provide culturally secure and professional advice to guide initiatives delivered under the SSSMYP.



## Key milestones and achievements on the SSSMYP between 2022-2023 include:

### **Deliverable 1: In Progress**

- The “Stay Strong, Look After You and Your Mob” campaign was launched on 15 May 2022, a culturally secure campaign to support the SEWB of young Aboriginal people in Western Australia. The campaign was delivered statewide through radio, out-of-home, social media and digital advertising. This campaign was repeated during February – July 2023 with a new concept applied ‘Spend time with Your Mob’. An evaluation of the ‘Stay Strong, Look After You and Your Mob’ will be undertaken in 2023/2024.
- A culturally secure adaptation of the Drug Aware campaign – ‘The Growing Brain’, was developed to educate young Aboriginal people and their communities about the impacts of cannabis use. This campaign ran December 2022-May 2023.
- A new SSSMYP public education campaign is currently in development and expected to be released in early 2024.

### **Deliverable 2: In Progress**

- Community consultation for the culturally secure Model of Service (MoS) for community outreach services for Aboriginal youth in the Metropolitan area has been completed. This program is expected to provide prevention strategies to improve SEWB of Aboriginal young people, which includes an emphasis on preventing and delaying the early uptake of AOD use through a culturally secure approach. The MoS is currently being developed with completion expected in 2024.

### **Deliverable 3: Complete**

- The SSSMYP provided funding for Community Grants up to the value of \$30,000. ACCOs and Aboriginal not-for-profit service providers throughout Western Australia were eligible for the grants to deliver local culturally secure initiatives, events and/or programs that aim to improve and address SEWB issues affecting Aboriginal young people (aged 12-25 years), including preventing and delaying the early uptake of AOD use. During the first round of Community Grants there were 13 successful applications that provided a wide range of local culturally secure activities for young Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia. These initiatives included cultural learning camps, yarning circles, dance/art therapy and a short film production for Aboriginal youth.
- A second round of Community Grants were delivered in 2022/2023, with 18 applicants being successful and awarded grant funding.

### **The focus of SSSMYP for 2023-24 to 2024-25 will be:**

- launch of the new SSSMYP Campaign;
- finalise the MoS for the outreach service;
- progress the procurement of the outreach service;
- evaluation of ‘Stay Strong and Look After You and Your Mob’ and ‘The Growing Brain’ culturally secure adaptation; and
- development of the new SSSMYP campaign.

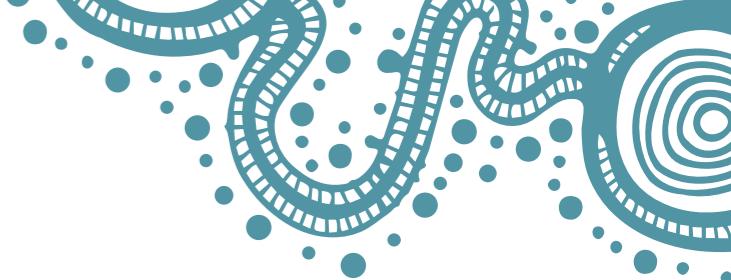
All aspects of SSSMYP will continue to be informed by the Aboriginal Youth Reference Group and the Community Specialist Reference Group.

## CONTEXT OF THE COMMITMENT FOR THE KIMBERLEY REGION

The WA Government's long-term commitment to Aboriginal children and young people is outlined through the development and implementation of the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing (the Commitment). Many of the initial programs and actions developed under the Commitment and the 86 recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest and Message Stick reports are focused on the Kimberley region. In addition to the Kimberley, the Commitment intends to benefit all Aboriginal young people and families across the state.

Partnerships being established in the Kimberley region are helping to refine the ways in which the WA Government is working with Aboriginal communities. Learnings are already informing further work in regions across Western Australia. Given the diversity of Aboriginal culture across the state, the implementation of these learnings will vary from region to region and from location to location.

This section provides a summary of key activities relating to the Kimberley region.



## Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee

The Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee (KAYWSC) was established in 2021. The purpose of the KAYWSC is to bring all relevant WA Government agencies together with Kimberley ACCOs represented on the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group to support and enable Aboriginal community-led solutions to improve Aboriginal youth wellbeing outcomes.

The *Kimberley Co-Design Guide: For the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Partnership* was developed and then endorsed by the KAYWSC on the 28 October 2022. This guide was developed by the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group through the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) and is a practical resource to support authentic and respectful co-design of programs, policies and actions for the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing partnership. This document can be accessed on the KALACC Website: *Co-design Guide for the Kimberley-Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Partnership*<sup>5</sup>

## Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy

The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy (KJJS) is a WA Government initiative that supports a range of community-led, place-based initiatives across the Kimberley. These initiatives are designed to engage Aboriginal young people in culturally safe and culturally appropriate activities that steer them away from the criminal justice system. The KJJS seeks to:

- reduce youth offending in the Kimberley region;
- improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal youth in the Kimberley;
- improve community safety;
- invest in long-term community solutions to address youth recidivism; and
- provide a direct influence on Target 10 and Target 11 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement CtG).

In 2023-24, \$11.8 million was allocated to the KJJS over a two-year period. This funding includes \$2.7 million allocated to the Department of Training and Workforce Development to deliver an alternate education program in Broome and Kununurra.

The KJJS has continued to fund and support a range of community-led place-based initiatives across the Kimberley, most of which have been delivered by, or in partnership with, ACCOs or Aboriginal Corporations. Each initiative is unique and meets the local needs of the community and is designed to engage young people in culturally safe and culturally appropriate activities that steer them away from the criminal justice system.

### Key milestones and achievements of the KJJS between 2022-2023 include:

#### The continued delivery of:

- structured activities and night patrols in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, Wyndham and Halls Creek;
- cultural camps in Kununurra and Fitzroy Crossing;
- school holiday programs in Broome, Kununurra, and Wyndham;
- an alternative learning program in Broome and Kununurra;
- a youth engagement program in Broome and Derby; and
- a cultural learning program in Halls Creek.

#### The establishment of new initiatives:

- a night patrol service in Fitzroy Crossing;
- a foot patrol service in Broome between January and April 2023; and
- hoops After Dark basketball program in Derby; The KJJS collaborative design project – established in partnership with Aboriginal community members and multiple government agencies, to co-design a safe space for street-present young people in Broome

The KJJS continues to be responsive to emerging and known trends within the region and continues to empower local service providers to develop their own initiatives that are relevant to their local needs.

To date, the KJJS has sought to provide a stabilising environment: building the capacity and capability of ACCOs and Aboriginal Corporations; and supporting initiatives that keep young people and their communities safe, engaged, and connected. The KJJS seeks to invest in longer-term solutions, led by the community to drive sustainable justice outcomes.

The next priority step is to progress the Immediate Response Safe Space pilot for street-present young people in Broome and continue to support place-based community-led initiatives. The evaluation of the KJJS is being overseen by the Western Australian Office of Crime Statistics and Research which will further assist to inform the future directions of the KJJS.

## Kimberley Data Project

The Kimberley Data Project (KDP) vision is the establishment of a virtual data hub that brings together data relevant to the mental health of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, from various sources and in different formats, to determine the state of community wellbeing and enable informed local decision making that reduces the rate of suicide and self-harm to zero.

The WA Government allocated \$150,000 for the development of a scoping proposal for a data project in the Kimberley focused on improving the collection and sharing of mental health, self-harm and suicide data. The work was led by WA Country Health Service, guided by a Project Reference Group comprising representatives from WA and Australian Government agencies, the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, and Kimberley ACCOs. A scoping proposal report was finalised in December 2022.

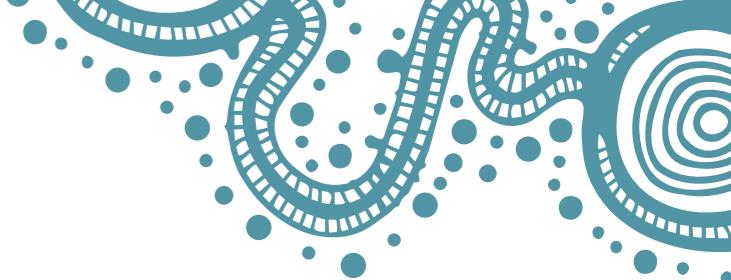
During 2023, the WA Government has continued to engage with Kimberley ACCOs about how best to progress the proposal in the context of other work underway, including the Kimberley Health Evidence Data Platform Project and PeopleWA (a linked data asset with datasets from a range of government sources including the Departments of Communities, Education, Health, Justice, and the Western Australia Police Force).

<sup>5</sup> Kimberley Co-design Guide for the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Partnership. Available from: <https://kalacc.org/about/documents/>

## UPDATE ON THE FIVE ABORIGINAL YOUTH WELLBEING INITIATIVES

In 2020, the WA Government commenced work to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people through a range of initiatives focused on health and mental health, empowering Aboriginal young people and delivering additional community services.

This section provides an update on five key initiatives that have been funded to support the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing (the Commitment) and the recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest and Message Stick reports as prioritised by the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group.



## Kimberley Empowered Youth Network

The Department of Communities contracted Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS) to deliver the Kimberley Empowered Youth Network (EYN) project to the value of \$1.3 million for 2022-23 to 2023-24. The funding forms part of the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing and the project is also an activity within the Western Australian Recovery Plan. The EYN project aims to support the Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders to:

- form and sustain a network across the Kimberley to contribute to decisions directly affecting them; and
- become leaders of change on behalf of their own and future generations.

The EYN participates as members of the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group and the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee (KAYWSC). Both these organisations have direct correspondence with WA State Agencies and have influence and input into policy and program design and delivery affecting Kimberley Aboriginal young people.

### Key milestones and achievements of the EYN between 2022-2023 include:

- Employment of two Empowered Young Leader Project Officers (1x – East Kimberley and 1x - West Kimberley);
- Ongoing engagement with individuals and organisations throughout the Kimberley;
- Provision of six-monthly progress reports;
- Establishment of an EYN Working Group (renamed to a Design Committee);
- Establishment of an external stakeholder engagement mechanism for government agencies and other stakeholders to formally engage with the Design Committee, independent from the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group and the KAYWSC, to seek information and advice as requested;
- Endorsement of EYN Terms of Reference, Induction Package, Communication Plan and Project Plan by the Design Committee in March 2023;
- Endorsement of final Constitution by the Design Committee on 16 June 2023;
- Incorporation under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 is currently being sourced and expected to be approved in September 2023;
- The first Annual General Meeting is scheduled to be held on 4 September 2023 and a Board of Directors elected.

KAMS are currently developing the data collection and evaluation procedures to provide feedback and the next progress report will include a list of qualitative and quantitative data collection.

## Connecting to Country Grants program

Connecting to Country is a grants program delivered by Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries that supports Western Australian Aboriginal people and organisations to undertake on-Country activities that foster the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, preservation of culture, and strengthening of communities.

### The program objectives are to:

- Facilitate sharing of cultural knowledge and skills between generations, such as the preservation of language, stories and dance;
- Recognise cultural leadership within the Aboriginal community and support leadership development in young people;
- Contribute to stronger community mental health and wellbeing; and
- Strengthen, protect, and maintain traditional ways of maintaining cultural knowledge.

The 2022/23 State Budget provided approximately \$500,000 per year ongoing funding for Connecting to Country Grants. Aboriginal peer assessment panels assessed the grant applications and made funding recommendations. Funding demand has continued to grow, with 25 applications received in 2021-22 and 58 received in 2022-23.

### Key milestones and achievements in the Connecting to Country Grants Program between 2022-2023 include:

- Two funding rounds completed with 40 applications supported (totalling \$948,582 in grants);
- Projects delivered in the Perth, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Gascoyne, Kimberley, Pilbara, Great Southern, South West, and Goldfields-Esperance regions; and
- Funded projects including:
  - Engaging at-risk youth to build their cultural knowledge;
  - Bush trips for young people to record cultural knowledge in photos, film and audio; and
  - Families returning to Country for critical transfer of knowledge.

Connecting to Country is a highly valuable grants program that will continue to be delivered by Department of Local Government, Sports, and Cultural Industries. It recognises the fundamental role of culture in supporting the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people and communities, through the maintenance and revitalisation of cultural and spiritual connections to Culture and Country.

## Preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Project

In March 2020, the WA Government committed \$2.7 million to the Mental Health Commission for 2020-21 – 2021-22 to pilot a suite of strategies that aim to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). This pilot, referred to as the Preventing FASD Project, was funded as part of the initial actions arising from the Commitment. It aimed to contribute to preventing and reducing the incidence of FASD by:

- increasing awareness about the risks associated with alcohol use in pregnancy;
- creating more supportive environments and communities that are conducive to women abstaining from alcohol when pregnant or planning a pregnancy; and
- decreasing the prevalence of alcohol use in pregnancy.



Funding for the pilot ceased 30 June 2022. In the 2022-23 Budget, a further \$6.1 million was committed to continue the delivery of the Preventing FASD Project. Initial actions which occurred from July 2022 – June 2023 and are associated with the expanded funding of the project include:

- Continuation of the Alcohol. Think Again 'One Drink' campaign to raise community awareness about the risks associated with alcohol use in pregnancy. The campaign ran statewide between September 2022 - January 2023 using mass media channels.
- Refining and expanding FASD prevention training across Western Australia to increase statewide training delivery to health and other frontline workers around alcohol and pregnancy; 85 health workers undertook training between July 2022 – June 2023, including those from regional and remote areas.

#### Key milestones and achievements of the Preventing FASD Project between 2022-2023 include:

- The development and implementation of a statewide, whole-of-population Alcohol. Think Again mass reach public education campaign ('One Drink').
- Training to build capacity of health workers to discuss stopping and reducing alcohol use during pregnancy with all women of child-bearing age and FASD prevention, and the development of a suite of related resources for workers.
- Delivery of an evaluation report, demonstrating that the pilot project produced significant public health outcomes as a result of change in attitudes, intentions and behaviours related to alcohol and pregnancy, including a conservatively estimated economic savings to the government at a \$24 million.

The Mental Health Commission and stakeholders are planning the development of a new statewide Alcohol. Think Again public education campaign, addressing alcohol use in pregnancy for 2023-2024, which will be informed by community consultation and the latest scientific data.

#### East Kimberley clinical health services

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) received funding of \$1.89 million for the 2022-23 financial year to employ a full time psychiatrist in the East Kimberley and a Nurse Educator across the Kimberley, with the aim of improving service access, delivery and outcomes for young people and their families in the East Kimberley.

#### Key milestones and achievements of the East Kimberley clinical health service between 2022-2023 include:

- The East Kimberley Psychiatrist position has been consistently filled with either WACHS employed Psychiatrists or locums.
- These positions worked in a culturally safe way alongside Aboriginal staff for Aboriginal clients. The positions liaised between the Adult mental health team, Child and Adolescent team, Drug and Alcohol team, the Kununurra and Halls Creek hospitals, primary care and social services and regularly visited remote Aboriginal communities in the region to provide clinical services.
- The Kimberley child and adolescent Psychiatrist and/or adult psychiatrist in the East Kimberley has provided consultation to Kununurra headspace for complex cases and team supervision.
- The Nurse Educator role was filled from July 2022 and provided extensive training for Aboriginal staff within the Mental Health teams. The role also provided learning and development for Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service more broadly, including provision of suicide risk assessment training to hospital staff and working with the Volatile Substance Use (VSU) team to address VSU issues.

In May 2023, WA Country Health Service were advised that a further five years of funding had been approved. WA Country Health Service aim to employ stable staffing in the Psychiatrist role going forward, including appointment of an adult Psychiatrist in 2023-24. The Nurse Educator will continue to provide training for the Aboriginal, Safe Haven, Psychiatric Liaison Nurses and the Kununurra hospital staff to enable them to feel more comfortable in caring for mental health clients. In time, this role will also support the two co-morbidity positions in the East Kimberley, one to work across Kimberley Community Alcohol and Drug Service and Adult mental health and another to work across Kimberley Community Alcohol and Drug Service and Child and Adolescent Mental Health streams.

The Nurse Educator role and Psychiatrist position are in recognition of the number of clients of the mental health service and the complexity of presentations from a cultural, medical, psychiatric, social and logistic/transport point of view across all ages that require higher level of staffing than metropolitan services.

#### Aboriginal Girls Engagement Programs

In October 2021, the Department of Education established a State government-funded panel of service providers with demonstrated capacity to deliver engagement programs that strengthen the outcomes for Aboriginal girls and young women in Years 7-12 in Western Australian public schools. The programs aim to help Aboriginal girls and young women to achieve their full learning potential; shape their own futures; and embrace their cultures, languages, and identities. The program commenced in 2022.

The five-year service agreement was established under the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy. The resulting agreement is a mandatory standing offer that allows schools to engage a service provider as required. Programs provided through the panel arrangement support whole-school culturally responsive approaches. They create opportunities for schools to work in place-based, flexible, and adaptive ways to meet the individual needs and aspirations of Aboriginal girls and young women.

The service model and intended outcomes were informed by extensive community consultation in metropolitan and regional locations. Consultation was undertaken with Aboriginal girls and young women in Years 7-12, local Aboriginal community members, school staff, potential service providers and key Department of Education staff. Schools use funds from their own budget to purchase programs from the panel arrangement.

The panel arrangement comprises of the following seven service providers offering 14 programs:

- Aurora Education Foundation;
- Glass Jar Australia;
- Koya Aboriginal Corporation;
- SHINE Inspire Achieve Belong;
- Stars Foundation;
- Stephen Michael Foundation; and
- Waalitj (previously Wirrpanda) Foundation.

Additionally, Department of Education has a central funding allocation of \$4.25 million each calendar year, from 2022 to 2025, and schools can apply for funds to assist them to purchase a program from the panel.



### **Key milestones and achievements on the Aboriginal Girls Engagement Program between 2022-2023 includes:**

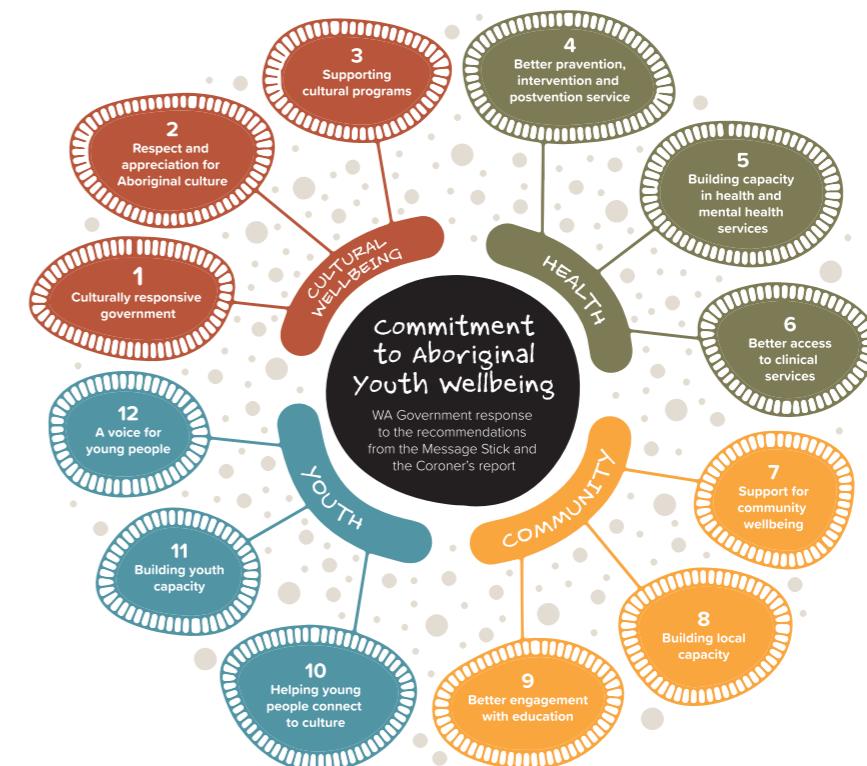
- In 2022, 1,097 Aboriginal girls and young women in 21 public schools accessed an engagement program. The programs were selected from the panel by schools and supported by WA Government funding. A further 26 schools engaged service providers, fully funded by Commonwealth Government or private funding sources, to deliver engagement programs to Aboriginal girls and young women, at no cost to the WA Government.
- In 2023, Department of Education focused on increasing the availability and accessibility of engagement programs and this resulted in a further five schools engaging a service provider from the panel arrangement.
- In 2023, 1,538 Aboriginal girls and young women, from 26 schools, have participated in an engagement program supported by state funding, an increase of 441 students, from five additional schools since 2022. A further 26 public schools have programs fully funded by Commonwealth Government or private funding sources, resulting in a total of 52 public schools providing an engagement program.
- Department of Education anticipates further expansion in the number of engagement programs, selected from the panel arrangement, as there are 11 new schools in the 'discussion phase' of selecting a program.

Supporting the creation of culturally responsive schools that build on the strengths of Aboriginal students, engage them in their learning, and enable them to thrive academically and socially are a priority for Department of Education. The Aboriginal Girls Engagement Program panel arrangement is a significant initiative that supports achievement of this priority.

In late 2023 or early 2024, the Department of Education will endeavour to secure programs for the 11 schools that are currently in the 'discussion phase' of selecting an engagement program from the panel arrangement.

# PROGRESS UPDATE OF THE 12 COMMITMENTS

The following 12 commitments were developed through discussions in community workshops based on the Coroner's and Message Stick reports. The 12 Commitments have been identified with what will contribute significantly to wellbeing of Aboriginal young people in Western Australia. The commitments highlight four focus areas of **Cultural Wellbeing**, **Health**, **Community** and **Youth**.



The following progress update of the 12 Commitments highlight key activity in relation to the relevant 86 recommendations (refer to breakdown of corresponding recommendation). These updates include those recommendations that have been previously listed as 'Actioned' with recognition that further activity or development can be commented on.



## CULTURAL WELLBEING

### Commitment 1: Culturally responsive government

*The Western Australian Government to put the right structures, policies and staff in place to ensure provision of more culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people.*

#### Commitment 1 arises from the State Coroner's recommendations 19 and 42

#### Message Stick recommendations 7, 12, 13, 14 and 40.

- The WA Government has published, and is implementing, the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029 (the Empowerment Strategy). The Empowerment Strategy sets out how the WA Government will direct its efforts towards a future in which all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation.
  - Developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia, the Empowerment Strategy also sets out the State's approach to meeting its commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement CtG).
  - The Empowerment Strategy outlines a high-level framework for the immediate and future reforms needed to ensure WA Government policies, plans, initiatives and programs - including support for Aboriginal-led services - are effective in meeting the needs of Aboriginal people across a range of diverse circumstances.
  - These reforms are built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal people, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working.
  - The WA Government will report annually on progress against both the Empowerment Strategy and the National Agreement CtG. Specific actions are outlined in Western Australia's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.
- The Department of Education has formed a new Aboriginal Advisory Body. This external advisory body will have an important role in supporting the Department of Education's progress towards reconciliation and creating a culturally responsive education system. It will work to support the wellbeing, engagement and achievement of Aboriginal students in public schools and enhance the quality of the relationship between the Department of Education and the WA Aboriginal community.
- Department of Communities through the establishment of the Closing the Gap Program Office, has demonstrated its commitment to fulfilling requirements under the National Agreement CtG and is identifying, aligning and reforming cross-agency and cross-government initiatives that contribute towards closing the health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal Australians.
- The Department of Health continues to embed action towards Closing the Gap via partnerships with Aboriginal people and shared decision-making. Furthermore, partnerships and Aboriginal community control and engagement are guiding principles of the Western Australian Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030.
- Department of Health, through the Aboriginal Health Impact Statement and Declaration Policy, outlines the requirements to declare and demonstrate that the, interests of potential impacts on, and opportunities for, Aboriginal people are considered and appropriately embedded within policy development processes. This policy requirement has been extended and applied to the Sustainable Health Review Program to ensure cultural governance.
- Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries recruited a Level 7 Aboriginal Policy and Business Advisor role (under section 50d) which will be instrumental in leading this work.
- The Public Sector Commission publish and provide a range of workforce diversity information and metrics on a regular basis to agencies throughout the year. This includes quarterly workforce reporting and the diversity dashboard, which support decision making and targeted workforce planning, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.
- The WA Police Force is improving engagement and relationships between police and Aboriginal communities through local Elders and community leaders, reestablishing the Aboriginal Employee Network and District advisory groups. The WA Police Force has implemented cultural immersion for recruits and new-to-rank courses, station-level inductions for police officers, cultural protocol guidance via mobile phone applications, and station-level community action planning with local Elders, community leaders and other partnered organisations.

### Commitment 2: Respect and appreciation for Aboriginal culture

*The Western Australian Government to ensure that acknowledgement of, and respect and appreciation for Aboriginal culture is a key consideration in the way we work.*

#### Commitment 2 arises from the State Coroner's recommendation 42

#### Message Stick recommendations 11, 12 and 40.

- The Reconciliation Week Street Banners Project, coordinated by Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries, is specifically aimed at recognising the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and achievements during Reconciliation Week. The banners are delivered in partnership with local government and business community support.
- In 2022, the WA Police Force Aboriginal Cultural Awareness (ACA) training package was reviewed and subsequently revised to provide a more immersive and impactful experience for recruits. The WA Police Force Academy (the Academy) has engaged the services of two senior female Aboriginal Elders, augmented by in-service Aboriginal Police Officers, to deliver the ACA training package. This delivery method is more culturally appropriate as it respects the fact the Academy is partly built on traditional Women's Land.
- In 2023, the Probationer and Cadet Development Unit initiated a redesign and development of the 'firepit' area of the Academy depicting Aboriginal art relevant to the Noongar seasons. New seating, pavement art and a firepit dome incorporating Aboriginal designs present an area intended to be a meeting place for WA Police Force employees and invitees that honours the Traditional Owners of the land and invokes inclusive discussion. A 'yarning' session has been scheduled at this location for all recruits in their victim support awareness learning and will be utilised during some aspects of Cultural Awareness Training.

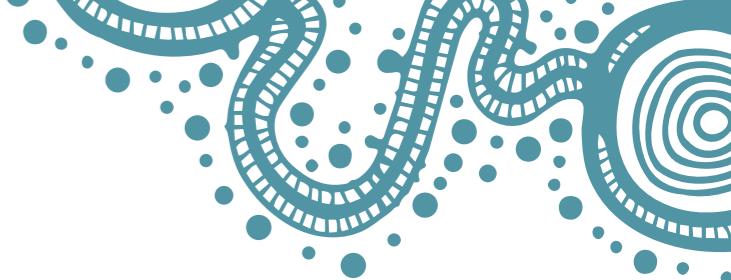
### Commitment 3: Supporting cultural programs

*Culture is at the heart of Aboriginal communities, and a key protective factor against suicide. The Western Australian Government will work with and support Aboriginal people to develop and implement ways of using culture as a foundation for healing, resilience and social and emotional wellbeing.*

#### Commitment 3 reflects State Coroner's recommendations 16, 25, 39 and 42

#### Message Stick recommendations 7, 8, and 30

- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has supported the expression of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture through the following Arts grants programs:
  - Arts 15k-plus and U-15k programs - 12 projects were funded through the Aboriginal Arts category of this program supporting Aboriginal artists and arts organisations to deliver arts projects, which can include cultural maintenance activities.
  - Aboriginal Arts Commissioning Fund - encourages the expression and preservation of traditional and contemporary regional Western Australian Aboriginal cultures, communities and identities through the arts. It is funded through Royalties for Regions, through the Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program. Three projects were supported, to be delivered in 2022-23, to a total value of \$987,100.
- Through Department of Education, the Two-way Science Initiative supports schools to build partnerships with local Aboriginal communities, Elders, ranger programs and organisations to develop integrated, culturally responsive, learning programs that connect the Western Australian science curriculum to Aboriginal knowledges.



## HEALTH

### Commitment 4: Better prevention, intervention and postvention services

*Innovative approaches to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal young people is crucial, along with targeted, safe and accessible clinical services. The Western Australian Government will evaluate and improve the effectiveness of current and ongoing programs and commit to the development of new approaches in accordance to best practice, in consultation with Aboriginal community.*

**Commitment 4 arises from State Coroner's recommendations** 12, 17 and 24

**Message Stick recommendations** 6, 7, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 34 and 37.

- The WA Mental Health Act 2014 includes provision for traditional healing for Aboriginal clients and collaboration with Elders. In all mental health assessments, Cultural/Traditional Healer is an option as part of care plans if requested by the consumer/family.
- Department of Health through the Mental Health Unit have procured Consultants to lead the work in traditional healing in Mental Health as part of the recommendations from the Mental Health Advocacy Services report.
- The WA Country Health Service Mental Health Cultural Information Gathering is a tool developed by WA Country Health Service Mental Health to gather information if Traditional Healing was accessed in the past. All cultural information for the consumer/family is gathered and informs the care management and clinical health assessments.
- The Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans are currently being implemented across Western Australia with a range of place-based suicide prevention activities being led by Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers within the regions. Examples of these activities include:
  - Cultural healing camps;
  - "Beat Ball" Events/Carnivals;
  - Elder Gathering Events;
  - Men's and Women's groups;
  - Youth Social and Emotional Wellbeing/Health Promotion education sessions;
  - NAIDOC/Community gathering events; and
  - Aboriginal Mental Health suicide prevention training.

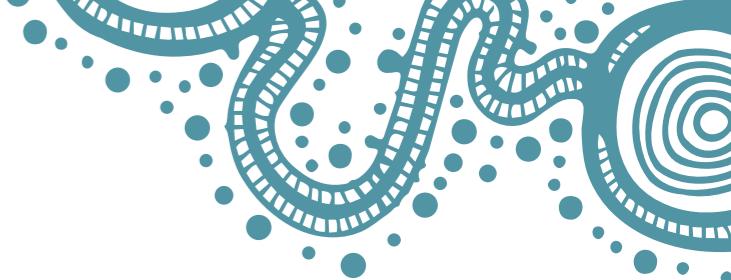
### Commitment 5: Building capacity in health and mental health services

*The Western Australian Government will improve the capacity of agencies, services providers and community organisations to deliver services to Aboriginal people that are flexible, responsive and culturally safe. Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal employees in the health and mental health fields will be a high priority, especially in remote areas.*

**Commitment 5 addresses the State Coroner's recommendations** 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27 and 42  
**Message Stick recommendations** 6, 9, 14, 16, 18, 19, 39 and 44.

- The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029 includes high level guidance on building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work. This covers the structures and processes for making decisions; the role of ACCOs; and the systems of WA Government accountability.
- In consultation with the Mental Health Commission's Suicide Prevention Coordinators, the Western Australian Postvention Consultant has identified specific community training needs and resource requirements in the area of suicide postvention. The consultation that has been undertaken will assist in the development and provision of resources, delivery of community training and postvention planning specific to each region's current needs. This partnership will increase the capacity of individuals and communities to prevent and respond to suicide more effectively.
- The Mental Health Commission has secured 20 Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work scholarships that will be focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Aboriginal Registered Training Organisation Marr Mooditj has been contracted to deliver these scholarships in the 2024 calendar year and through the Mental Health Commission, are partnering with Consumers of Mental Health Western Australia to refine the course training materials in anticipation.
- Child and Adolescent Health Service prioritises procurement with Aboriginal organisations who are registered on the Aboriginal Business Directory Western Australia in accordance with the Aboriginal Procurement Policy.
  - A cultural competency training policy (where appropriate) is considered as part of the selection criteria dependent on the type of contract/service.
  - Child and Adolescent Health Service is actively seeking additional funding to enable more contracts to be awarded to Aboriginal businesses where the cost may far exceed that of a non-Aboriginal owned business.
  - All procurement contracts with Aboriginal businesses are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure there is a shared learning experience and opportunities available for smaller Aboriginal businesses.
- Child and Adolescent Health Service provides many opportunities for Aboriginal staff, consumers (including young people) and stakeholders to be involved in organisational decision-making and governance processes. This occurs via mechanisms such as the Child and Adolescent Health Service Aboriginal Community Advisory Group, dedicated positions on governance committees such as Child and Adolescent Health Service Executive, and opportunities for Chairs of consumer committees to present to the Child and Adolescent Health Service Board on pertinent issues.

In addition, Child and Adolescent Health Service provides many opportunities for Aboriginal consumer participation on specific projects and improvement initiatives occurring across services. This is governed by the 'Child and Adolescent Health Service Consumer Involvement in Healthcare Service Design and Management Policy' which provides a policy framework for the establishment of effective and meaningful partnerships with consumers and acknowledges the need for cultural safety and responsiveness. Strengthening Child and Adolescent Health Service' engagement with Aboriginal consumers and their broader communities is a key priority of the Child and Adolescent Health Service Consumer Engagement Strategy 2023-2026, released August 2023.



## COMMUNITY

### Commitment 6: Better access to clinical services

Aboriginal young people and their families in remote areas and communities are experiencing difficulties in accessing the services and follow-up they need. The Western Australian Government will work to address these issues, balancing the needs of the community with the challenges posed by regional and remote Western Australia.

**Commitment 6 addresses the State Coroner's recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 34**

**Message Stick recommendations 26, 32, 38, 39 and 43.**

- King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) provides a range of supports to the Kimberley Region. Services and supports provided by KEMH in perinatal and infant care include:
  - Women Newborn Health Service has three Statewide arms to their services – Department of Psychological Medicine, Mother Baby Unit and Statewide Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Program (SPIMHP).
  - The Department of Psychological Medicine provides statewide preconception counselling appointments with the psychiatry team, and then provides antenatal and postnatal care to all women delivering at KEMH. This includes the Childbirth and Mental Illness Clinic (CAMI), and WANDAS (Drug and Alcohol Service) both of which are state-wide. KEMH is also the referral hospital for all complex deliveries, which means the Department of Psychological Medicine provides care to a significant number of regional families.
  - The Department of Psychological Medicine provides phone support and advice state-wide via the triage team and the on-call medical/psychology staff. The KEMH pharmacy will also answer medication queries from any part of Western Australia.
  - The SPIMHP is a policy, guideline, education and training unit and has material and staff to support services with the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, perinatal anxiety and Mothers with Serious Mental Illness. They reach out to assist the regions in progressing their capacity to manage Perinatal and Infant Maternal health.
  - The Mother Baby Unit has 8 adult beds for postnatal mothers. An antenatal admission may be considered in the final weeks of pregnancy in preparation for delivery and parenting, on an occasional basis with clear goals and defined obstetric plan.
- The Department of Justice has been approved for the creation of an embedded health team in Banksia Hill Detention Centre. This team has a broad focus with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder assessments to be completed in the facility if this is indicated. The priority for 2022-2023 has been the development of a model of service.
- The Department of Education will ensure its internal processes for commissioning community services are aligned to the new whole-of-government Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) strategy and will work with ACCOs in planning and designing services and will seek to increase the number of ACCOs delivering services to Aboriginal students. In addition, the Department of Education will explore the establishment of an ACCO capacity building grant to support ACCOs providing community services in the Education sector.
- Employment opportunities have been established through the Health Navigator Pilot Program, with Aboriginal Medical Services and ACCOs funded in the Mirrabooka and South West pilot sites to:
  - Employ Aboriginal Health Navigator positions - to work with carers, case workers and young people to navigate and access the right health and related referral services at the right time, using a holistic model inclusive of social and emotional wellbeing;
  - Increase existing service capacity to support Aboriginal children in out of home care through access to child health nurses and paediatrician and developmental paediatricians;
  - Raise awareness of the existing capability and capacity across the ACCO sector; and
  - Enable self-determined growth for the ACCO sector, with government as an enabling partner.
- The Kimberley region has an on-call Psychiatry with local mental health liaison nursing support providing 24/7 care. Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service provides specialist mental health support for local services. The Kimberley region also has enacted a Suicide Postvention Protocol in partnership with several key Kimberley agencies, including Aboriginal Medical Services. Postvention services are also available, such as StandBy Support After Suicide and Thirri.

### Commitment 7: Support for community wellbeing

Support community wellbeing is about having the right structures, programs and processes in place, and ensuring that we work together to help construct safe, happy and prosperous communities. The Western Australian Government will work to strengthen communities with ongoing investment and support, developing strong working partnerships with Commonwealth and local governments, businesses, the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, and Aboriginal people.

**Commitment 7 addresses the State Coroner's recommendations 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 30, 32, 33 and 42**

- Through the Aboriginal Community Connectors Program Service program, service providers reported (through the CONNECT app) the following supports provided to Youth:
  - 941 accessed Youth Engagement Support;
  - 18,881 accessed Safe Transport;
  - 1,484 accessed Community Activities and Events;
  - 1,224 accessed Referrals and Follow ups;
  - 13 accessed Planned Medical Appointment Support; and
  - 2,771 accessed Prevention and Mediation.
- Through Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Sport and Recreation Community Place Based grants include provision for recipients to develop, train and employ local community members in youth services provision. The Kimberley Investment Framework has objectives for the West Australian Football Commission to employ local community staff in Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek.
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries subtenants in the Kununurra PCYC Centre, this includes Sports House occupant providers Garnduwa and Western Australian Football Commission. Local services are working together on programs to maximise use of this space. Upgrades to the Wyndham Football Oval Lighting and Changerooms have progressed with the completion of changerooms, with further funding provided to support lighting component of project due to cost escalations.
- The WA Police Force Kimberley District currently employs seven Community Liaison Officers and two Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers. Community Liaison Officers operate alongside police, to work as a community-based immersion model to benefit and encourage Aboriginal people to have input into appropriate programs, strategies, and initiatives with a view to community building.
- The Youth Policing Officers and Police Officers across the Kimberley actively lead and participate in various diversionary programs for youth.



## Commitment 8: Building local capacity

*Supporting Aboriginal people to develop and drive economic social projects in their own communities is essential to the empowerment process. The Western Australian Government will work with Aboriginal communities, the Commonwealth, local governments, business, and community organisations to help develop and broaden the base of skills, capabilities, and structures at the regional and local levels.*

**Commitment 8 arises from the State Coroner's recommendations 12, 16, 17, 21, 33, 41 and 42**

**Message Stick recommendations 12, 13, 16 and 39**

- In August 2022, the Department of Communities launched the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy 2022 to 2032 (the ACCO Strategy). The ACCO Strategy seeks to improve the way Department of Communities commissions and delivers services to Aboriginal children, families, and communities, while supporting the development of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to increase their capability to deliver place-based and culturally safe and responsive services across Western Australia. The ACCO Strategy will improve the way in which Department of Communities procures the services of ACCOs, focusing on culturally informed, culturally led, and appropriate procurement where Aboriginal children and families are the primary recipients of the services delivered.
- The Department of Education continues to contribute to the State Commissioning Strategy and is implementing its Agency Commissioning Plan (ACP). The design principles used to inform the Department of Education's ACP create conditions that will support the growth of ACCOs through improved engagement and facilitated capacity building. The Department of Education is exploring opportunities to strengthen knowledge and understanding of, and engagement with, the broader ACCO sector, which will include consultation with regional offices regarding their connection and local engagement with ACCOs.
- The Department of Justice's Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee has identified procurement as a strategic focus area it wishes to address in its first two-year plan. This includes a recommendation of prioritising increased participation of ACCOs in the delivery of reintegration and rehabilitation programs.
- The Mental Health Commission will be exploring commissioning strategies which include a component of direct engagement with ACCOs for new services including the Youth Psychosocial Support Packages and Youth Long-Term Housing and Support Program. Mapping of the ACCO's services and programs will be undertaken and barriers preventing and/or hindering ACCOs responding to Mental Health Commission tenders will also be captured.
- The WA Police Force Commissioning Strategy focuses to identify gaps in service delivery and seek options for new services provided by local ACCOs. WA Police Force's ACCO Strategy 2022-2032 ensures that services will be designed in partnership with local Aboriginal Communities. The WA Police Force ACCO Strategy 2022-2032 has three main principles:
  1. Cultural Safety and Governance – all services for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities are grounded in Aboriginal knowledge and culture.
  2. Relationships – building genuine relationships and partnerships with ACCOs to deliver strong accountability and implement culturally responsive ways of working.
  3. Economic Opportunities – ACCOs are supported via economic and socio-economic opportunities to deliver community services.
- The Mental Health Commission funds the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Program which provides 10 FTE across Western Australia who implement Aboriginal Regional Suicide Prevention Plans.

## Commitment 9: Better engagement with education

*Education is crucial to equip Aboriginal young people to embrace the challenges of adulthood. The Western Australian Government will work towards improving the engagement of Aboriginal children and young people in education and across Western Australia.*

**Commitment 9 arises from State Coroner's recommendations 35, 36, 38, 39 and 40**  
**Message Stick recommendation 36**

- The Department of Education operates the Broome Residential College which provides boarding places for up to 104 secondary school students from across the Kimberley, enabling them to attend either Broome Senior High School or St Mary's College.
- 18 Kimberley Schools Project (KSP) schools run the KindiLink, a play-and-learn program for 0 to 3-year-olds. The program continues to support Aboriginal families, with children and their parents attending six hours each week at participating schools. Learning activities are based on the Early Years Learning Framework to develop the social, emotional, language and cognitive abilities of children. In May 2022, the WA Government announced that as part of the \$40.4 million package to tackle juvenile crime in the Kimberley, KSP would receive a further \$11.7 million to extend the project for a further three years (2023-24 to 2025-26).
- To expand access to Aboriginal languages teachers, the Department of Education has developed the Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training course Certificates III and IV, which are awaiting accreditation. These courses will provide further education and employment pathways for Aboriginal educators. Planning is continuing to develop the Certificate II course which will provide Aboriginal secondary students the opportunity to connect with their language and identity. It will also provide an entry point for students into the Certificate III and IV, providing a career pathway for students to teach an Aboriginal language.
- The Department of Education has formed a new Aboriginal Advisory Body. This external advisory body will have an important role in supporting the Department's progress towards reconciliation and creating a culturally responsive education system. It will work to support the wellbeing, engagement and achievement of Aboriginal students in public schools and enhance the quality of the relationship between the Department of Education and the WA Aboriginal community.
- The Two-way Science initiative provides a framework for schools to connect learning on Country led by the local Aboriginal community with the broader teaching and learning program. Since 2021, 21 public schools across three clusters in the Kimberley, Goldfields and Metropolitan education regions have been engaged in Two-way Science. In 2023, a further 32 schools have engaged with the initiative.



# YOUTH

## Commitment 10: Helping young people connect to culture

*Connection to culture promotes social and emotional wellbeing and provides a protective factor against suicide and self-harm. The Western Australian Government and Aboriginal communities will work together to develop strategies and programs to facilitate intergenerational and on-country learning of culture and culture-inspired life skills*

**This commitment addresses State Coroner's recommendations 16, 17, 25, 38, 39 and 42**

**Message Stick recommendations 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 16**

- The Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan outlines a range of initiatives that prioritise cultural identity and cultural connection within the Aboriginal community and promote the value of Aboriginal cultures to the broader society.
- The Health Navigator Pilot Program has aided improved pathways and access to alternative models of care with respect to cultural safety, workforce, capacity, and infrastructure. The Health Navigator Pilot Program has partnered with Aboriginal Medical Services in the pilot sites: Mirrabooka and South West, to increase existing service capacity to provide health services for children in out of home care, including child health nurses and paediatricians.

## Commitment 11: Building youth capacity

*The Western Australian Government will work with the Commonwealth, local government, businesses and the community sector to help build the capacity of Aboriginal young people to develop the skills, knowledge and experience required to live healthy, confident and independent lives. Aboriginal young people need better access to training and employment opportunities, and outlets for self-expression through sport, recreation and social interaction*

**Commitment 11 arises from the State Coroner's recommendations 21, 30 and 37**

**Message Stick recommendations 17, 19, 20 and 39.**

- Through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, a successful pilot paid Aboriginal Internship program in collaboration with University Hall (Aboriginal students residing at University Hall and studying at University of Western Australia) has been established. This is a potential pathway into employing Aboriginal Graduates at Department of Premier and Cabinet and the public sector.
- Department of Communities' Graduate Development Program is currently being redesigned to align with workforce planning. The revised Program will continue to offer opportunities to Aboriginal students and there is a hope that some participants in the Program will be based in regional locations to be able to work on Country.
- The Department of Health delivers a range of workforce initiatives through the Implementation of the Aboriginal Workforce Policy to progress achievement of the Western Australian health system's Aboriginal employment target, including the Aboriginal Cadetship Program employing 37 cadets in 2022-23.
- The Public Sector Commission continues to lead the Solid Futures Aboriginal Traineeship Program. In 2021, 2022, and 2023 there was a total of 129 young Aboriginal people who commenced the traineeship program in a range of public sector agencies in metropolitan and regional locations.
- The WA Police Force facilitates a Cadet program, providing an entry pathway into education, training and deployment of Aboriginal people to build workplace capability and experience. Recruitment into the program contains many discretionary elements to enable a broad base of applicants. Participants receive Academy instruction and workplace development in the use of police systems and procedures. The Department of Education, via a TAFE Certificate II in Adult Education and Physical Training, helps to build health and fitness in readiness for transition to Police Recruit programs.
- Delivered by the Western Australia Aboriginal Leadership Institute (WAALI), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the WA Police Force of varying levels and ranks can apply to attend the Yorga Djenna Bidi Leadership Program. This opportunity exists for current, future and emerging Aboriginal leaders from all language groups to build leadership capability in a culturally appropriate and collaborative environment. The program objectives are to develop leadership capability for Aboriginal and wider community benefit and facilitate meaningful and positive inter-cultural interactions.
- In addition to the Yorga Djenna Bidi Leadership Program, also offered by WAALI is the Aboriginal Emerging Leaders Program. This program is available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women aged between 18 – 25 with the objective of developing leadership capacity for Aboriginal and wider community benefit and facilitate formal leadership development for Aboriginal youth.



## Commitment 12: A voice for young people

*Building youth voice is about identifying, recognising and supporting young people and their right to have a say about decisions that affect them. Aboriginal young people should be empowered to speak up and contribute to decision making, and to become leaders of change on behalf of their own, and future generations.*

### Commitment 12 arises from the State Coroner's recommendation 42

#### Message Stick recommendations 12 and 17

- Commencing late 2022, the Mental Health Commission's Lived Experience Workforce Development team partnered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre led by Black Dog Institute to develop a Guide that highlights the nuances of the Lived Experience Workforce in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This Guide is anticipated for release in 2024.
- The Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders group formed following a series of workshops in 2017 for Aboriginal young people in the Kimberley. The Group advocates for formal opportunities to contribute to the development of Government policy and programs in the Kimberley region. The project was funded as part of the State Government of Western Australia's 2020 Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing. The Department of Communities is supporting the Kimberley Empowered Youth Network project, which is also recognised in the Western Australian Recovery Plan.

## Next Steps

This annual progress report outlines the progress so far of the WA Government's current programs, projects and initiatives against the 12 Commitments established to support Aboriginal young people across Western Australia.

It must be acknowledged that in working towards the 12 Commitments, there will be challenges along the way. The WA Government recognises the complexities and issues expressed by the community and will continue to implement new ways of working that can support and empower Aboriginal young people.

The voices of Aboriginal young people are central and valuable to this space. In working with Aboriginal peoples and communities, we continue to find better ways to meet outcomes to ensure Aboriginal young people have every opportunity to thrive and look forward to a positive and hopeful future. This vision remains at the forefront as we continue to progress the Commitment, now and in the years to come.

# APPENDIX 1 – FULL RECONCILIATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides an update on the progress of the recommendations from the Coroner’s Inquest and Message Stick reports. Responses include recommendations that:

- Have been closed
- Have progressed to ‘Actioned’ from the previous annual report;
- In progress;
- Not yet commenced.

Where a recommendation has previously been updated as ‘Actioned’ and is now ‘Closed’, related information of these recommendations can be found in the Progress Update of the 12 Commitments on page 37. Four recommendations (MS22, MS35, MS41 and MS42) from the Message Stick report have been superseded.

The WA Government recognises that while some recommendations are in progress, it will take some time for long-term and significant change to occur.

## DEFINITIONS:

### WA Government position on Recommendations

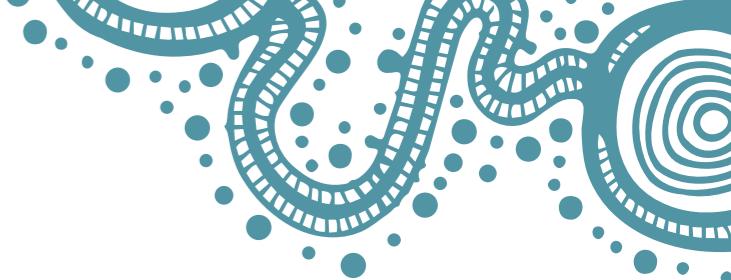
“Accepted”	The WA Government agrees with the recommendation and will endeavour to implement it.
“Accepted in principle”	The WA Government agrees with the intent of the recommendation but may endeavour to implement it in a different way, or details of the Government’s response may vary.
“Further discussion required”	The recommendation requires further consideration in terms of its implications, applications, or impacts; generally, some form of impact study, consultation, or review of the evidence may be required.
“Superseded”	The recommendation is no longer relevant due to events that have taken place since the recommendation was made.
“Not Accepted”	The WA Government does not agree with the recommendation and will not endeavour to implement it in the proposed format.

### Status of Recommendation

“Closed”	The recommendation has previously been reported as “Actioned” and no further update is required.
“Actioned”	The WA Government has comprehensively actioned the recommendation.
“In progress”	There has been some progress to address this recommendation. But it is not comprehensive to the point when the recommendation is considered fully actioned.
“Not yet commenced”	There has been no progress to address this recommendation.
“Superseded”	The recommendation is no longer relevant due to events that have taken place since the recommendation was made.
“N/A”	The recommendation relates to Commonwealth Government.

## SNAPSHOT UPDATE 2022-2023

Status	Recommendations	Total Number
Closed	Coronial Inquest: 7, 10, 24, 21, 23, 31, 32, 42. Message Stick: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31, 32.	23
Actioned	Coronial Inquest: 11, 13, 30, 33, 35, 36. Message Stick: 9, 29, 33, 38, 40, 43.	12
In Progress	Coronial Inquest: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40. Message Stick: 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 26, 30, 34, 36, 37, 39, 44.	42
Not yet commenced	Coronial Inquest: 4, 25, 41. Message Stick: 25.	4
N/A	Coronial Inquest: 12. Message Stick: N/A	1
Superseded	Message Stick: 22, 35, 41 and 42.	4



## RECOMMENDATIONS PROGRESS UPDATE

### Commitment 1. Culturally responsive government

#### Recommendation: CR19

That cultural competency training given to service providers who interact with Aboriginal persons is co-designed with Aboriginal persons and delivered in a culturally relevant manner with emphasis on the effect of intergenerational trauma and FASD, and on the importance of cultural wellbeing, and that all service providers be required to be trained and that it be funded. Further, wherever possible, that cultural competency training be delivered by involving local Aboriginal people.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	All	In progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

All WA Government agencies continue to work with Aboriginal people and communities to ensure appropriate cultural training is available for those who engage with Aboriginal people. Some examples of actions that agencies are doing to support this recommendation include:

- Department of Communities through the Kimberley Region Aboriginal staff reference group have developed a Cultural Induction package specific to the region. The first cultural induction workshop launched in Broome in June 2022, with sessions delivered to staff across Broome, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Kununurra.
- The Department of Education's Agency Commissioning Plan includes the requirement to ensure community services delivered to Aboriginal students are culturally appropriate, flexible and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal students and their families. Where services are not provided by Aboriginal businesses or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), the Department of Education has continued to include qualitative criteria that encourages partnerships with ACCOs, and evidence of appropriate cultural competency training is provided to staff.
- The Department of Health continues to deliver the mandatory system-wide Aboriginal Cultural eLearning and monitors compliance. As of 1 June 2023, 80% of WA Health staff have completed the Aboriginal Cultural eLearning - Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing training. In line with Department of Health's policy, WACHSs staff also completed the mandatory Aboriginal Cultural eLearning. Alongside this, Regional Aboriginal Health Consultants provide cultural education for staff.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Training Strategy (ACCTS) is priority Action 6 of the Department of Justice's Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024. Keogh Bay People Pty Ltd developed the ACCTS in 2022, and the first stage of implementation is now underway; developing the online Foundation Program from the curriculum of learning. The Foundation Program will begin to be rolled out in early 2024. The ACCTS program will promote place-based and culturally responsive practices for all employees, including as relevant to procurement processes and strategies.
- The Mental Health Commission's Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Programs Team delivers Ways of Working training, a mandatory two-part cultural awareness training program for Mental Health Commission employees. This training is also delivered externally to employees within the alcohol and other drug, mental health and human services sector.

#### Recommendation: CR42

##### I recommend that:

- The principles of self-determination and empowerment be given emphasis in initiatives, policies and programs relating to Aboriginal people in Western Australia and that the Western Australian Government introduce measures to enable Aboriginal people and organisations to be involved in setting and formulating policy that affects their communities;
- That in developing such measures, consideration be given to negotiating mutually agreed outcomes, with service delivery responsibilities as between the Western Australian Government and Aboriginal people and organisations; and
- The Western Australian Government develop a statewide Aboriginal cultural policy that recognises the importance of cultural continuity and cultural security to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in this State.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The WA Government has published, and is implementing, the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029 (the Strategy). The Strategy sets out how the WA Government will direct its efforts towards a future in which all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation. Developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia, the Strategy also sets out the State's approach to meeting its commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Strategy outlines a high-level framework for the immediate and future reforms needed to ensure WA Government policies, plans, initiatives and programs – including support for Aboriginal-led services – are effective in meeting the needs of Aboriginal people across a range of diverse circumstances. These reforms are built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal people, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working. The WA Government will report annually on progress against both the Strategy and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Specific actions are outlined in Western Australia's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**



## Recommendation: MS7

That Western Australian Government agencies recognise the importance of cultural knowledge as a protective factor preventing Aboriginal youth suicide.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
<p>The Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025 developed by the Mental Health Commission, recognises that protection and promotion of Aboriginal culture is a significant protective factor for Aboriginal people that contributes to community cohesion and personal resilience. The concept of Social and Emotional Wellbeing is also referenced in the Framework as a foundational element for Aboriginal people and their communities, which signifies connection to culture as integral.</p> <p>Further recognition of the importance of culture is referenced in the Western Australian Mental Wellbeing Guide (Mental Wellbeing Guide) that recognises the importance of culture as a protective factor is outlined by strong cultural identity. The Mental Wellbeing Guide aims to improve community understanding of mental wellbeing and provides practical steps for state and local government agencies, communities, non-government, and private organisations to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate community-based mental wellbeing initiatives. This Mental Wellbeing Guide will be released by the Mental Health Commission in late 2023. The WA Government will continue to work alongside Aboriginal people and communities to ensure cultural knowledge remains key in the continued approach in preventing Aboriginal youth suicide.</p>		

## Recommendation: MS12

That the Western Australian Government places increased emphasis on empowering Aboriginal communities in developing and actioning all strategies, programs and services which are relevant to Aboriginal people.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	All	In progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
<p>The National Agreement on Closing the Gap reinforces the principles of empowerment and partnership.</p> <p>The WA Government is developing a whole-of-government ACCO Strategy to increase opportunities for ACCOs to deliver services to their communities across the Closing the Gap outcome areas and participate in the design of services.</p> <p>On 9 August 2022, the Department of Finance launched the State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services and its Implementation Plan. The State Commissioning Strategy reflects a shift away from the current purchasing models to a more holistic, proactive, and sustainable approach to commissioning community services. The Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy has recently been updated to reflect enabling the direct engagement of an ACCO by Western Australian public sector agencies for the delivery of community services.</p>		

## Recommendation: MS13

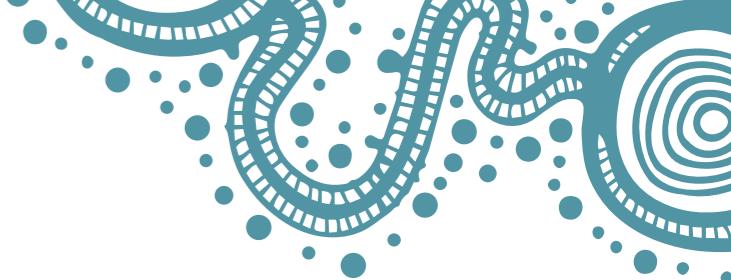
That the Western Australian Government shifts its focus from government owned and run programs and services for Aboriginal people to Aboriginal owned and run programs. The Committee acknowledges that this will be a gradual process; however, it can begin immediately by designing strategies, services and programs with the aim of empowering Aboriginal communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	All	In progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
<p>Refer to progress update of <a href="#">Recommendation: MS12</a>.</p> <p>All WA Government agencies are developing work in response to this recommendation.</p> <p><i>Refer to progress update of Commitment 8: Building Local Capacity for additional information in response to this recommendation.</i></p>		

## Recommendation: MS14

That the Western Australian Government implement minimum standards of engagement with Aboriginal people when developing, actioning, and funding strategies, programs and services which affect Aboriginal people.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	All	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
<p>Actioned, no further update from previous report.</p> <p>The WA Government is a signatory to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which commits WA Governments to establishing policy and place-based partnerships which respond to local priorities and meet the strong partnership elements of accountable and representative; formally agreed; and shared decision-making. In essence, these commitments outline how the WA Government should engage with Aboriginal people.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy provides high level guidance about building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work. This includes the structures and processes for making decisions; the role of ACCOs; and the systems of Government accountability.</p> <p>The WA Government is currently developing a whole-of-government ACCO Strategy which will provide more specific guidance about the role of ACCOs and Aboriginal people with lived experience in the planning, design and delivery of services to Aboriginal people.</p> <p><b>This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.</b></p>		



## Commitment 2. Respect and appreciation for Aboriginal culture

### Recommendation: MS40

That the WA Police Force and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support report to the Parliament on the scope for local cultural authority to be incorporated into the services provided at multi-functional police facilities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	WA Police Force	Actioned in 2022-23.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The operations and resourcing for Multifunctional Police Facilities (MFPF) remain under review. MFPF Police Officers work closely and collaboratively with Department for Child Protection and Family Support (now known as Department of Communities) and local community leaders where applicable, in the delivery of government services from MFPF. One example is Jigalong MFPF in the Pilbara who have a strong relationship with the Kanyirrinipa Jukurrpa Rangers being Martu People and their cultural leaders. They have housing, vehicles and an office in Jigalong, regularly providing support to Police with at-risk youth, local crime issues, missing persons and patrols.

### Recommendation: MS11

The Western Australian Government should foster strategies and programs which contribute to the greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture, including placing a greater emphasis on reconciliation action plans, and providing funding for cultural events attended by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries / Department of the Premier and Cabinet	In progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Supporting of Aboriginal culture is reflected in the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and Western Australia's Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan. The Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan outlines a range of initiatives that prioritise cultural identity and cultural connection within the Aboriginal community and promote the value of Aboriginal cultures to the broader society.

The planning for the Aboriginal Cultural Centre (ACC) with the Business Case and Project Definition Plan for the ACC is progressing, with key decisions about the Centre's form and function being discussed by the ACC Steering Committee. Indigenous Professional Services Management Consultants, an Aboriginal-owned consultancy, have been contracted to lead the planning and coordination for statewide engagement for the next stage of the project.

## Commitment 3. Supporting cultural programs

### Recommendation: CR16

That the Yiriman Project or a model akin to the Yiriman Project be extended across the Kimberley, and that consideration be given to the following matters in connection with the extension:

- a. That the Western Australian government through its various health and justice branches should explore opportunities for the implementation of models akin to the Yiriman Project in other remote parts of Western Australia with priority given to those areas with high rates of Aboriginal youth suicide.
- b. That funding providers for the Yiriman Project and other programs akin to the Yiriman Project should acknowledge the need for key performance indicators that are flexible and reflect the difficulty such organisations have in providing quantitative and qualitative data on the success of individual interventions with at-risk clients.
- c. That the Western Australian government should consider guaranteed funding for the Yiriman Project on a longer-term basis, whether through funding provided by the Department for Corrective Services for diversionary programs, through ATSIPEP funding, or through funding co-ordinated through the Mental Health Commission.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Justice	In progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy continues to fund place-based activities, night patrols and school holiday programs in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, Halls Creek, and Wyndham, as well as a youth engagement program in Broome and Derby and an alternate learning program in Broome and Kununurra. Funding has also been allocated to the Immediate Response Safe Space pilot in Broome. These initiatives are delivered by or in partnership with ACCOs or Aboriginal Corporations. The Yiriman Project will be funded for a further 2-year period; June 2023 to July 2025, to deliver on Country camps for young people in the Fitzroy River region.

### Recommendation: CR25

That there be funding for the development of cultural healing projects in the Kimberley, such as that being developed by the Nyamba Buru Yawuru Centre in Broome.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Health	Not yet commenced.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service have been participating in the Jalingangurru Healing trial (previously the Traditional Healing Practices Pilot) which is based in Derby and Fitzroy Crossing by providing clients with the opportunity to access healing sessions.

Meetings have been held to ascertain how to provide the option of ongoing cultural healing services to our clients ensuring cultural/clinical and operational governance is in place.



### Recommendation: CR39

That the Yiriman Project or a model akin to the Yiriman Project be linked to schools within the Kimberley Region.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Education	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Department of Education is working with the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) Board and the KALACC Coordinator to initiate planning on two school Yiriman project trial sites at La Grange Remote Community School and Fitzroy Valley District High School. The Department of Education is committed to ongoing work with KALACC with the view to connecting the justice diversion elements of On Country Learning with the Department of Education's broader intentions concerning the education, health, and wellbeing of Aboriginal students in our schools.

A working group has been established to progress a connected (federated) model of remote schools, together with developing the Terms of Reference for a review of the Remote Teaching Service, a group of more than 200 teachers living and working in 37 remote communities in Western Australia. A Steering Committee has been formed to progress this initiative, with a broader focus on developing governance around building culturally responsive schools with high Aboriginal student enrolment.

*Refer to progress update of **Commitment 3: Supporting cultural programs** for additional information in response to this recommendation.*

### Recommendation: MS8

That the Western Australian Government set aside an appropriate portion of grant expenditure to fund more culture-embedded programs for Aboriginal young people across the state.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	In progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries operated a round of the Connecting to Country Program in October to December 2022 for activities commencing from 1 May 2023. A Peer Assessment Panel, consisting of four Aboriginal people and an Aboriginal Chair, assessed the applications and made funding recommendations. This resulted in 20 applications being funded, totaling \$469,384. Funding of up to \$25,000 was awarded for activities on Country that encourage sharing of cultural knowledge and skills between generations, preservation of culture and strengthening of communities. Funded projects have included engaging at-risk youth to build their cultural knowledge, bush trips for young people to record cultural knowledge in photos, film and audio as well as families returning to Country for critical knowledge transfer.

*Refer to progress update of **Commitment 3: Supporting cultural programs** for additional information in response to this recommendation.*

### Commitment 4. Better prevention, intervention and postvention services

### Recommendation: CR12

That there be the appointment of Local Area Co-ordinators or local Family Advocates in the Kimberley Region who can assist families in need of accessing service providers and that all efforts be made to have such roles filled by an Aboriginal person.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	N/A (Commonwealth)	N/A

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

No further update from previous report:

The Commonwealth Government has funded Community Liaison Officers through the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Trial. The trial is currently being evaluated, with the outcome of the evaluation to determine the Commonwealth Government's ongoing support for services in the Kimberley.

### Recommendation: CR17

That the Government and its service providers continue to ensure that the strategies for addressing Aboriginal suicide be implemented in consultation with appropriate representatives from the Aboriginal community, that the representatives which are appropriate to consult are identified on an ongoing basis, and that such representatives be provided with an opportunity for involvement in the co-design of such strategies.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Across the state under the Western Australian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Strategy, 10 Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans have been developed specific to each region with the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer responsible for the implementation of the suicide prevention activities associated with these plans. The plans undergo review with local governance groups as the drivers of priorities for the local community under the streams of prevention/early intervention, support and aftercare and postvention.



### Recommendation: CR24

That the Minister for Health report to the Parliament on measures to address the acknowledged gap in teaching and training staff about mental health issues and Aboriginal youth suicide.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Health	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report.

In all mental health assessments, Cultural/Traditional Healer is an option as part of care plans if requested by the consumer/family.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS6

That the Mental Health Commission broadens its scope of suicide prevention for Aboriginal people to encompass all identified risk factors.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Mental Health Commission	In progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans are currently being implemented across Western Australia with a range of place-based suicide prevention activities being led by Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers within the regions. This delivery of suicide prevention for Aboriginal people incorporates a community-led approach that includes identified risk factors for individual community needs.

Examples of delivery of suicide activities include:

- Cultural healing camps;
- “Beat Ball” Events/Carnivals;
- Elder Gathering Events;
- Men’s and Women’s groups;
- Youth Social and Emotional Wellbeing/Health Promotion education sessions;
- NAIDOC/Community gathering events; and
- Aboriginal Mental Health suicide prevention training.

### Recommendation: MS10

That Western Australian Government agencies use the assessment tools and evaluation framework created by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP).

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The evaluation of the Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025 has utilised the ATSISPEP resources as a key guide and indicator for the review and analysis of the Aboriginal People Stream. Further use of these resources will be ongoing.

### Recommendation: MS15

That the Mental Health Commission involves Aboriginal people in the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives strategy.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Mental Health Commission	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The final evaluation report of Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives was completed in 2019. The Evaluation Reference Group had Aboriginal representatives.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS16

That the Mental Health Commission provide and fund programs and strategies which emphasise developing the capacity of community members to help youth at risk of suicide.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

On 13 May 2022, the Mental Health Commission released the Young People’s Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020-2025 Report on Implementation 2021 (YPPA) to guide current and future YPPA initiatives. The launch of YPPA was showcased alongside a public art exhibition titled 'Project Elevation' featuring artwork from young artists on the theme of mental health. This an across agency commitment to support the delivery of current and future YPPA initiatives. The YPPA provides an overview of these engagement activities and outlines ongoing governance and reporting arrangements.



### Recommendation: MS23

That the Mental Health Commission should evaluate the success of Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives, and report on the outcomes of its evaluations at least annually, including how progress is being measured and what changes in approach have been made based on evaluation findings.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Mental Health Commission	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The final evaluation report of Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives was completed in 2019. Since then, the Mental Health Commission released the Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025. The Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025 sets the direction for future action to reduce deaths by suicide in Western Australia. Developed for use by state and local government, non-government, private organisations and communities to help identify their role in suicide prevention and to guide the investment, development, implementation and evaluation of suicide prevention across the state.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS24

That the Evaluation Reference Group should include at least one Aboriginal member and should engage with Aboriginal communities as part of its ongoing evaluative role.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Mental Health Commission	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The Mental Health Commission Evaluation Reference Group that was set up to guide the work associated with the Suicide Prevention 2020 strategy had Aboriginal representatives. This group is now disbanded.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS34

That the Western Australian Government should collaborate with Commonwealth agencies and non-government organisations to strengthen the evidence base to determine the effective ways to prevent Aboriginal youth suicide.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Improving data gathering and sharing is a key element of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement. The Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Data Governance Forum has been established with representatives from the Commonwealth Government and other States and Territories to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the data and performance measurement commitments specified in the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

The Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Data Governance Forum is progressing the development of National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement Technical Implementation Plan (TIP) due to the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Senior Officials Group by October 2023. Consultation with Lived Experience and Aboriginal representatives to inform the TIP will occur.

### Recommendation: MS37

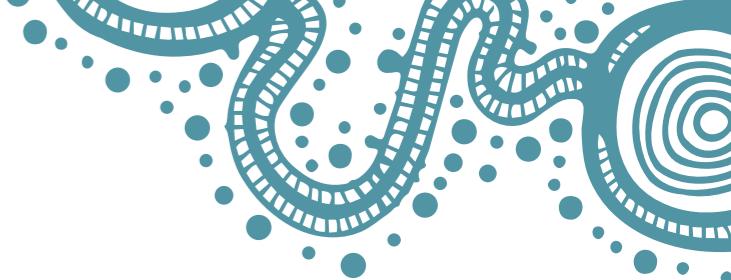
That the Mental Health Commission implement the postvention recommendations in the 'Solutions that Work: What the Evidence and Our People Tell Us, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project' report and the forthcoming University of Western Australia Critical Response Project report into its dedicated suicide prevention strategy Aboriginal Implementation Plan.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Mental Health Commission funds and supports the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (CLO) program to deliver the activities of Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans across the state. Delivery of postvention through the CLOs can typically occur through financial aid or information packaging for support services. Implementation of the ATSISPEP postvention recommendations are subject to community-led delivery of postvention through dedicated Regional Plans.

Further work is required to best utilise and implement the postvention recommendations into the future delivery of dedicated suicide prevention strategies relating to Aboriginal communities.



## Commitment 5. Building capacity in health and mental health services

### Recommendation: CR20

That Department of Communities' child protection workers and school teaching staff (in the public and private sectors) who have regular contact with Aboriginal children receive appropriate training in suicide intervention and prevention, and that such training be provided at appropriately regular intervals.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Communities / Department of Education	In progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Three training products have been reviewed for Suicide Prevention:

- Compassionate Foundations is a free digital learning resource by the Australian Public Sector Commission;
- Gatekeeper Training is a free face-to-face workshop co-ordinated by the Mental Health Commission; and
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) by LivingWorks.

Compassionate Foundations and Gatekeeper will both be piloted in late 2023 through the Department of Communities Learning Management System to explore suitability broadly for the Departments.

Teaching staff (in the public and private sectors) will continue to be provided with suicide prevention training and refresher courses available when required.

### Recommendation: CR21

That efforts continue to be made to employ Aboriginal persons in health (including mental health), education, child protection and police and, where necessary or desirable, that consideration be given to introducing bridging courses and cadet programs and/or locally accessible training courses to assist prospective employees to obtain the necessary qualifications.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Public Sector Commission / Mental Health Commission / Department of Health	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

There are many different approaches across the Western Australian Government agencies to increase employment of Aboriginal people in key service areas, including the use of the exceptions in the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Section 50(d) and Section 51), Aboriginal traineeship programs and WA Police Force Aboriginal Police cadetships. The Public Sector Commission has developed the Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: CR26

That care or treatment provided by service providers to Aboriginal children and young people in the Kimberley operate in a trauma-informed model, and that service providers account for the need for trauma-specific care where possible.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Health	In Progress.

**2022-2023 UPDATE:**

Safewards has been implemented in the South West and Great Southern Mental Health inpatient units. Mabu Liyan in Broome is also commencing the implementation of Safewards. Other trauma informed programs and practices, including the e-learning package are being developed. Psychological First Aid program has been deployed in response to environmental emergencies (i.e. floods and fires) to support staff deliver trauma responsive care for their community.

### Recommendation: CR27

That all health service clinicians in the Kimberley have the necessary skills to screen for and facilitate care for patients with alcohol, drugs and mental health issues; and that all health service clinicians in the Kimberley have access to training in the assessment and management of these issues.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Health	In Progress.

**2022-2023 UPDATE:**

In 2021, it was reported that as part of the suite of additional documents, the Department of Health has recently recommended the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Tool (ASSIST – SMHMR905) for statewide usage when clinically appropriate. Where possible, clinicians should document the key findings in the mandatory Statewide Standardised Clinical Documentation. Draft guidelines for the additional document suite including the ASSIST – SMHMR905 Tool remain under review and will be added to the Triage to Discharge Framework in the future.



### Recommendation: MS9

That non-Aboriginal employees of government agencies who are involved in developing strategies for, or delivering programs and services to, Aboriginal people should attend a locally relevant cultural competency course run by suitably qualified providers.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	All	Actioned in 2022-23.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

As stated in response to CR19, all government agencies provide cultural competency training for staff. Additional cultural training is available on an ongoing basis as required.

Refer to progress update of **Commitment 1: Culturally responsive government** for further information in response to this recommendation.

### Recommendation: MS18

That the Public Sector Commission mandate higher Aboriginal employment targets for Western Australian Government agencies.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Public Sector Commission	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The WA Government published its Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for Western Australian Public Sector Employment 2020-2025 in September 2020 (the Strategy), and it is available on [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au). The Strategy contains a range of actions for agencies to assist them in reaching the representation target, along with actions for the Public Sector Commission to support agencies. There is an associated Action Plan for Aboriginal people (the Plan) with actions that are being implemented. The Plan includes an aspirational target of 3.7% representation based on Australian Bureau of Statistics projected working population, the 2016 Census data, and current representation data in public sector employment.

The Public Sector Commission also introduced a diversity dashboard for public sector agencies to monitor representation and inclusion information across diversity groups. In addition, achieving and progress towards targets and better employment outcomes is included in CEO performance agreements.

The Public Sector Commissions continues to publish and provide to agencies a range of workforce diversity information and metrics on a regular basis throughout the year. This includes quarterly workforce reporting and the diversity dashboard, which support decision making and targeted workforce planning, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS39

That the Western Australian Government collaborates with the Commonwealth Government to train and employ local community members to fill positions in remote areas.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	All	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

This recommendation remains ongoing as supported by actions in the workforce development space. Several strategies exist to support training and employment pathways that reflect the work needs of local remote communities.

The National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Working Group has been established to ensure a nationally coordinated approach to mental health workforce planning. Further work is still required to meet this recommendation's objective.

### Recommendation: MS44

That the Minister for Health report to the Parliament on measures to address the acknowledged gap in teaching and training staff about mental health issues and Aboriginal youth suicide.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Measures to address the gap in educating and training of staff in mental health issues and Aboriginal youth suicide continues to be a work in progress. Community-led suicide prevention activities and training vary from region to region. The Mental Health Commission recognises this recommendation as a pivotal factor into the further development of Aboriginal suicide prevention and remains a key area of capacity building in the sector.



## Commitment 6. Better access to clinical services

### Recommendation: CR1

- a. That there be universal screening for FASD at the following points: during infant health assessments and upon a child entering into the child protection and justice system for the first time;
- b. That all children identified at risk of neurodevelopment impairment on the basis of antenatal exposure to alcohol or early life trauma be assessed by a paediatrician for development and behavioural impairments at the age of one year and in the year prior to school starting.
- c. In respect of a child entering the child protection system for the first time in addition to the FASD universal screening:
  - i. the preliminary assessments and screening be undertaken by Department of Communities' district psychologists;
  - ii. that referrals be made for comprehensive IQ and functional capacity assessment where and when required by presentation and behaviours; and
  - iii. that there be referrals to other treatment and therapy services for trauma – related developmental and behavioural issues, including mental health issues, impulsivity, and harmful sexual behaviours, that may or may not include cognitive impairments and neuro-disabilities such as FASD.

**INITIAL RESPONSE:**  
Accepted in principle

**LEAD AGENCY:**  
Department of Justice / Department of Health / Department of Communities

**PROGRESS:**  
In Progress.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) screening project was commissioned by the Department of Health in partnership with the Telethon Kids Institute with no evidence-based tools for screening identified through this process.

A multi-disciplinary assessment which includes individual neuro-psychological, paediatric and speech pathology components would be required. This assessment process takes between five to eight hours. Co-ordinating the availability of the three required professionals within the allocated time frames, particularly when the assessment is required for a young person in a regional or remote setting is challenging.

The viability of flying young people to the metropolitan area for assessment has been assessed but is not feasible for many reasons such as costs for flights, accommodation, on ground transport, language barriers when English is not the first language, the necessity of the young person to be accompanied by a caregiver (who may be a sole caregiver for other children and can't be removed from the home setting for even a short time) and the overall destabilising impact of removing a young person off country unnecessarily particularly if they have never been to the metropolitan area before.

FASD screening is only requested in instances where maternal alcohol use during pregnancy has been confirmed; and a neuropsychological assessment would initially be requested in those instances where maternal alcohol use is unknown but where the young person's presentation raises concerns. Should the neuropsychological assessment identify the required deficits, then the paediatric assessment can be requested following this.

Communities prioritises Health Screening for all children entering Out of Home Care, this is further being supported by the Health Navigator Pilot Program which integrates and coordinates access to health services for children in care in the respective pilot catchment areas.

**This recommendation remains in progress with further work emerging.**

### Recommendation: CR2

- a. That neurodevelopmental impairment (an umbrella term which includes behavioural, developmental and cognitive impairments) incorporating the criteria defined in the Australian Guide to the diagnosis of FASD be recognised as a disability within the National Disability Insurance Scheme ("the NDIS");
- b. that where FASD has actually been diagnosed at the appropriate level of severity, it is separately recognised as a disability within the NDIS.

**INITIAL RESPONSE:**  
Accepted in principle

**LEAD AGENCY:**  
Department of Health

**PROGRESS:**  
In Progress.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The WA Government continues to support the Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) National Disability Insurance Scheme model in Kimberley. The model provides paediatric specific GP, nurse and allied health assessments and treatment services through the AMS or as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation registered NDIS provider. Assistance is available to help navigate applications to the NDIS scheme and access to other NDIS services.

*This recommendation relates closely to CR1.*

### Recommendation: CR3

That consideration be given to whether appropriate Medicare Benefits Scheme item numbers ought to be allocated for FASD.

**INITIAL RESPONSE:**  
Accepted in principle

**LEAD AGENCY:**  
Department of Health

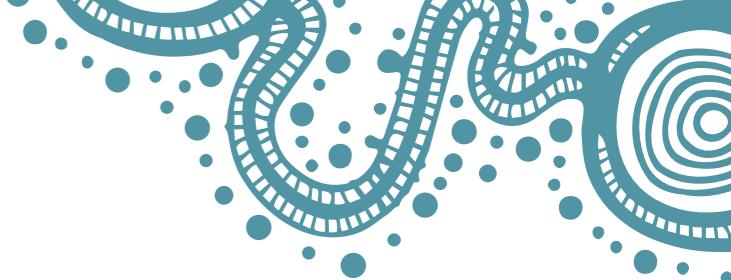
**PROGRESS:**  
In Progress.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

This recommendation remains in progress, no further information is available following previous report.

The WA Government accepts this recommendation in principle and maintains discussions with the Commonwealth Government about items covered by the Medicare Benefits Scheme.

*This recommendation relates closely to CR1.*



### Recommendation: CR4

That consideration be given to additional funding for primary care services in areas with a high burden of neurodevelopmental impairment to increase diagnostic capacity for complex conditions including FASD, and to respond to the diagnosis by way of therapeutic services for children and young people diagnosed with FASD.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Health	Not yet commenced.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Discussion and referral through to the Kimberley (AMS) model should be considered. Continue to support the AMS (ACCHO) NDIS model in the Kimberley - it provides paediatric specific General Practitioner, nurse and allied health assessments and treatment services through the AMS or as an ACCHO registered NDIS provider as well as assistance through AMSs to navigate applications to the NDIS scheme and access to other NDIS services.

*This recommendation relates closely to CR1.*

### Recommendation: CR28

That a facility be built in the East Kimberley Region which incorporates the co-morbid treatment of mental health, alcohol and drug abuse problems, or alternatively that a feasibility study be undertaken with a view to considering the need for, and impact of, such a facility.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The proposed prioritised model was provided to key stakeholders for initial feedback. Discussion and feedback indicated that although broadly supportive, sufficient information was not enough to support the proposed services at the current time.

The Mental Health Commission will continue to work with the local stakeholders to ensure a suitable and appropriate service can be implemented within the region.

### Recommendation: CR29

That peri-natal and infant care by health service providers in the Kimberley incorporates the treatment of mental health issues and those clinicians be made aware of the role and resources developed by the Western Australian Peri-natal Mental Health Unit.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Health	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Perinatal and infant care by health service providers in the Kimberley incorporates the treatment of mental health issues. The Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service provides Aboriginal youth with mental health care in the perinatal period and in infancy and connect with the Western Australian Perinatal Mental Health Unit as clients require support.

*Refer to progress update of **Commitment 6: Better access to clinical services** for further information in response to this recommendation.*

### Recommendation: CR31

That there be a mental health clinician permanently based in Halls Creek, or alternatively, that there be an increase in the visiting capacity of mental health clinicians for Halls Creek.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Mental Health Commission / WA Country Health Service	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Mental Health Commission funded the psychiatrist position that has been filled consistently with locum Psychiatrists over the 2022/23 financial year. The Nurse Educator has continued to provide extensive workforce training for the Aboriginal workforce during this time.

Due to recruitment and retention being an ongoing challenge, WA Country Health Service has at times had to use the Senior Medical Practitioners to cover the Psychiatry component.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**



### Recommendation: CR34

That facilities be developed and funded in the Kimberley Region that specifically cater for the rehabilitation of children and young persons with addiction to drugs and/or alcohol, with step down processes. The development of these facilities should be informed by the principles of self-determination, cultural continuity and empowerment.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Services have not yet commenced operations given a review of the proposed model is currently underway in collaboration with local stakeholders. Guidance is being provided from key governance groups to assist the Mental Health Commission that an appropriate service can be delivered.

*Refer to CR28 for additional information.*

### Recommendation: MS26

That the Mental Health Commission, as a matter of priority, works with the WA Primary Health Alliance and other stakeholders to establish clear roles and responsibilities for approaching Aboriginal suicide prevention in Western Australia.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement details the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth Government and WA Government regarding mental health and suicide prevention services, policy and data from a broad perspective. However, this is not specific to Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Services.

The Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention: Western Australia includes an Aftercare Services initiative. Under this initiative, the Commonwealth Government and WA Government agree to implement services to support those who have been discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt, as well as implementing a pilot to expand referral and entry pathways for people who do not present through the hospital system. Specifically, the Bilateral Schedule notes that the aftercare model of service to be delivered in Western Australia includes: "cooperating on Indigenous-specific Aftercare arrangements in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders".

The development of the Western Australia Aftercare Service model of service has involved extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and collaboration with the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia. The aftercare model of service acknowledges the parallel development and implementation of the Commonwealth Government funded program, "Culture, Care, Connect", which will have complementary functions to aftercare services program.

### Recommendation: MS32

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet co-ordinates and collaborates with the Mental Health Commission and WA Primary Health Alliance to integrate the Mental Health Atlas with the map of local or regional Aboriginal youth services.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The Mental Health Atlases referred to were developed by WA Primary Health Alliance in 2017 and included Western Australian funded services. The 2020 Productivity Commission inquiry into mental health made recommendations about how to better link consumers with services.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS38

That the Western Australian Government collaborates with the Commonwealth Government to provide accessible 24-hour mental health and suicide prevention services in remote areas.

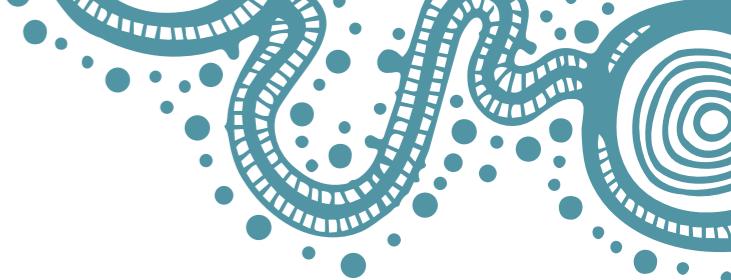
INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Health	Actioned in 2021.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

A 24/7 telehealth service has been implemented in regional areas through WA Country Health Service. Additional staff and resources are provided to give guidance to 'on the ground' clinical staff.

The continued 24/7 Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Emergency Telehealth Service continues in regional areas throughout the WA Country Health Service. Specialist Mental Health nurses and doctors are available 24hrs a day to give clinical support and guidance to 'on the ground' clinical staff, and follow-up more at-risk emergency department discharges.

A number of other programs exist that provide 24/7 mental health and suicide prevention services such as the StandBy Support After Suicide and Thirrili Postvention services.



### Recommendation: MS43

That the Premier and the Minister for Mental Health report to the Parliament on the establishment of wraparound services in remote communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Mental Health Commission / Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2022-23.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Remains in progress, no further update from previous report.

The Commitment includes building capacity in health and mental health services and providing holistic services. Efforts to achieve this will be included in annual reports for the Commitment. The response to Coroner's recommendations 12, 27 and Message Stick recommendation 39 can be found above.

## Commitment 7. Support for community wellbeing

### Recommendation: CR5

That there be Government funding to extend to other regional centres in the Kimberley the "Making FASD History" project that ran in the Fitzroy Valley, adapted as appropriate to the prevailing circumstances of those communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Mental Health Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Following the successful implementation and evaluation of the Government's two-year, statewide pilot of the Preventing FASD Project (2020-21 and 2021-22), funding was secured by the Mental Health Commission to continue the delivery of this Project. Across the two year-pilot, significant changes were observed in community-wide awareness about the risks associated with alcohol use in pregnancy, intentions to abstain from alcohol in pregnancy and community willingness to support alcohol-free pregnancies.

Training will continue to be delivered for health workers across Western Australia to support meaningful engagement with women, families and communities about alcohol use in pregnancy and FASD prevention, and funding allocated annually to support high-risk communities to implement local initiatives to address alcohol issues and FASD.

Informed by the development of a data system to help identify communities experiencing harms from alcohol and related needs assessments, funding was provided to organisations in Meekatharra and Newman to co-design targeted strategies to address alcohol use and FASD. A variety of FASD prevention activities were delivered by both communities.

Refer to Preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Project on page 31 for related information.

### Recommendation: CR8

That there be restrictions on the purchase of take away alcohol across the entire Kimberley Region, but that such restrictions be formulated after there has been consultation with key stakeholders, including affected local Aboriginal communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

On 16 December 2022, the Director of Liquor Licensing (the Director) made preliminary findings in respect of the section 64 inquiry into the availability of packaged liquor in the Kimberley towns of Broome, Kununurra, Wyndham, and Derby. The inquiry in Kununurra and Wyndham was subsequently finalised on 19 June 2023.

Finalisation of the inquiry in Derby and Broome has been delayed due to additional alcohol-related harm arising in Derby following the Kimberley flooding event and the declaration of an Emergency Situation in Derby and Broome. Additionally, the Derby/West Kimberley Liquor Accord requested the Director to impose further restrictive conditions on the sale of packaged liquor in Derby and its surrounds, to support local solutions to local problems. The Director's subsequent inquiry (following the request of the Derby/West Kimberley Liquor Accord), to form an independent view into whether additional restrictions are necessary, remains ongoing. The outcome of this may result in a change to the Director's preliminary view, published in December 2022. As Broome is in close proximity to Derby, the finalisation of the inquiry in Broome will be unlikely to proceed prior to the one in Derby.

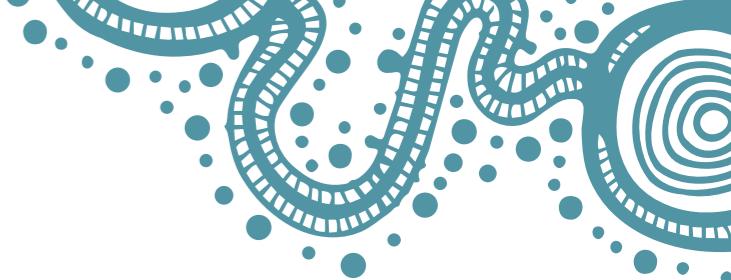
### Recommendation: CR9

That the Western Australian Government considers and/or assesses the feasibility of a Banned Drinker Register that is modelled on therapeutic support for those who are placed on it. If the matter progresses to an assessment, that consideration be given to community consultation.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Kimberley Evaluation Report of the Banned Drinkers Register (BDR)/Takeaway Alcohol Management System program has been approved by the Minister for Racing and Gaming, and a summary report is available on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website. As a result of the findings and those of the Pilbara evaluation, amendments are being progressed to the Liquor Control Act 1988, to increase pathways onto the BDR, and establish Banned Drinkers Areas in legislation. The BDR trial has been extended in the Kimberley until June 2025. A full evaluation of alcohol-related harm reduction measures will be undertaken to determine future approaches.



## Recommendation: CR10

That in light of the passage of the Liquor Control Amendment Act 2018 relating to the proscription on "sly grogging", that police be properly resourced to enforce it.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	WA Police Force	Actioned 2022-23. Closed 2023.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Kimberley Police District have dedicated police officers responsible for liquor enforcement duties contributing to the reduction in liquor related harm across the District. Ongoing operations such as Operation Bignell and Regional Shield have realised success in relation to identifying and prosecuting offenders. Upcoming process and system changes to the BDR will provide greater capacity for individuals to be placed on the register for behaviour stemming from harmful alcohol use, preventing them from acquiring packaged liquor, a common feature of alcohol-related crime.

Kimberley District continue to conduct policing operations to reduce liquor related harm in vulnerable communities. With dedicated Liquor Enforcement officers and assistance from Operation Regional Shield deployments, liquor seizures aligned to sly grogging have been successful.

Legislative amendments to the BDR will provide additional pathways for individuals to be placed on the register for behaviour stemming from harmful alcohol use. Additionally, the legislative amendments will place obligations on licensees. These amendments will be introduced in December 2023.

All WA Police Force recruits, cadets and auxiliary officers participate in cultural immersion events at commencement and graduation from training. These events include Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country, to pay respect to traditional custodians of lands and Fire and Smoking Ceremonies to promote cleansing, healing and group cohesion.

In 2022, the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness (ACA) training package was reviewed and subsequently revised to provide a more immersive and impactful experience for recruits. The WA Police Force Academy (the Academy) has engaged the services of two senior female Aboriginal Elders, augmented by in-service Aboriginal Police Officers, to deliver the ACA training package. This delivery method is more culturally appropriate as it respects the fact the Academy is partly built on traditional Women's Land.

The presenters are tertiary qualified Elders capable of sharing with the recruit's significant historical events, factors affecting the relationship between police and Aboriginal peoples and both contemporary and generational issues, which may result in trauma to Aboriginal people. The presenters are able to speak to the recruits from their lived experiences of the challenges facing some Aboriginal people, bringing authenticity and context to the training.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

## Recommendation: CR11

That there be recurrent, or more long-term funding to the various town-based patrols in the Kimberley for the provision of diversionary services to those who are abusing alcohol.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Communities / Department of Justice	Actioned in 2021.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Aboriginal Community Connectors Program (Connectors Program) aims to reduce the number of Aboriginal people coming into contact with the justice system, preventing crime and victimisation in Aboriginal communities, and ensuring coordination with other community support and law enforcement services. The Connectors Program delivers essential community services by providing:

- Transport to a safe place.
- Diversion from unsafe situations.
- Referrals to complementary services.
- Mediation or de-escalation where safe to intervene for people who are at risk of harm.
- Assistance to community members to attend local events and activities in the regions.

The State Government approved additional funding of \$31.1 million over four years from 2023-24 to 2026-27 to maintain current levels of program spending to deliver the Connectors Program services.

*Refer to progress update of **Commitment 7: Support for Community Wellbeing** for further information.*

## Recommendation: CR13

That there be consideration of the funding for, and assessment of the feasibility of, the construction of culturally appropriate short-term accommodation in Kununurra for Aboriginal persons visiting the East Kimberley Region.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
For further discussion	Department of Communities	Actioned in 2021.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Projected development costs for a new build Kununurra Short Stay have been significantly impacted by the heated market conditions being experienced in Western Australia, and further exacerbated by flood events in the Kimberley region in early 2023. Investigations of alternative site options are being explored and are yet to be determined.

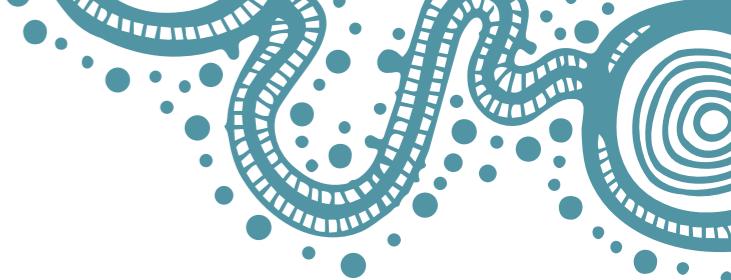
## Recommendation: CR14

That the Transitional Housing Project be continued in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek and Kununurra and be extended to other town sites in the Kimberley.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Communities	In Progress.

### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Transitional Housing Programs are now operational in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Wyndham and South Hedland. Build completion in the East Kimberley occurred in December 2021. As at 30 June 2022, 98% of dwellings in the East Kimberley were occupied, 96% of properties in the West Kimberley, and 87% of properties in South Hedland were occupied.



### Recommendation: CR15

That Aboriginal persons living in the Kimberley Region in public and/or transitional housing are not disadvantaged regarding accommodation in the event of their household exceeding the income threshold for eligibility.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Communities	In Progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
The process to end the tenancy of those deemed over income allows for full consideration of the households' housing needs including capacity to sustain alternative housing options. The process also enables placed base decision making with regards to factors such as the availability of alternative housing within the local area.		

### Recommendation: CR18

That measures be introduced aimed at increasing the prospects of complaints of domestic violence being reported and maintained; and as part of such measures, that the WA Government consider introducing legislation allowing for visually recorded statements taken from victims of domestic violence to be admitted as evidence-in-chief at a court hearing.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Justice	In Progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
The new Evidence Act is in the advanced drafting stages. The Department of Justice is consulting numerous stakeholders in developing the provisions concerning video recorded statements of family violence complainants as evidence-in-chief. The Department of Justice is currently awaiting the evaluation findings of a 12-month pilot of similar provisions run in Queensland. The pilot will conclude in September 2023 and the findings are expected to be reported in December 2023 and include qualitative and quantitative data from all involved in the pilot, including the family violence complainants. The Department of Justice will consider these findings before finalising the provisions under the new Evidence Act.		

### Recommendation: CR22

That consideration be given to extending an offer of a voluntary cashless debit card program to include the entire Kimberley Region.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Department of Communities	In Progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
The Cashless Debit Card (CDC) program ceased in the East Kimberley on 4 October 2022. Since then, 97.4% of CDC participants in the East Kimberley and Goldfields have opted out of income management. The remaining 2.6% have opted to remain on the new alternative (voluntary) income management scheme, known as 'Enhanced Income Management (EIM)'. The Australian Government's Department of Social Services has confirmed that there are plans in place to extend the EIM scheme across all areas within the Kimberley in late 2023.		

### Recommendation: CR30

That the development or refurbishment of facilities for young persons to meet and engage in activities to be undertaken in the Kimberley Region, in consultation with local Aboriginal communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries / Department of Justice	Actioned in 2021.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

A number of recent initiatives have sought to improve facilities for young people in the Kimberley, including upgrades and new multicourt facilities for many communities through the Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund. Below provides a summary of these recent activities.

##### Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley:

- Kununurra Police and Community Youth Centre maintains the head lease of the Youth Hub, and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries sub-tenants office accommodation including for Sports House occupant providers Garnduwa and West Australian Football Commission. Local services are working together on programs to maximise use of this space.
- Water Park Development is now completed (\$3.5 million election commitment).
- Wyndham Football Oval Lighting and Changerooms - changerooms completed, lighting still underway.
- Kununurra Leisure and Aquatic Centre Redevelopment - project timeline will need to be extended to accommodate the local wet season conditions (\$6 million election commitment).

##### Shire of Halls Creek:

- Ringersoak Community - new basketball courts build completed.
- Shire of Halls Creek Club Night Lights Program Town Oval Lights completed.
- Warmun Community upgrade facilities - agreement signed March 2023, Steering Committee formed and progressing procurement (\$2.35 million election commitment).
- Shire of Halls Creek, CSRRF Town Sports Field upgrade - preparation works underway with commencement scheduled at conclusion of football season (September 2023).

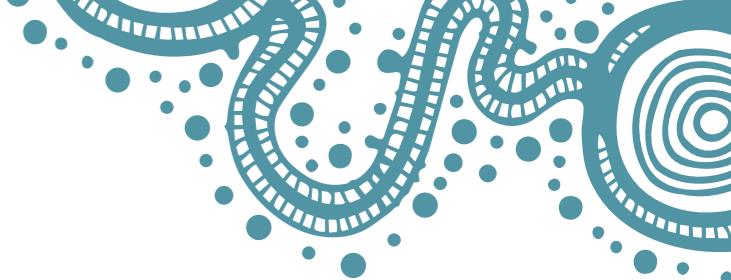
##### Shire of Derby West Kimberley:

- Derby Horse Riders Association Club Night Lights Program - upgrade of rodeo grounds main lighting completed July 2023.
- Fitzroy Crossing upgrade recreation facilities - Funding Agreement Amendment 1 executed March 2023 for \$1.5 million towards lighting upgrade and design consultations. Desire to progress with Funding Agreement Amendment 2 around fencing of precinct in near future (\$4 million election commitment).
- Mowanjum Community - election commitment to build changerooms at Mowanjum Football Oval is underway.
- Yungngora Community (Noonkanbah) Upgrade Oval - project progressing with expected completion May 2024.
- Looma Community upgrade football oval, changerooms, lighting - working with Community to revise project scope.

##### Shire of Broome:

- LED 150 lux lighting installed at Nipper Roe Oval - completed August 2022.
- Broome Surf Club Redevelopment - practical completion achieved July 2023.
- Broome Recreation and Aquatic Centre Club Night Lights Program - tennis court light upgrade completed July 2023.
- Ardyaloon Community rebuild two basketball courts and lighting - project progressing, lighting installed, first concrete pours underway August 2023.

Refer to progress update of **Commitment 7: Support for Community Wellbeing** for further information.



## Commitment 8. Building local capacity

### Recommendation: CR32

That police stations in the Kimberley consider expansion of “Adopt-a-Cop” or similar programs, developed in consultation with members of the Aboriginal community.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	WA Police Force	Actioned 2022-23. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

This recommendation has been progressed to Actioned.

Operational methodology has changed since the inception of this report due to Operation Regional Shield. The WA Police Force refer the Youth at Risk to the Department of Communities while retaining a strong youth policing focus that is more contemporary than Adopt a Cop.

Refer to progress update of **Commitment 7: Support for Community Wellbeing** for further information.

This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.

### Recommendation: CR41

That a policy be introduced that ensures those who appropriately act as CEOs of their Aboriginal communities are either remunerated for their efforts or, at the very least, reimbursed for expenses incurred in executing that role.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Department of Communities	Not yet commenced.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Department of Communities continues to fund or part-fund 21 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/community coordinator positions within program funding for municipal services in remote Aboriginal communities. This Commitment predates the Coroner's Report and Message Stick report.

## Recommendation: CR33

That the Elders Reference Group presently in operation in Halls Creek be extended to other Kimberley town sites and that this work be CDP recognised, and that current police efforts continue and be supported.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	WA Police Force	Actioned in 2021.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

In addition to Elders Reference Groups, Police across the Kimberley engage with local ACCOs, Elders and community members in relation to critical, sensitive and cultural issues impacting on communities. Ongoing support for grant funding applications are provided by WA Police Force.

## Commitment 9. Better engagement with education

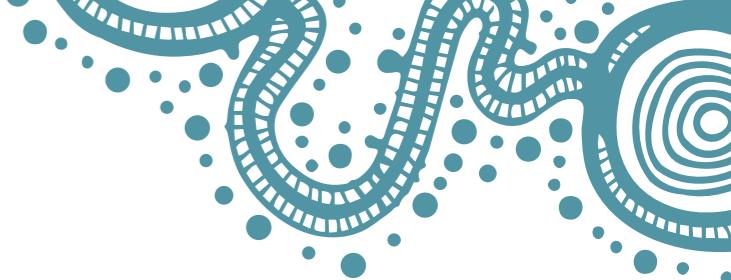
### Recommendation: CR35

That early education programs such as KindiLink be maintained for the Kimberley Region, with consideration for funding beyond the period of the pilot, and that programs be developed in consultation with the local Aboriginal communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Education	Actioned in 2021.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

18 Kimberley Schools Project (KSP) schools run the KindiLink, a play-and-learn program for 0 to 3-year-olds. The program continues to support Aboriginal families, with children and their parents attending six hours each week at participating schools. Learning activities are based on the Early Years Learning Framework to develop the social, emotional, language and cognitive abilities of children. In May 2022, the WA Government announced that as part of the \$40.4 million package to tackle juvenile crime in the Kimberley, KSP would receive a further \$11.7 million to extend the project for a further three years (2023-24 to 2025-26).



### Recommendation: CR36

That schools within the Kimberley Region be encouraged and resourced to introduce re-engagement classrooms at a primary school level.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Education	Actioned 2022-23.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Department of Education has established a panel of service providers to deliver engagement programs for Year 7-12 Aboriginal girls and young women in public schools.

Since implementation in 2022, the number of state funded programs, selected from the panel arrangement has expanded. In 2023, 1,538 Aboriginal girls and young women from 26 schools, participated in an engagement program supported by state funding, an increase of 441 students, from 5 additional schools. A further 26 schools have programs fully funded by Commonwealth Government or private funding sources, resulting in a total of 52 public schools providing an engagement program.

In Semester 1 2023, Commonwealth Government and/or WA Government funding supported the delivery of engagement programs at 5 schools in the Kimberley region:

- Broome Senior High School.
- Derby District High School.
- East Kimberley College.
- Fitzroy Valley District High School.
- Halls Creek District High School.

Additionally, there are five Clontarf Foundation academies operating in the Kimberley region that deliver school-based programs designed to strengthen the education and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal young men in Western Australian public schools and assist their transition through school and into post-school destinations.

### Recommendation: CR38

That the Department of Education introduce or continue to expand the teaching of Aboriginal languages in its Kimberley schools, in consultation with the local Aboriginal communities.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Education	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

In 2023, there were 24 Aboriginal languages taught in 97 public schools. Within these schools, 14,857 students in Kindergarten to Year 12 studied an Aboriginal language. 16 Kimberley schools taught 1 of 14 Aboriginal languages to 2,443 students.

The decision to teach an Aboriginal language/s in schools is decided in consultation with the local Aboriginal community. Two part-time Aboriginal Language Support Coordinators based in Kimberley schools provide localised support for Aboriginal languages teachers and trainees. To support the increased demand for Aboriginal languages, the Department of Education has developed, and made available on its Intranet, Aboriginal language program implementation, recruitment, employment and support guidelines for staff.

In September 2022, the Training and Accreditation Council Western Australia approved the accreditation of two qualifications, being: 52897WA Certificate III in Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, and 52898WA Certificate IV in Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages based on the Department of Education's Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training course. The School of Isolated and Distance Education Registered Training Organisation is supporting preparation and delivery of the courses projected to start during 2024. These courses will provide further qualifications and employment pathways for Aboriginal educators.

Strengthening partnerships with language centres is ongoing with three centres actively involved in teaching and supporting Aboriginal language teachers and trainees in schools.

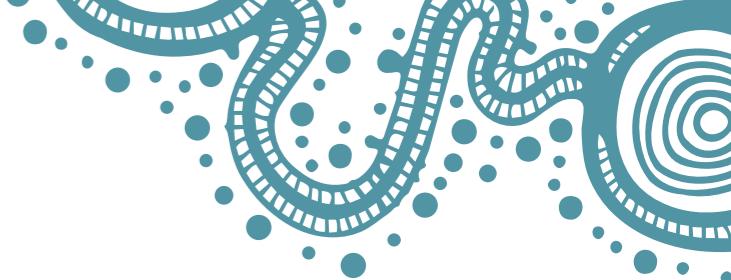
### Recommendation: CR40

That consideration be given to residential facilities being built for school aged students in the Kimberley Region, after consultation with local Aboriginal communities, and that any such colleges be co-designed and informed by the principles of self-determination, cultural continuity and empowerment. Further that admission is voluntary, with the consent of the parents and/or caregivers, and the consent of the child.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Education	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

\$1 million in funding was announced in the 2022-23 State Budget to develop a business case to assess the feasibility of establishing an Agriculture College in the Kimberley. Agricultural Colleges include a residential component. In March 2023 the Department of Education held workshops with the community and industry in Broome and Kununurra to identify the opportunities, education pathways and requirements of a potential agricultural college in the Kimberley Region. Work on the business case continues and is anticipated to be completed late in 2023.



## Commitment 11. Building youth capacity

### Recommendation: MS36

That the Minister for Education increase the number of Child and Parent Centres operating in remote areas.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Department of Education	In Progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
This recommendation remains under consideration. Considerable resources would be required to action the community engagement required to properly understand the viability of centres in larger remote communities, with outreach to smaller communities as well; and to build and operate Child and Parent Centres in remote locations.		
22 Child and Parent Centres operate on or near to public schools, with 13 centres located in metropolitan Perth and 9 are in regional and remote locations.		
The centres offer a range of early learning, child health, parenting support, health promotion and wellbeing programs and services to families in communities with higher levels of disadvantage. To establish more centres, the Department of Education would first need to secure additional funds to pay for capital works and recurrent operations. Funds for this purpose have not been identified and are not currently being sought.		

## Commitment 10. Helping young people connect to culture

The response to Coroner's recommendations 16, 17, 25, 38, 39, 42 and Message Stick recommendations 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16 can be found above.

### Recommendation: CR37

That high schools in the Kimberley region be provided with facilities that enable non-academic students to engage in vocational programs.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Education	In Progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
The School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) Registered Training Organisation (RTO) continues to provide students in remote areas with access to RTO services. The SIDE RTO currently has nine qualifications on scope. It is conducting research into courses that align with current and future job opportunities in regional areas, with the view to ensuring any further scope additions lead to opportunities that will exist in the local community.		
Through the 2021 State Government Election Commitments, additional fee-free-training places have been provided at North Regional TAFE in 2022. Schools in the Kimberley work with the TAFE to access this training.		

### Recommendation: MS17

That the Western Australian Government support the development of future Aboriginal leaders, by providing support and funding to existing leadership development organisations, funding scholarships and connecting future leaders with secondment opportunities to gain specific skills, and assisting with the early identification of leaders through school-based programs.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Communities	In Progress.
<b>2022-2023 UPDATE:</b>		
The Empowered Youth Network project aims to support the Empowered Young Leaders to form a network of young Aboriginal leaders across the Kimberley, who can contribute to decisions that directly affect them, and become leaders of change on behalf of their own and future generations.		
The Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group in the Kimberley supports the Kimberley Young Leaders group to form a network of young Aboriginal leaders across the Kimberley and establish an incorporated body. The Empowered Young Leaders are also active members of the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group and the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee.		



### Recommendation: MS19

That Western Australian Government agencies should recruit greater numbers of Aboriginal people, relying on section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 if necessary. These positions should not be limited to Aboriginal liaison or cultural advisory positions but should be generally spread across all positions at all levels in all agencies.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Public Sector Commission	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Released September 2022, the Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction 39: Interim arrangements to fill public sector vacancies, temporarily streamlined recruitment processes in response to the competitive employment market and to increase workforce diversity. This instruction provides specific measures for the direct employment of Aboriginal people.

First released in November 2021, the Hiring Managers Toolkit provides guidance for managing inclusive recruitment processes. In October 2022, it was updated to include guidance about identifying and managing unconscious bias to support better recruitment outcomes for diverse people, including Aboriginal people.

The Public Sector Commission has released guidance about fostering psychologically safe and inclusive workplaces (released April 2021), and about cultural considerations in the workplace (released November 2022), for building inclusive, respectful and safe work environments for Aboriginal employees.

Refer to progress update of **Commitment 11: Building youth capacity** for further information

- Two focus areas of the Department of Education's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025 are the attraction of, and the development and retention of a diverse workforce. Initiatives targeted towards Aboriginal employees under this focus area include:
  - The Aboriginal Employee Professional Learning Program providing the opportunity for school-based staff to undertake a customised Certificate III or IV in Education Support, and a pathway to a teaching qualification.
  - The On-Country teacher education pilot program to support Aboriginal staff working in support roles become primary school teachers through the remote delivery of a Bachelor of Education by Curtin University.
  - Professional learning for Aboriginal aspirant school leaders is delivered under the Djiral-ak-djinda bidi (North Star Program).
  - Offering scholarships, known as Bob Hawke scholarships, to students undertaking an education qualification.
- The Department of Justice has focused on building Aboriginal workforce numbers within operational service areas, whilst fostering career development. The Aboriginal Workforce Development team works closely with Recruitment to provide support in key operational roles such as Youth Custodial Officers, Youth Justice Officer, Adult Community Corrections and Prison Officers, in addition to providing entry-level programs such as traineeships.
- Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries advertises all positions on the Aboriginal Service Jobs Board via Job Skills WA and applies the exceptions provided in the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Section 50(d) and Section 51), Commissioner's Instruction No. 2 and Commissioner's Instruction No. 39 to give preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait applicants, as required.
- The Mental Health Commission has commenced work to develop an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker Framework for public sector health services in Western Australia. The Commission is convening a working group of Aboriginal mental health workers and leaders from each Health Service Provider, including the WA Country Health Service to identify and describe the clinical capabilities and training required for the Aboriginal mental health workforce. The Framework will clearly define career pathways including opportunities for progression to leadership and tertiary qualified roles. The Framework is due for delivery by end of December 2024.
- As of June 2023, 3.8% of WA Country Health Service' staff are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. WA Country Health Service has regional Aboriginal employment action plans that contain detailed action and initiatives to increase employment of local Aboriginal people and support career pathways. WA Country Health Service has launched its Aboriginal Employment Action Plan 2022-2026 to support the goal of 5.66% employment rate.
- WA Police Force facilitates a Cadet program, providing an entry pathway into education, training and deployment of Aboriginal people to build workplace capability and experience. Recruitment into the program contains many discretionary elements to enable a broad base of applicants. Participants receive Academy instruction and workplace development in the use of police systems and procedures. Education via a TAFE Certificate II in Adult Education and Physical Training to build health and fitness in readiness for transition to Police Recruit programs are provided.

### Recommendation: MS20

That the Western Australian Government establish clear and more attractive career paths for Aboriginal employees.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	All	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

As previously reported, this recommendation relates to CR21 – employment of Aboriginal people in key service areas. Some examples of how agencies are actioning this recommendation include:

- The Department of Communities' Aboriginal Workforce Support team is planning the development of the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy. A key action for implementation is a whole-of-Department Professional Development Program for attracting, recruiting, and retaining Aboriginal employees. The Department of Communities has partnered with Curtin University to develop a Tertiary Qualifications Program that will support Aboriginal employees to obtain a Bachelor of Social Work through the differential pathways provided at the Curtin Centre for Aboriginal Studies.

### Commitment 12. A voice for young people

The response to Coroner's recommendation 42 and Message Stick recommendations 12, 17 can be found above.



## RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Recommendation: CR6

That education campaigns be conducted in all secondary schools in Western Australia to alert students to (i) the dangers of consuming alcohol during pregnancy and (ii) the prevalence of FASD (with a culturally relevant education campaign for Aboriginal children).

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of Health	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Department of Health continues to collaborate with the Department of Education to develop progress in relation to this recommendation.

### Recommendation: CR7

That the State Government appoints a person who is a Special Advisor on matters concerning Aboriginal children and young persons or considers appointing an additional Commissioner for Aboriginal children and young persons.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

WA Government has concluded that enhanced oversight of outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people may be achieved under the existing statutory framework, and will be the subject of further work between the WA Government and the current Commissioner for Children and Young People.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: CR23

That the use of videoconferencing for mental health assessments be expanded throughout the Kimberley Region, including an after-hours service.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Health	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service continues to successfully support more than 80% of referred patients to remain on country and receive care in their local area. Of total referrals, 31% are for Aboriginal patients.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS1

That Western Australian Government agencies revisit reports listed in Appendix Six and outline their actions of how the intention and recommendations of these reports will be implemented.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

Many of the reports listed in the Message Stick report have been considered by the WA Government and their intent and recommendations have been incorporated into current WA Government strategies, including the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing and the Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS2

That the Premier coordinates and provides a response to the recommendations of this Inquiry which have not been directed to a specific agency or Minister.

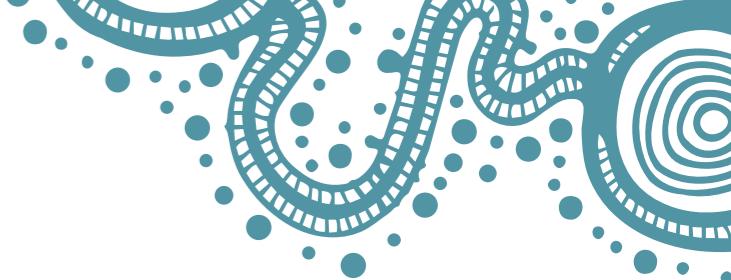
INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has coordinated a whole-of-government response to the recommendations of this Inquiry and has provided responses to recommendations where an agency has not been specified. The Mental Health Commission is assuming lead agency responsibility for the Commitment and will publish updates on progress in implementing the recommendations in the annual reports.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**



### Recommendation: MS3

That the Premier and each Minister to whom recommendations are directed should report to Parliament at six monthly intervals for no fewer than five years after the tabling of this report on the progress of implementing recommendations made in this report.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The WA Government has committed to annual reports on the Commitment until 2025 (five years). Annual Reports on the WA Government's implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap commitments will supplement these reports in working to improve Aboriginal wellbeing.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS4

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet create a centralised database of inquiry recommendations made to Western Australian Government agencies. Further:

- the Department of the Premier and Cabinet retains overall responsibility for maintenance of the database and ensuring government agencies update the database in a timely fashion.
- the database should include the government's initial response to recommendations and be updated at six monthly intervals to advise of progress made in implementing supported recommendations contained in the database. This advice should include detailed information of specific actions taken in response to particular recommendations, and not just whether actions are 'in progress' or 'complete'.
- information in the database should continue to be updated until implementation of a recommendation is 'complete' or superseded, in which case the reasons why the recommendation is no longer being implemented should be stated.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has established a database on recommendations from the Coroner's Inquest and Message Stick reports. This database will be transferred to the Mental Health Commission, which is assuming responsibility for the Commitment. WA Government agencies are responsible for inquiry recommendations pertaining to their portfolio responsibilities.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS5

That Western Australia be mindful of its obligations under international human rights agreements and take all possible measures to ensure these obligations are met.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The WA Government contributes to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review National Report and Australia's periodic report to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS21

That the Western Australian Parliament explores the option of employing an Aboriginal liaison officer based on the Queensland Parliament's experience.

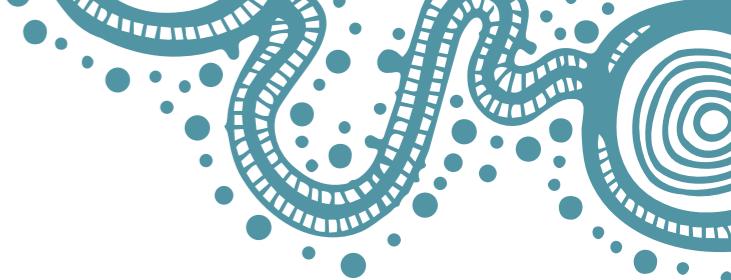
INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Not yet commenced. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

No change from previous report:

The WA Government has decided not to employ an Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the Western Australian Parliament at this time.

**This recommendation is closed, no further updates will be provided.**



### Recommendation: MS25

That the Western Australian Government urge the Commonwealth Government to now release the funds for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Mental Health Commission	Not yet commenced.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

These funds were not included in the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement or associated Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention: Western Australia. Work in this area is still to be established with the Mental Health Commission engaged through membership on the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Senior Officials group, which oversees the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

Clause 110 of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement recommits governments to (a) support the implementation of the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration; and (b) ensure alignment with other relevant national commitments and agreements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and suicide prevention - includes the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy*, and the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing*.

### Recommendation: MS27

That the Premier, in conjunction with Cabinet, create or designate a government agency or authority to lead the Western Australian Government's actions in responding to issues affecting Aboriginal wellbeing.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted in principle	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is the agency principally assisting the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with the administration of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972, which gives the Minister an overall coordination role in relation to government actions to promote economic, social and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal people.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS28

That the designated government agency responsible for Aboriginal wellbeing is fully resourced and provided with sufficient authority to fulfil its leadership role and cause other government agencies to act in accordance with its directions.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet chairs the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee, comprising key Directors General and the co-chairs of the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia.

Further supporting the central agency role of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, in March 2022, the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee has expanded its membership to include a much broader range of WA Government agencies than had previously been involved. This will enable a more integrated and holistic approach to complex cross-portfolio issues.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**

### Recommendation: MS29

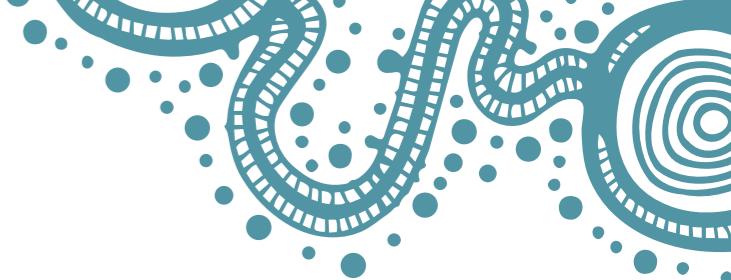
That the Western Australian Government redesign its agency structure to achieve an integrated whole-of-government approach to addressing issues facing Aboriginal people in remote areas. The redesign should be led by senior public servants from within each agency which provides services to Aboriginal people in remote areas.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned in 2021.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The WA Government, through the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, is using an integrated approach to progress outcomes for Aboriginal people across WA, including in remote communities.

Specifically, Targets 9a and 9b seek to secure appropriate housing and essential services that are aligned with the priorities and needs of those living in remote communities.



### Recommendation: MS30

That the Western Australian Government improve collaboration and co-ordination between agencies that develop strategies for, and deliver programs and services to, Aboriginal people in remote areas.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	In Progress.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

As in item MS29, WA Government agencies are delivering more coordinated programs and services to Aboriginal people in remote areas through the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Statement of Commitment to District Leadership Groups (DLGs) was signed by the Directors General of the Departments of Communities, Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Justice, and the Commissioner of Police on 25 May 2023.

The statement reflects the shared commitment of each of the human services agencies to the ongoing work of DLGs. In September 2023, the East and West Kimberley DLGs hosted a joint strategic planning workshop at which it was decided the DLGs would merge to create a singular whole of Kimberley Region DLG.

### Recommendation: MS33

That the Department of the Premier and Cabinet amend the Aboriginal Youth Investment Priority and Principles to allow funding amounts of less than \$300,000 to be granted to Aboriginal organisations.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Further discussion required	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Actioned 2022-23.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

The Premier's Circular concerning Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Reforms was rescinded on 4 November 2021. As a consequence, the expenditure minimum of \$300,000 for the awarding of grants associated with this policy has now been lifted.

Improving outcomes for young Aboriginal people and increasing the effectiveness of WA Government expenditure remain key priorities.

The State Commissioning Strategy for community services and its Implementation Plan, launched in August 2022, will progress these aims holistically for services commissioned by WA Government agencies.

The WA Government is also developing a whole-of-government ACCO Strategy, which will work in alignment with the State Commissioning Strategy.

### Recommendation: MS31

That the Department for Child Protection and Family Support in conjunction with the Public Sector Commission prepare a circular outlining the operation of the information sharing provisions under the Children and Community Services Act 2004 to be circulated to all government agencies.

INITIAL RESPONSE:	LEAD AGENCY:	PROGRESS:
Accepted (being implemented)	Department of Communities / Public Sector Commission	Actioned in 2021. Closed 2023.

#### 2022-2023 UPDATE:

Actioned, no further update from previous report:

New information sharing provisions came into effect in January 2016.

**This recommendation is closed, no further update will be provided.**



