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LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW  
COMMITTEE



Queensland  
Government

2 JUL 2007

Mrs Dianne Reilly MP  
Chair  
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Queensland  
Corrective Services

Office of the  
Director General

Dear Mrs Reilly

Thank you for your letter of 5 April 2007, and your invitation to participate in the interim evaluation of the *Hands on Parliament* recommendations.

Please find enclosed Queensland Corrective Services' submission to your interim evaluation.

I note that there has been a considerable amount of work done to address the recommendations and further work is to be done to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a voice within the democratic process.

I am very supportive of more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in the democratic process and consider that great leadership can be found within indigenous communities.

As the Government Champions for Doomadgee, Ms Rachel Hunter, the Director-General, Education, Training and the Arts and I have been working with the Doomadgee Council and others to build a stronger community, including supporting the council in its transition to full shire council status.

Greater achievements can be made in the effort to build a safer and secure community for all Queenslanders through an acknowledgement of shared responsibility between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and the Government.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

  
F P Rockett  
Director-General

\*Encl

File: F/07/00585

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# **SUBMISSION**

## **Queensland Corrective Services**

### **Formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

The Queensland State Government has long recognised and sought to address the issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) will continue to negotiate and consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with or without formal recognition in the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*.

### **Political parties**

At times a number of Aboriginal candidates have stood for election at both State and Commonwealth level. The continued engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this area is encouraged so that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek pre selection.

### **Enhanced and inclusive education**

QCS works with the education sector in a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives forms part of the civics and citizenship education in a number of schools, both in indigenous and non indigenous communities. QCS supports the continuation of this initiative and that this type of education should be delivered by local indigenous people as a separate and distance educational event, not just as part of the broader curriculum.

QCS also works with a number of indigenous councils, community organisations, elders and other respected persons that are currently providing cultural education within the school environment.

### **Testing inclusiveness in civics education**

QCS supports the continued emphasis on issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance issues being assessed and notes that this issue is to be considered as part of the Civics and Citizenship Assessment Project due to be undertaken in October 2007.

### **Parliamentary education services**

It is noted that this issue is covered, in part, by the increased focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues as part of the civic and citizenship education initiatives and by recent activities undertaken by the Parliamentary Speaker. Issues around the parliamentary process are also addressed during visits from Members of the Legislative Assembly and during Community Cabinet meetings held in Indigenous communities.

### **Youth participation in local government processes**

QCS works with a number of Indigenous communities, particularly Doomadgee and Mornington. QCS is aware that recent initiatives in these communities have focused on the establishment of youth councils that provide advice to the local Aboriginal councils and that work with other government and non government organisations to raise issues of concern to young people in these communities.

QCS supports the recent initiatives by government, including those activities undertaken by the Department of Communities that aim to increase the involvement of young people in the democratic process. A particular example of this is the Youth Leadership Forums conducted by the Department of Communities and that brings together youth representatives from different communities to discuss and highlight recent successful initiatives. This type of forum provides an excellent opportunity to build networks and to build the young leaders of tomorrow.

QCS notes that in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the Council invites school children to attend Council meetings. There may be some value in Council holding a meeting within the school environment to provide a greater opportunity to participate in the Council process.

### **Australian Electoral Commission voter education activities**

Comments on this issue are included within the response provided to Electoral Commission Queensland activities.

### **Electoral Commission Queensland voter education activities**

Electoral enrolment and encouraging a greater involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in the electoral process is important. QCS works with the Electoral Commission of Queensland to ensure that all remand prisoners continue to exercise their democratic right to vote while in custody.

QCS notes that the Electoral Commission has previously provided information to communities regarding electoral enrolment and encourages further work in this area.

## **Employment and training in democratic institutions and processes**

QCS notes the steps taken to address this issue and supports the continued focus on increasing the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in democratic institutions.

QCS seeks to employ Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders part of its workforce. The Agency has identified a number of opportunities to improve awareness of employment including using targeted advertising campaigns, using cultural specific press, conducting public information seminars as well as making contact with community groups to promote employment opportunities.

QCS targets Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people for traineeships in areas of public administration. QCS is currently recruiting for trainee positions in the Probation and Parole offices located in Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Mt Isa, Normanton, Palm Island and Thursday Island.

Additionally in order to enhance the employment and training prospects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, this Agency sponsors Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in furthering their education through to year 12. The Education to Employment Scheme allows QCS to provide monetary scholarships to individuals students and also provides the services of QCS staff as mentors to guide and encourage the students with their studies and career.

QCS is also working with the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation and the Department of Communities in their support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In particular QCS works with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council in its transition from a Community Council to Shire Council. The Chief Executive as Government Champion for Doomadgee (together with the Director-General of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts) works with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council to focus on developing a Local Indigenous Partnership Agreement and in addressing governance issues.

### **Leadership training**

Leadership training is a critical issue. QCS works with a number of other agencies and indigenous communities to encourage a greater focus on developing local leadership that is willing and able to take an active part in addressing indigenous disadvantage.

In many indigenous communities, QCS' work is being carried out together with individual councils, community justice groups and others to develop leaders able to take indigenous communities into the 21st century.

## **Enhancing local government participation**

QCS supports the current strategies and initiatives that are being undertaken to encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in local government.

Through our role in the State Government, QCS is aware that officers from the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation have visited many of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and carried out training as part of the Community Governance Improvement Strategy and that they continue to work with Councils in the transition phase of local government.

## **Evaluation of participation in local government**

QCS supports the continued examination of this issue. It is noted that the government is currently working with a number of aboriginal councils in the development of an over arching indigenous partnership agreement and in the development of individual partnership agreement for specific communities that will focus on a number of priority issues.

## **The role of ATSIC and efficient service delivery**

QCS works with a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However, particular attention has been directed towards the Doomadgee community as the Director-General, Queensland Corrective Services is the Government Champion, in partnership with Ms Rachel Hunter, Director-General, Department of Education, Training and the Arts. The two Government Champions worked with the recently established Dullama Government Coordination Committee – Doomadgee to develop the Doomadgee Service Delivery Plan that focuses on youth, child safety, family violence and alcohol reduction.

QCS also works with the Government Coordinator – Indigenous Service Delivery, the Department of Communities and other agencies to ensure that services to indigenous communities are delivered in a more coordinated and efficient manner.

## **Indigenous Community Cabinets**

It is noted that the State government has held a number of Community Cabinet meetings. QCS has provided advice and assistance in this process, and it is considered that these initiatives provide a valuable forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be engaged with government at a local level. The State government's commitment to continue this process is supported.

It is also recommended that there might be an opportunity to engage more of the youth of the community if particular community cabinets included a youth forum or other similar forum that could be held before the formal Cabinet Meeting, as an opportunity to involve more of the young people in the community in the democratic process.

### **The role of community leaders**

QCS work with a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Councils, community justice groups, indigenous organisations and other agencies on a range of issues associated with the criminal justice system and indigenous people.

QCS is aware that there are differences in cultural protocols within specific communities and also the need to ensure that consultation and negotiation is undertaken with the broader community, while recognising the role of community leaders, elders and other respected persons with the community.

QCS is actively involved in a number of negotiation tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is currently working with the Department of Communities and others in developing service delivery intervention plans and indigenous partnership agreements to address priority issues within indigenous communities.

The Director-General, as Government Champion for Doomadgee, has attended a number of negotiation tables within the Doomadgee community and has recently been invited to attend the next negotiation table to be held in Doomadgee on 21 May 2007.

QCS recently established Probation and Parole offices in Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Normanton and Thursday Island and as part of that process, met with a range of community members, Councils and others to ensure that these services were delivered in accordance with local protocol and met the needs of the local community.

### **Government's appreciation of cultural differences**

This issue is addressed in part through the response to the issue of the role of community leaders. QCS has a range of strategies that address indigenous issues, such as, part of the *Diversity in Corrections* initiative and also through corrective services role in addressing indigenous over representation.

### **Fundamental legislative principles**

The recommendation and the Government response to this issue are noted. No further comment is made on changes to the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*.

QCS notes that issues particular to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were considered during the review of the *Corrective Services Act 2000* which culminated with the recently introduced *Corrective Services Act 2006*.

### **LCARC's area of responsibility**

The recommendation to include issues associated with the review of legal reform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as part of the responsibility of the LCARC and the Government's response to the recommendation is noted. No further comment is made on this issue.

### **LCARC's agenda**

This issue is still under review. Comments from the LCARC regarding inquiries in other states regarding customary and traditional law are noted.

### **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Assembly**

It is noted that there has been limited support for this initiative.

### **Greater autonomy in the Torres Strait**

It is noted that this issue is being addressed as part of the review of Torres Strait governance issues.

### **Dedicated seats**

This issue may be addressed by encouraging more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be part of the current democratic process, either as electors or candidates.

### **Queensland electoral system**

QCS is aware that particular issues associated with the electoral system have been addressed as part of the changes to legislation that regulates the administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait councils. These changes include modification to the method of representation for Saibai Island Council and also that the Commonwealth and State Electoral Commissions carry out mobile polling within the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula areas to ensure that all electors have an opportunity to vote.

Electoral issues are still under consideration and will be examined during the review of Torres Strait governance and more broadly as part of the work being undertaken by the Electoral Commission of Queensland.