



# Katy Gallagher MLA

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

---

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Mr Tom Calma  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and  
National Race Discrimination Commissioner  
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
GPO Box 5218  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Calma

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2007 to Jon Stanhope MLA, Chief Minister, regarding the forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home* Report on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2007. I am responding as Acting Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

You requested an overview of the ACT Government's current programs and response to the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* Report, and details of any events that will be staged in the ACT to mark the anniversary that could be promoted on the events online resource hosted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

To address the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* Report, the ACT Government is implementing a range of initiatives and programs and is in the process of implementing across all ACT Government agencies an overarching framework, the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2006-2013*. This will cover the overriding national reporting frameworks for Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID), reconciliation, service delivery and prevention of violence, as well as the ACT Government's reporting requirements relating to the Canberra Social Plan and the *ACT Human Rights Act 2004*.

In addition to this, the ACT Government recently established a Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs to drive the improved delivery of human services to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the ACT, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth.

Current programs that relate to the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* Report in the ACT include:

- **Health**
- the implementation of: *A New Way: The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing Plan 2006-2011 and the Cultural Respect Implementation Plan 2006-2009*
- the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Improvement Program*;

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone (02) 6205 0840 Fax (02) 6205 3030 Email: [gallagher@act.gov.au](mailto:gallagher@act.gov.au)

- improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health data quality continues to be a priority;
  - improving the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification on death registration data; and
  - working in partnership to develop an "Integrated Indigenous Service Delivery Project".
- **Education**
    - the implementation of a range of programs to meet the needs of Indigenous students including:
      - Koori Preschool program for Indigenous children aged 3 to 5 years;
      - the Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy initiative; and
      - Indigenous Home/School Liaison Officer support.
    - in 2006, Year 3 Indigenous student performance measured through the ACT assessment program was maintained at a higher level comparable to previous years; and
    - individual learning plans have been implemented for each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.
- **Housing**
    - the ACT Government does not receive any funds specifically for Indigenous housing through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, and only recently received small allocations of Australian Government funding through the *Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP)* and the *Healthy Indigenous Housing Initiative*; and
    - the ACT does not have a discrete Indigenous housing program, however it is committed to addressing Indigenous housing needs and disadvantage in a coordinated and integrated way. The primary response addressing Indigenous housing issues is through public housing and there has been specific funding to increase allocated capital in this program to Indigenous housing over the next three years. In this regard, public housing outcomes are achieved for Indigenous people under the *ACT Strategic Plan for 2006-2008* and *Operational Plan for 2006-07 for Indigenous Housing*.
- **Early childhood intervention and safer communities**
    - implementation of a number of Indigenous-specific services including:
      - Indigenous Family Support Services;
      - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foster Care Services; and
      - Indigenous Supported Accommodation Service.
    - providing funds to non-Government organisations for support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including:
      - Indigenous Family Support; and
      - Funding has been provided for family support and community building to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
    - finalised draft project management plans for the three funded projects relating to the Vardon Report—youth forums, a one day Indigenous out-of-home care conference and a 'gathering'.

- **Proposed Representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

The ACT Government is in the process of implementing an elected community-based body to represent the interests of local Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Further work will be undertaken in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT to develop a structure and constitution for the new body that reflects priorities expressed during the initial community consultation process in 2006.

- **ACT Government Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

The ACT Government has erected signs at entry points to the ACT acknowledging the traditional owners.

The ACT Government is committed to including Indigenous ceremonies in official events, including acknowledgement of the Ngunnawal people in the Legislative Assembly. All Ministers and senior officials acknowledge the traditional owners when opening events or making ceremonial addresses at official events.

- **Aboriginal Justice Centre**

The Aboriginal Justice Centre Inc was incorporated in late 2005 under the *ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991* and has been funded by the ACT Government since 1 July 2006 to provide programs and support to the ACT Indigenous community with the aim of reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system.

- **Interim Namadgi Advisory Board**

The Board consists of five Aboriginal and five non-Aboriginal members and in addition to providing advice for the management for Namadgi National Park, also acts to address issues of concern to the Ngunnawal community that can be addressed through the joint management of Namadgi.

The ACT Government is delighted to financially support the *Journey of Healing ACT Inc*, a local community based organisation, to stage three events to mark the effects of the forced removal policies on the Indigenous peoples and to celebrate their survival. The ACT Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has extensively promoted the events through our e:mail system to all ACT public servants in ACT Government agencies.

I would also be grateful if you could arrange to have the following planned events promoted on your community events online resource:

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007

9:00am-4:00pm (Venue: *Havelock House Northbourne Ave Turner*)

***Are we bringing them home? 10 years later*** – a conference for service providers and policy workers.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2007

7:00am (Venue: *Reconciliation Place Barton*)

***Remembering the Children*** – a ceremony to remember Indigenous children taken from their families, those who are still searching, and those who never found them.

10:00am – 3:00pm (Venue: *Stage 88 Commonwealth Park*)

***Celebrating Survival*** – a family festival in the park, with Indigenous performers and entertainment, children's activities stalls music fun and food.

The ACT Government looks forward to participating in the forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home* Report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katy Gallagher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katy" being more prominent than the last name "Gallagher".

Katy Gallagher MLA  
Acting Minister for Indigenous Affairs

2115707