



Tuesday, 11 June 2024

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: FirstNationswomenchildren.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Inquiry into Missing and murdered First Nations women and children – update to AFP submission

I refer to your correspondence dated 23 May 2024. The AFP welcomes the opportunity to provide an update in relation to the public hearing and submission made in 2022 for this inquiry.

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre

Established in 2006, the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) now sits within the Forensics Command (previously within both the Specialist Protective Command and the Intelligence and Covert Services Command) in the AFP. The NMPCC continues to provide national coordination in response to missing persons in Australia, and complements the investigative role of state and territory police.

The NMPCC continues to chair the Police Consultative Group on Missing Persons (PCGMP) bi-annual meeting. In November 2023, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) provided an update to the PCGMP regarding the Senate Inquiry into Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children along with a timeline of the public hearings.

The National DNA program for Unidentified Human Remains funded through Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) was established within the NMPCC and used DNA testing alongside other forensic techniques to scientifically link unidentified human remains and long-term missing persons cases.

During the four years of funding, the Program has provided forensic testing assistance for a total of 111 cases: 99 unidentified human remains cases and an additional 12 long-term missing persons cases. The POCA funding concluded at June 2024 and the program is in the process of being transitioned to a Business As Usual (BAU) funding arrangement to enable continued support to national and international partners for forensic identification.

First Nations Unit

The AFP's First Nations Unit is working together with external partners to develop a cultural competency program, to enhance opportunities for First Nations people to share their lived experiences with non-First Nations members.

The First Nations Unit is currently drafting a First Nations Employment Strategy to better support our members and deliver priority outcomes against *Closing the Gap*.

Ministerial and Parliamentary Liaison Team

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This will primarily focus on Priority Reform 3 and Targets 7 and 8:

- Reform 3 Transforming Government Organisations
- Target 7 Youth are engaged in employment or education
- Target 8 Strong economic participation and development of people and their communities.

AFP staffing

In 2023, the AFP launched its new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2026 which sets a revised target of 3% representation of First Nations peoples in our workforce by 2028, and increased representation in the AFP Senior Executive Service by 2028, reflective of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy.

As of April 2024, 165 AFP members identified as First Nations, representing 2.1% of the AFP's workforce.

The AFP uses the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Principles, AFP's Innovate Reconciliation Plan and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to guide efforts in supporting better outcomes for First Nations peoples.

In 2023, the AFP launched its First Nations Advisory Board, the Naragunawali Board (the Board), to provide a First Nations voice and executive level oversight of our First Nations agenda:

- The Board is responsible for progressing the development and implementation of the First Nations agenda and specific inclusion initiatives relating to First Nations matters for the AFP.
- The Naragunawali Framework (First Nations Strategy) is currently being drafted with the vision of positioning the AFP as a leader in law enforcement through our commitment to cultural safety, being an employer of choice for First Nations people and delivering culturally safe policing and protection services to the community.
- The Board maintains a minimum 50% representation of First Nations members. This ensures equal opportunity for First Nations voices on First Nations matters and provides members the opportunity to represent their own views and lived experience directly (rather than through a representative or spokesperson).
- Board meetings are run in the style of a yarning circle to promote equal opportunity to share and enhance the quality of discussion.
- The Board includes standing executive representation from the Attorney-General's Department and the National Indigenous Australians Agency to ensure a joined up approach across Government.

The Board is currently being reviewed following its first year of operation as an established accountability measure.

In 2023, the AFP engaged a First Nations external provider to deliver cultural appreciation training to Naragunawali Board members. This training will be expanded in 2024-25 and offered to first direct supervisors, targeted at the AFP Band 6-8 level to enhance enterprise capability.

Human Exploitation

As outlined in the submission, under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (National Strategy)*, the AFP received \$3.9 million to enhance child protection investigations in the Northern Territory (First Commonwealth Action Plan, Measure 23).

This resulted in an increase in investigation resources into the Northern Territory Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team (NT JACET) and continues to expand the focus of the multi-agency approach in recognition of the increasing connections between online and in-person offending against children.

The AFP committed to one Sergeant, three JACET Investigators, one Prevention Officer and one Intelligence Officer.

As at April 2024, the status of these NT JACET positions are:

- A substantive NT JACET Sergeant will be recruited in mid-June (there are currently long term acting arrangement in place).
- Senior Prevention Officer commenced 23 April 2024 and is in initial stages of stakeholder engagement.
- Intelligence Field Officer in final stages of recruitment with an offer expected to be made mid-June.

Update to Question on Notice (staffing information) 5 October 2022 – Senator Nita Green

As at 30 April 2024, the AFP has 80 Liaison Officers – comprising roles in Community Policing (including victim Liaison), Protection and National Coordination. There are six First Nations Liaison Officers deployed in ACT Policing - five females and one male.

Of the 80 Liaison Officers:

- 7 are First Nations (9% of Liaison Officers are First Nations)
- 33 are females (41% of Liaison Officers are female)

As at 30 April 2024, the AFP has 165 First Nations employees.

- 55 Police (1.6% of Police are First Nations)
- 14 Protective Service Officers (PSO) (1.7% of PSOs are First Nations)
- 96 Unsworn (2.6% of Unsworn are First Nations)

First Nations appointees' band levels are outlined below:

Band Level	First Nations Staff	% First Nations
Casual	1	0.5%
Bands 1-5	133	2.6%
Bands 6-8	27	1.2%
Technical	1	1.8%
EL	3	1.2%
SES	0	0.0%
Total	165	2.1%

* As at 30 June 2022, First Nations statistics are captured through a self-identification mechanism in the AFP HR system.

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83 First Nations staff are female (50.3% of all First Nations appointees). Further breakdown by sworn status and gender is outlined below:

Sworn Status/Gender	First Nations Staff	% First Nations
Police	55	1.6%
Female	16	1.8%
Male	39	1.5%
Gender X	0	0.0%
PSO	14	1.7%
Female	2	1.8%
Male	12	1.7%
Gender X	0	0.0%
Unsworn	96	2.6%
Female	65	2.8%
Male	31	2.2%
Gender X	0	0.0%
Total	165	2.1%

* As at 30 April 2024, First Nations statistics are captured through a self-identification mechanism in the AFP HR system.

The AFP continues to work closely with policing partners across the Commonwealth, States and Territories to eliminate all forms of violence experienced by First Nations women and children.

The AFP looks forward to reviewing the Committee's report and recommendations when tabled in June 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Wood
Acting Chief Operating Officer