



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND
SOCIAL SERVICES**

(Reference: Annual and financial reports 2007-08)

Members:

**MR S DOSZPOT (The Chair)
MS J BURCH (The Deputy Chair)
MS A BRESNAN**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2009

**Secretary to the committee:
Ms G Concannon (Ph: 6205 0129)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Committee Office of the Legislative Assembly (Ph: 6205 0127).

APPEARANCES

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| Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services | 99 |
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Amended 21 January 2009

The committee met at 9.35 am.

Appearances:

Stanhope, Mr Jon, Chief Minister, Minister for Transport, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Minister for the Arts and Heritage

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Hehir, Mr Martin, Chief Executive

Manikis, Mr Nic, Director, Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Harwood, Mr Neil, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services

THE CHAIR: Good morning. Welcome, Chief Minister, to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services in its inquiry into the annual and financial reports of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services for 2007-08. Today's hearing will focus on the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. I welcome the departmental representatives. I think you have all been asked this ad infinitum: you have read the privilege card that is available and I understand you know your rights. I hope you have read the card.

Chief Minister, is there anything that you would like to give as a preamble before we start asking you some questions?

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I think it needs to be understood in the context of the role of the office of Indigenous affairs, having regard to the overarching approach to management of issues that are specific to Indigenous Canberrans, that it is really a management and facilitation role. The office provides an all-of-government focus for the delivery of programs that deal with issues that could be identified as being of specific import to our Indigenous community. In that context the department is not responsible for the major areas of interest in relation to Indigenous programs such as education, health or justice. Those issues are pursued on the ground by the respective departments.

I am here today as Minister for Indigenous Affairs, which is really an overarching responsibility for the delivery of Indigenous programs across the board. As the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, other than areas for which I have a direct line responsibility as minister, I do not have that day-to-day responsibility for the delivery of Indigenous programs. Through the office of indigenous affairs, I maintain a strong interest and a monitoring role in relation to delivery. I receive regular reports across all agencies on progress against our aspiration in relation to all areas of the Indigenous program.

The office also accepts responsibility for overarching issues in relation to the government's management and consultation with the Indigenous community. Most particularly, of course, it was the office that led the consultation, developed the legislation and maintains liaison with the ACT Indigenous elected body. For instance, it was the office, in partnership with the private sector, that created a vision and drove a very successful program in relation to the introduction of Indigenous trainees into

the ACT public service—a program that has been enormously successful and a model which we will continue to seek to advance and to grow.

The office has been responsible for facilitating the creation of an ACT public service Indigenous network. The office provides advice to the government, to me as a member of COAG, on work that has been pursued through COAG through a working group for Indigenous reform, the deputy chair of which was the chief executive officer of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

That is the nature and order of the role which the office has. The officials and I are very happy to respond to any questions you may have.

THE CHAIR: Prior to asking my first question, I had neglected to mention that we have received an apology from the shadow minister for Indigenous affairs, Jeremy Hanson.

Mr Stanhope: Yes; he is at the other committee.

THE CHAIR: He is double-booked at the moment so he passes on his apologies. I have some of the questions that he was going to ask. First off, a question from me: how many Indigenous Australians are employed in the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs?

Mr Manikis: Four.

THE CHAIR: How many Indigenous Australians are there in management positions in the same division?

Mr Manikis: If you define management position as an EL1 or a SOGC, there is one, and there is a recruitment process that is going on at the moment for a second.

THE CHAIR: That one is a SOG—

Mr Manikis: A SOGC, and there is a recruitment process in place for the manager of the office, which is expected to be an Indigenous Australian.

THE CHAIR: Is that the policy manager position?

Mr Manikis: It is the manager of the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. So that is the manager of the whole office.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, how many Indigenous Australians are employed in the ACT government in management levels? I do not expect you to be able to give me an answer straightaway.

Mr Stanhope: I do not have that number. As a public service, we have programs in place in relation to the employment of people with a disability and people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. And we do monitor, but without specific targeted programs, the number of people of non-English-speaking background that are also employed within the ACT public service. But there are

programs in place that seek to advance this, although not perhaps as successfully from time to time as we would wish. That is why we have looked at the Indigenous traineeship program which Mr Manikis managed through his responsibilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, which was incredibly successful. From memory, and from the advice I received at the time, through that program, which successfully concluded towards the end of last year, the number of Indigenous people that we employed increased by 12, essentially on a single day, which represented an increase of almost 10 per cent in the number of Indigenous people employed.

It is important to say something about the number of people who identify as Indigenous. One of the issues in relation to any statistic, most particularly employment statistics, is that significant numbers of people who have Indigenous heritage choose not to identify their Aboriginality. But in the context of those that have, a broad number that I can give you now is that, from memory, from the last briefing I received on this, there are somewhere in the order of 100 people who identify as Indigenous and who are employed within the ACT public service. I am more than happy to take the detail of that question on notice, Mr Chairman, and respond to you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, we would appreciate a more detailed response.

Mr Stanhope: Certainly.

MS BRESNAN: On page 174 it talks about overcoming Indigenous disadvantage strategic areas. A number of times it notes that data is not actually collected on these strategic indicators. Why is that the case? Is it because of the size of the numbers or are there other issues as to why it is not actually measured and collected?

Mr Manikis: This is across these functional areas, and there is a push at the moment to improve data collections. It is just historical that collection has not been as robust as it should be. Also, the overcoming disadvantage report that is done by the Productivity Commission and that began in 2005 really put a spotlight on this area. The Productivity Commission reported on this every two years, and these areas started to respond by putting data collections into play. And it is continuing to improve.

Mr Hehir: Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage is actually a national framework so the report is done on a national level. Given that the report is quite a new report, you will find within these areas that they identify areas where they think they need to do work and then they will start working on what the data collection needs to be to support that analysis. So it is not unusual for people to say: "We think this is the area where we need to improve. Hang on, we do not have any data. What are the possible data sources? What are possible proxy data for that area?" Then you go from there in terms of building that up. So that is a national project. We are participating in that along with all the other jurisdictions.

As Mr Manikis says, the first report was in 2005 so, certainly in national government terms or Australian government terms, quite a new report and quite a new area of data in terms of the actual collection and the processes to identify what are good measures, so not unusual perhaps. We are certainly participating in that process. You will see that there are some which are quite good and quite applicable very broadly in terms of

the education ones. They are there, they are measured, they are comparable. But others in areas where we think we need to do more work, there is a national group that looks at those issues.

MS BURCH: On page 173 there is talk around a number of forums, cultural gatherings, Indigenous youth forums. Can you tell us the thinking behind that and some of the outcomes of that, and where that will inform your future work?

Mr Hehir: I will just do the overview and then I will pass to Neil Harwood, the Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, as this question actually relates to that particular area. The Australian Catholic University, in terms of the Institute of Child Protection Studies, was wanting to do some work with us on Indigenous youth experience of the out-of-home care system. There was quite a consultative process in terms of getting their story about what their reaction was, what their feeling was, so a number of forums were conducted around that, but Neil will have the detail of those answers.

Mr Harwood: That is exactly right. Over the past three or four years we have been doing a range of reforms across the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, particularly in the area of care and protection. This was one of the research projects we wanted to look at as part of that overall work. We were trying to improve practice in that area. We wanted to try and hear the voice of Indigenous young people, particularly Indigenous young people we have had contact with the care and protection and the out-of-home care system. We had some funds and we organised with the Institute of Child Protection Studies to do a number of forums, which were well participated in by the Indigenous youth; I think there were two forums. We also had an out-of-home care conference which was attended by young people as well as the service providers and government officials, and the Institute of Child Protection Studies collected that information and captured that in a report to government as a way of informing our practice.

MS BURCH: So the feedback and the conversation from those gatherings is being fed into your forward thinking policy?

Mr Harwood: Yes, absolutely. If you would like me to talk about it a bit, there were four key messages that came from the youth forums. The first one was culture, and I thought that was very interesting. We had the Indigenous young people, still even in this generation, saying that culture was intrinsically important to them, not only in terms of their identity as people; they saw culture as a key way of responding to the issues that they face. So culture was a key message coming out of the forums.

Another issue was family. They saw family as integral and very important to them. If they were in the out-of-home care system they wanted to be able to have mechanisms for contact with their siblings and their extended families, so they identified very strongly that family was very important to them. Also as a key way of responding to the issues that they face, they saw family there.

The third point was the voice; they wanted to have mechanisms where their voice is heard, if you like, so they wanted to be part of the decision-making process for things that happened with them, in the care and protection or out-of-home care systems. So

they wanted to be at the centre of the case management, case planning meetings and be able to have their input into what they see as important to them and how the services can respond to their needs.

The fourth one, which is not unusual, was around collaboration. They wanted the service system to work together so they did not have to tell their story five, six, seven times. They wanted the agencies to respond in a holistic way to their needs. Those were the key, very strong messages that came out of that forum, and that is not new. We knew those sort of things but it has reinforced our general approach to how we want to respond to not only Indigenous families but all families. Those things are applicable to non-Indigenous families as well, so it is really informing our practice and reinforcing the direction that we are heading in in our practice in the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, I have already given your apologies, so thank you, welcome.

MR HANSON: Yes, the meeting finished early next door so I was able to come in. The healing farm that has just been announced by the health minister: what was the attraction of your department in the selection of that site? Who, I guess from the Aboriginal community, said, “This is where we want to go; this is the site that we think is appropriate”? Was there any interaction between the Department of Health and—

Mr Stanhope: Absolutely. Certainly at the end of the day I think it is fair to say that there was a detailed, comprehensive and extensive consultation by ACT government agencies, most particularly the Department of Health, facilitated by the office of Indigenous affairs, with the Indigenous community. This is an interesting conversation for us to have in relation to consultation in that the consultation with Indigenous community, the primary stakeholder and as far as the government was concerned the community whose view in relation to this we respect and respected absolutely, essentially selected the site. I see some commentary today about consultation with the community. It does require us to come to some understanding of the meaning of community and the primacy of consultation and of a consultation mechanism.

The Indigenous community selected this site. We, the government, identified a number of sites. The Indigenous community, I think led by the United Ngunnawal Elders Council; is that correct, Nic?

Mr Manikis: Yes

Mr Stanhope: A number of senior members of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council were part of the working group for the healing farm proposal, which initially arose out of a COAG process, selected and elected by members of the Indigenous community to represent them through the healing farm. Initially it was a COAG proposal, one of the previous Prime Minister’s proposals in relation to—what was the title of that particular program at the time?

Mr Manikis: Trials, I think—trials and explanations—

Mr Stanhope: That is right, the COAG trials. It was a personal initiative of the previous Prime Minister, John Howard, that COAG trial process. The trial that was selected by the Indigenous community of the ACT as the trial that they would wish to pursue was a healing farm. The consultation led by the Indigenous community was invited to review a number of potential sites. One of those sites, which has been mentioned again today, was at Kama, and my issue and my involvement in relation to that site, and the involvement of the office, was simply to keep the site available for possible selection.

The Indigenous community, particularly when presented with the site which they have ultimately chosen on Paddys River, have informed me that it was a lay-down misere. They weighed up the pros and cons, as I understand it, of a number of sites. In my discussions and consultation with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council members, members of the healing farm subgroup, they said it was a lay-down misere. Of all the sites that they viewed and reviewed, one site, in their view, was superb for the purpose, and that is the site which the Indigenous community of the ACT chose.

So we consulted closely and extensively with the community—in other words, the Indigenous community, the affected community, the community that led and have led this process from the outset—and the government was happy to respond to what I understand to be the unanimous advice and view of the Indigenous community.

MR HANSON: Can I just clarify: there were no members of the Indigenous community that thought other sites were more appropriate or did not think this was the right site—

Mr Stanhope: Not that I am aware of. I must say I have not received that advice in those terms, Mr Hanson, so I do not want to over-egg it. But I have had discussions with a number of the members of the Indigenous community that were part of the consultation or part of the group that was selected by the Indigenous community to represent them on the healing farm proposal and they are just excited beyond description at the fact that the government was prepared to make the Paddys River site available through a purchase of the estate, and I am personally very pleased with the outcome.

It is a quite isolated site, one of a number. Mr Manikis is probably far more au fait with this than me, but in early discussions that I had with the Indigenous community going back two years—this process is extensive and long term; the consultation has extended more than two years on this particular proposal—some of the criteria that were important to those members, and I will phrase it in that way, of the Indigenous community associated with this program were a degree of isolation, access to water, a rural setting and a setting some kilometres from development.

The Kama site, which has also been mentioned today, was ruled out of contention, particularly when other sites were presented as potentially available, because the closest water is the Murrumbidgee—actually, the Molonglo probably is closer than the Murrumbidgee—which is miles away, it is an exposed and very dry site and it is 100 metres from Hawker, in other words, civilisation. There was a view amongst some of the elders that I have spoken to that they wanted a relatively isolated site.

This will be a therapeutic facility, a drug rehabilitation facility, but the Indigenous community have a far broader vision than that for this particular facility.

THE CHAIR: Could I interrupt you for one moment. Could you please try and get to the point of the answer—

Mr Stanhope: I have concluded. I just think we need to have an intelligent, mature conversation around community, the meaning of community, and around consultation. The ACT government has been consulting closely, minutely, in detail, over an extended period of time—in other words, years—with the ACT Indigenous community, their representatives, in relation to this proposal. If that is the absolute united will of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council and of other Indigenous people, I am just a little bit confused as to how we then say, “Well, this is what the Indigenous people of Canberra have identified as their need in relation to a therapeutic healing farm for the Indigenous community, but we will now allow another potentially affected community”—and I do not know how you identify that—to say that they have a view about that.

We consulted with the Indigenous community. We consulted with the affected community. We consulted through a framework established by the previous Prime Minister, John Howard, in relation to a process he put in place called the COAG Indigenous trial process. We have done it in good faith, we have done it openly, we have done it responsibly, we have done it respectfully, and at the end of the day we have responded clearly and decisively to the will and the wishes of the Indigenous community of the ACT, and I do not apologise for it.

We have purchased this land in good faith, in direct response to requests and representations from the Indigenous community, and we are, in concert with them and with the broader community, going to establish the best Australian therapeutic community for Indigenous rehabilitation, both physically in relation to substance abuse and spiritually, that we can possibly create. In that context in relation to this particular proposal, I have to say that there are often significant time lags in consultation with the Indigenous community. I say that with great respect. The Indigenous communities have their own processes; they have extensive processes of consultation, which they have gone through over this last two years within their community, and as a community they have come to us and said: “This is the will and the decision of the community. This is the site we want.”

So how do we maintain our faith with the Indigenous community and the Indigenous community’s own processes and protocols for consultation and at the end of the day say, “Well, look, thanks for that two years of consideration and detailed thinking and application around this issue”—remembering that these funds were appropriated, I think, two years ago. There is \$11 million appropriated for this—

THE CHAIR: Minister, I am happy for you to keep talking, but can we—

Mr Stanhope: I will leave it here, but I just think there needs to be some broader, more mature and respectful understanding—

THE CHAIR: Are you available to—

MR STANHOPE: of the way in which the Indigenous community consult and deal with us—

THE CHAIR: I am asking you: are you available to stay behind for another quarter of an hour if you keep—

Mr Stanhope: I am. But, having said that, I think it is probably right, Nic, to say that the Department of Health led the consultation. It was facilitated by Mr Manikis but it was led by the Department of Health.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Stanhope: I will conclude on this point: in the context of respectful consultation and genuine consultation with the Indigenous community, I challenge anybody to provide a model that is respectful and supportive of our relationship with the Indigenous community in relation to an issue of such sensitivity as this and then impose an overlay which says: “Yes, okay, that is two years of consultation with the Indigenous community. We’ll now check that.”

I have to say that governments reach a point, particularly in the context of their relationships with Indigenous communities, having regard to the history of discrimination, of not listening and of paternalism that then says: “Yes, okay, we are very interested in your views. Thanks for taking the last couple of years to give us your consensus community view in relation to this issue, but we will just check that now with your potential white neighbours to see what they have to say.”

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. On page 58 there is reference to the Council of Australian Governments Indigenous reform agenda, established under COAG in 2007, and a working group on Indigenous reform, which has the Chief Executive of DH, Sandra Lambert, as the deputy chair. In the two years hence, have there been any ACT-based reforms implemented?

Mr Stanhope: As you are aware, Ms Lambert would have been here today but for her appointment as the coordinator-general for the ACT in relation to the recent stimulus package announcements, but Mr Hehir I am sure can respond to the work of the COAG working group and indeed of its most recent outcomes.

Mr Hehir: This work is continuing, and my understanding of this process is that it has not yet formally been signed off by COAG. In fact, I understand there is intended to be a specific COAG dealing with Indigenous issues. So this work is ongoing. That does not mean that we are not looking at how we can actually move forward in terms of dealing with some of these issues. Some of these are areas outside our direct portfolio responsibility, but, again, some of the work that we will be talking about today would be relevant there.

In terms of closing the life expectancy gap within a generation, there are quite a number of health issues that impact significantly on the Indigenous population. They impact far more significantly in some very particular areas. My understanding is that ACT Health is very aware of those issues and has an Indigenous specific program

looking at how they can work on and improve those outcomes. It would also be fair to say that drug and alcohol is one of the issues that applies in that area. Certainly, the ACT government has shown that it is keen to move forward in assisting the Indigenous community to address that issue.

The mortality rates for Indigenous children go to quite a number of factors. Again, they are primarily a health area. They are about good prenatal preparation. They are about higher rates of teenage pregnancy—quite a number of factors can impact on that. They are all things that we would work with within the office as well. So we are quite conscious of that. We have a number of programs, including the ATSI unit, which would be working broadly across those areas.

In terms of specific initiatives, there is nothing that has come firmly out of the COAG process. Yesterday, in the estimates process around the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, we talked about the work we are doing with the Australian government on an Indigenous specific child and family centre, particularly for the west Belconnen region, given the high level of Indigenousness in that area. That is something we would see as quite important in terms of literacy, the employment gap and making sure that young Indigenous children access preschool. We have a number of preschool programs starting from the age of three for the Koori community, so in a sense we are in advance of some of the work that COAG is proposing as well.

Having said that, there is still a significant amount of work to be done. It is a community that still has a significant amount of disadvantage and we need to continue to work on improving those outcomes.

THE CHAIR: On page 51—and this is supplementary to my previous question—there are a number of key achievements in the various areas reported on by this annual report. I note that these key achievements are noted, but are there any key achievements for Indigenous Australians that should have been or could be noted in these annual reports?

Mr Manikis: That have been achieved during the reporting period?

THE CHAIR: Correct.

Mr Manikis: I would imagine, as we have already mentioned, the traineeship program; that is a significant achievement. The fact that we have got the Indigenous cultural centre up and running and buzzing at the moment and being utilised by the public and the broader Indigenous community I think is an achievement.

Mr Hehir: It is also fair to say there are quite a number of specific initiatives that are listed throughout the program areas. There is quite a deal of discussion around the work that the child and family centres are doing in working with some of the Indigenous families. There is information, particularly if you look at page 47, in terms of work we are doing around housing. It is fair to say that housing is one of those key building blocks, if that makes sense, in terms of trying to make sure steps are taken for people who are disadvantaged. If you can get the housing right, you get the base to build on. You can work from that. You can get access to education, to training and to health care, because you are not floating around. They are all things that we work on

as a department.

Across the government, the more significant issue was the training initiative. From memory, 11 out of 15 young people were permanently appointed to the ACT public service once they had completed their traineeship, which was really quite a good outcome from our perspective. I know the Chief Minister was very pleased with it. Perhaps the most significant thing is the Indigenous elected body; having the framework and legislation put in place to allow the Indigenous community to elect their own representative body was a significant achievement from our perspective in terms of the whole of government and whole of community outcomes that we are seeking.

MS BURCH: Can you tell us about some of the outcomes of the representative body that was established and how that is working?

Mr Manikis: The Indigenous elected body was elected last June and first met in September. It has taken its role very seriously. We have seven members who have taken time to ensure that they understand their role as it is contained in the legislation. They have taken time to set down governance protocols—how they relate with the community, how they relate with government and how they relate with each other. So all of that work has happened. They have also taken time to develop new structures for themselves and also to interact with agencies. They have attended meetings in the justice area and in the health area, so they are becoming known as well, and it is building up.

They have got a community forum on 29 March, which is a key milestone for them. It is the first of the two forums that they are required to conduct under the legislation. They are working together very well and there is a great deal of respect for the body, not just by agencies but throughout the community.

The body has three elders or traditional owners and the other four are people from the broader Indigenous community, so there is a good mixture. Gender wise there is a good mixture as well—four to three. So it augurs well for their work over the next three years. At the moment they are putting together a work program for the next three years, but a lot of that will be informed by their community forum at the end of this month.

Mr Stanhope: I agree with the summary which Mr Manikis has given. I have been very pleased, with great respect to the elected body, with the rigour which they have brought to an understanding of their role. As Mr Manikis said, they have spent some significant time on understanding the legislation, understanding the statutory requirements and the framework within which they operate. They have now begun a process of meeting ACT government agencies as well as the broader community of Indigenous representative bodies.

For instance, they met last week with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council. There has been an awareness and a sensitivity through all the negotiations around the establishment of the elected body about relationships with existing Indigenous organisations, including existing Indigenous service organisations such as Winnunga Nimmityjah; the nature of the relationship between an elected representative body and

other bodies that are of themselves also elected but elected for specific purposes; the sensitivities around traditional ownership, which Mr Manikis has touched on, and the respect accorded to traditional owners and then an elected Indigenous body, the majority of which are not of this country.

So there are some very sensitive issues that have required some dialogue and conversation, and the elected body have been going through a quite extensive process. But they are ramping up their activity now. They are through that initial phase. I met with the chair and the deputy chair six weeks ago. At that meeting I invited the full elected body to meet with the full ministry. That meeting occurred on Monday of this week.

At that meeting we explored again the nature of the relationships that I anticipate developing, and I used the estimates process as a model that I anticipate will be appropriate in future for the Indigenous elected body. So it will have meetings based on this framework, except that the Indigenous elected body will be sitting where you are today and ministers and officials will be responding to the same range of questions that you are asking today, but they will be questions asked by Indigenous representatives.

I have committed to that model and I have committed to ministers and senior officials being available. The Indigenous elected body will hold its own estimates type meetings at which all officials charged with responsibility for delivering Indigenous programs or supporting the Indigenous community will be asked to account for how they are being delivered. The Indigenous elected body can then write reports and make representations to government such as you are about to do. That is how we anticipate the process developing.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We did start seven minutes late, so with your concurrence we will have two more questions and then we will conclude. There may be other questions that the committee may wish to put to you.

Mr Stanhope: Certainly.

MS BRESNAN: Page 177 of volume 1 discusses the community development services grants. There is not any information there—I apologise if it is there, but I could not find it—about the programs which are funded under those grants. Is it possible to provide some information about that and whether or not there have been any particular outcomes from those projects funded under the grants? What projects have been funded under the grants?

Mr Hehir: We can certainly identify those. The community support and infrastructure grants process is actually administered through Minister Gallagher, but we can certainly get you that detail.

MS BURCH: Again, at page 176 and then elsewhere in the document, there is comment around the number of women's group meetings, women's grants. In other words, there is a concentration on women's groups to better support families; is that it? Are they successful, and is there any notion to have a focus on Indigenous men and fathering and families?

Mr Hehir: This was discussed during yesterday's estimates process. There was quite a detailed discussion around the child and family centre programs, particularly looking at engaging with Indigenous men. They are developing that program at the moment, so that is certainly an area of interest for us. We are quite concerned to do that.

MS BURCH: The working with women has worked; that has been successful?

Mr Manikis: A lot of it is out of the Office for Women.

MS BURCH: I see.

Mr Hehir: The responsibility for this area, while it is reported here, actually sits with Minister Gallagher. But in terms of the general principles, yes, we are very keen to work with Indigenous men, particularly fathers. There was quite a detailed conversation yesterday at the estimates for the office, where we did talk about that.

MR HANSON: I would concur with that. It would be in the *Hansard*.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time, minister and gentlemen. We will look forward to seeing you at next year's annual review.

The committee adjourned at 10.17 am.