

CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

EXPOSURE DRAFT OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ELECTED BODY BILL 2007

Background

In October 2004 following the Commonwealth abolition of ATSIC, the Chief Minister announced support for the establishment of a democratically elected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative body for the ACT. In 2006 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultative Council held a series of consultations with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on the structure of a possible representative body.

The ACT Government has now decided to establish the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) under its own Act, which reflects the views and recommendations from the 2006 community consultations. The Government has authorised the preparation of a Draft Bill and the obtaining of comments and feedback from members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The main goal is to ensure maximum participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT in the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of government policies that affect them.

Key Points and Next Steps

The Elected Body will have 7 Members elected every 3 years and there will be a requirement in the Act for the Elected Body to consult with and to consider the views of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council.

The Elected Body Members will elect, by majority vote, one of their members to be the ATSIEB chair and another to be the ATSIEB deputy chair.

To be eligible to vote, or to nominate or be nominated as a candidate, one must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person (self-declaration), 18 or over, & on the ACT Electoral Roll or eligible to be on it by having resided within the boundaries of the ACT for one month.

Voting can be through postal or attendance ballots, but will not be compulsory.

Following consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on the proposed legislation until 11 February 2007, it is proposed to have the final version of the legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly in April 2008, with the first election in May and the first meeting of the Elected Body on 1 July 2008.

Role of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body will be required to meet at least six times per year. Its functions will be:

- To receive, and pass on to the Minister, the views of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT on issues of concern;
- To represent Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT and to act as an advocate for their interests;
- To conduct regular forums for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT and report the outcomes of those forums to the Minister;
- To conduct research and community consultation to assist it in the exercise of its functions;
- To propose programs and design services for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT for consideration by the government and its agencies;
- To monitor and report on the effectiveness of programs conducted by government agencies for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT;
- To monitor and report on the accessibility by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT to programs and services conducted by government agencies for the general public;
- In consultation with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, to recommend any reasonable action it considers necessary to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural material or information considered sacred or significant by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT.

Copies of proposed legislation will be available at ACT Government Libraries and the following two Internet sites:

www.dhcs.act.gov.au www.legislation.act.gov.au

For more information contact:

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Comments

Community consultation meetings will be held as follows:

Dates: 17 December 2007 and 7 February 2008

Venue: Tuggeranong Community Centre

Address: Cowlshaw Street Tuggeranong

Time: 12:00am to 2:00pm

Date: 18 December 2007

Venue: Woden Community Centre

Address: Corinna Street, Woden

Time: 12:00am to 2:00pm

Dates: 20 December 2007 and 6 February 2008

Venue: Belconnen Community Centre

Address: Swanson Court, Belconnen

Time: 12:00am to 2:00pm

Date: 8 February 2008

Venue: Woden Senior Citizens Club

Address: Corner Corinna Street and Melrose Drive

Time: 12:00am to 2:00pm

Date: 10 February 2008

Venue: Boomanulla Oval

Address: 34 Goyder Street Narrabundah

Time: 10:00am to 2:00pm

Send written comments by close of business, **Monday, 11 February 2008** directly to:

The ACT Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

PO Box 158

Canberra ACT 2601

OR

Email: terina.barratt@act.gov.au