

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Group 2

Program 1.5

Question No. 39

Senator Wright asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

Senator WRIGHT: I think you have answered the questions that I had, so thank you very much. I now turn to some questions in relation to justice reinvestment. I have asked questions at previous estimates about the government's response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report *Doing time—time for doing*, which states that it accepts in principle the committee's recommendations that 'the Commonwealth government develop a national partnership agreement dedicated to the Safe Communities Building Block' but that it would only consider developing such an agreement after a national Indigenous safe communities strategy has been put in place. Can you please provide an update on the progress that has been made to negotiate the national Indigenous safe communities strategy with the state and territory governments?

Mr Walter: The strategy is currently being considered by the Working Group on Indigenous Reform, which is chaired by Minister Macklin. There was consideration at the September meeting. I think 24 September was the last time the strategy was considered. Further work is taking place as we speak, mainly in the form of an audit of activities going on in the Indigenous safety space and it will be considered again at the next meeting. I do not have the date in front of me but I think it is in March.

Senator WRIGHT: If you are not sure of the date, could you take it on notice and confirm that for me?

Mr Walter: Absolutely.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The timing of the next meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Reform (WGIR) has not yet been determined. The WGIR is chaired by Minister Macklin and a number of factors can affect the timing of WGIR meetings, including ministerial availability and competing meeting priorities.