



## Andrew Barr MLA

### Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality

Minister for Tertiary Education

Minister for Tourism and Special Events

Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment

Member for Kurrajong

Mr Julian Leeser MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
[IndigenousAffairs.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:IndigenousAffairs.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Mr ~~Leeser~~ <sup>Julian</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Inquiry into the Pathways and Participation Opportunities for Indigenous Australians in Employment and Business.

In support of the inquiry, I am providing a contemporary snapshot of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the jurisdiction of the ACT Public Service (ACTPS). This information can be accessed via the online links attached to this letter.

The ACTPS employs 23,208 people and has had employment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in place since 2011. We strive to achieve a public service comprised of individuals who are valued for their differences, experiences, knowledge, backgrounds and their contribution to the Service.

The ACTPS has frameworks in place to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and to achieve the goal to have a diverse public service which can deliver for the requirements of the diverse ACT community.

These frameworks have supported a culture which is agile and responsive, and where employees exhibit the values and signature behaviours outlined in the ACTPS Code of Conduct, and the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

In relation to Inclusion Employment, the ACTPS recognises the value of individual differences in the workplace. In the ACTPS, diversity can include gender, language, ethnicity, cultural backgrounds, age, sexual orientation, religious belief and family responsibilities. Diversity also refers to other attributes people have, such as education level, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background, personality, marital status and abilities/disabilities. For the ACTPS, diversity is more than merely accepting people from diverse backgrounds; it is supporting and integrating their valued lifestyles into the workplace.

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Please note that the language used in the ACTPS for the Indigenous portfolio is 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs', which is inclusive of both Aboriginal people and of Torres Strait Islander people, noting the large representation of people who identify as Aboriginal, or identify as Torres Strait Islander, or identify as Aboriginal **and** Torres Strait Islander who reside in the Australian Capital Territory.

The information I am providing for the inquiry is from pages 84 to 96 in the *2018-19 ACTPS State of the Service Report*, and provides information on:

- the ACTPS Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework (RED Framework);
- the ACTPS Diverse and Inclusive workforce;
- contemporary employment data relating to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees;
- information on current ACTPS Vocational Employment Program;
- strategies to attract, retain and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees; and
- some snapshots of current initiatives in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

I invite the Inquiry to also consider diversity employment information in previous ACTPS State of the Service Reports, available at the online links attached to this letter.

Further information about the ACTPS, including its values-based initiatives (such as the RED Framework and the ACTPS Code of Conduct) is available at the *ACTPS Employment Portal*.

The portal also provides information about cultural leave entitlements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as outlined at A2.15-A2.19 of the *ACT Public Sector Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021*.

For the inquiry, I would also like to highlight the following important initiatives in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in the ACT:

- The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) is responsible for the development and provision of strategic policy, governance and advice to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on matters of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT. OATSIA provides oversight and coordination of the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* across the ACT Government and provides strategic advice for the ACT on the COAG Closing the Gap Refresh. OATSIA brings together a range of functions that support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community around leadership, lifelong learning, sharing culture and fostering new and emerging community organisations;
- The *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body* which is a representative body established under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT to have a strong democratically elected voice;
- The *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028* recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People, and that First People have the right to self-determination which is an ongoing process of choice, to ensure that Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander communities are able to meet their social, cultural and economic needs. The Agreement is a basis for ACT Government funding commitments to support employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For example, *Economic Participation* is a significant focus area for implementation in the Agreement that aims to provide equal access to employment and growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community services organisations, which drives economic development actions within their communities.

We are focussing on supporting growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community services organisations. In the first 18 months of the Agreement, we have:

- implemented the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy;
  - procured services and products from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses;
  - linked Aboriginal and Torres Strait businesses and entrepreneurs to programs and activities that support existing and new businesses; and
  - worked with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to foster and promote cultural tourism opportunities.
- *ACT Reconciliation Day Public Holiday* – the first jurisdiction in Australia to dedicate a public holiday to Reconciliation; and
  - Development and implementation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy*, the *New and Emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisation Support Program*, and the *Canberra Indigenous Entrepreneurs Centre* in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise development.

The ACTPS is currently finalising its next employment strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and expects to implement a percentage target, currently proposed to be two percent of the 2018-19 ACTPS headcount.

I trust this information is of benefit to this important inquiry. Should you require further information, please contact Ms Jacinta Evans, Deputy Director-Director, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Andrew Barr MLA  
Chief Minister

30 JAN 2020

## **Links to online documents:**

### *Public Sector Management Act 1994*

- <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/a/1994-37/current/PDF/1994-37.PDF>

### 2018-19 ACTPS State of the Service Report

- [https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1429766/Service-State-of-the-Service-Report-2018-19.pdf](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1429766/Service-State-of-the-Service-Report-2018-19.pdf)

### Previous ACTPS State of the Service Reports

- <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/industrial-relations-and-public-sector-management/public/publications#S>

### ACTPS Employment Portal

- <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/employment-framework/wpsafety/health-and-wellbeing>

### ACT Public Sector Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021

- [https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1266175/Admin-Final-Agreement-October-2018-for-access.pdf](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1266175/Admin-Final-Agreement-October-2018-for-access.pdf)

### ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

- <https://atsieb.com.au/>
- <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/a/2008-12/current/PDF/2008-12.PDF>

### ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028

- [https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/1323132/ACT-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Agreement-2019-2028.pdf](https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/1323132/ACT-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Agreement-2019-2028.pdf)

### ACT Reconciliation Day

- <http://events.act.gov.au/component/content/article/22-reconciliation-day/110-reconciliation-in-the-park>
- [http://events.act.gov.au/templates/reconciliation/files/walking\\_trail\\_final.pdf](http://events.act.gov.au/templates/reconciliation/files/walking_trail_final.pdf)

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy

- <https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/policy-and-resources/procurement-from-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-organisations>

### New and Emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisation Support Program

- <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/home/grants>
- [https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/rachel-stephen-smith-mla-media-releases/2018/new-and-emerging-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-organisations-to-receive-\\$100,000-over-4-years](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/rachel-stephen-smith-mla-media-releases/2018/new-and-emerging-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-organisations-to-receive-$100,000-over-4-years)

### Canberra Indigenous Entrepreneurs Centre

- <https://yerra.com.au/canberra-indigenous-entrepreneurs-centre/>