

**HON MICHELLE ROBERTS MLA MINISTER FOR POLICE; ROAD SAFETY**

**MINISTERIAL RESPONSE TO:  
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION  
REPORT NO. 8 – *The More Things Change***

I wish to report to the House regarding the Western Australia Police Force's actions to address the recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Corruption and Crime Commission Report No.8.

The report relates to the Corruption and Crime Commission's examination of Operation Aviemore, the investigation into the death of Joshua Warneke and the wrongful conviction of Gene Gibson. The report contains three recommendations for the WA Police Force which include the need to routinely work with local groups and Aboriginal Elders when inducting regionally and remotely stationed officers; training in the identification and awareness of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and cognitive impairment; and ongoing cultural awareness education and training.

The WA Police Force is committed to partnering with the Aboriginal community to enhance cultural training and understanding across its metropolitan and regional districts in Western Australia. Several regional districts have already established successful partnerships to assist with the delivery of specific cultural inductions, whilst others are engaged with Elders, community organisations and groups in determining the most appropriate way to work together and deliver culturally sensitive inductions.

The State Government and the WA Police Force take seriously the Joint Standing Committee on Corruption and Crime Commission Report No.8 and its recommendations.

The Western Australia Police Force created the Aboriginal Affairs Division (AAD) in August this year, led by a Divisional Officer who identifies as an Aboriginal person. The role of the AAD is to build, foster and sustain better relations with the Aboriginal people and communities.

The AAD is working towards ensuring the WA Police Force understands and responds appropriately to views and interests of the Aboriginal people and to enhance respect for Aboriginal people and their culture.

To better understand the needs of Aboriginal people, an Aboriginal Police Advisory Forum (APAF) has been established. The first meeting of the APAF was held in early September this year. The APAF comprises the police executive and eight Aboriginal leaders from across Western Australia.

Returning to the Joint Standing Committee on Corruption and Crime Commission Report No.8, and specifically how the WA Police Force has responded to the recommendations.

As previously mentioned, the three recommendations include the need to routinely work with local groups and Aboriginal Elders when inducting regionally and remotely stationed officers; training in the identification and awareness of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and cognitive impairment; and ongoing cultural awareness education and training.

Examples of the programs currently in place that address the Joint Standing Committee's recommendations include:

### Kimberley

- Broome Police Station currently conduct a full day induction at the Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Corporation facilitated by Elders and Indigenous Leaders.
- Fitzroy Crossing engage a local female leader from the Nindilingarri Cultural Health Centre, with new staff spending two days learning the cultural specifics of the Fitzroy Valley region with her.
- Wyndham Police work collaboratively with the Ngnower Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation which includes officers attending the Ngnower Aerwah Safe House and Sober up Centre, working with the night patrol bus and conducting shifts at the Sober up Centre. Officers also meet with the CEO of the Corporation and discuss local Aboriginal culture specific to Wyndham.

### Pilbara

- Newman Police have a long standing working relationship with the Kanyirninopa Jukurrpa Rangers, who provide cultural training to officers at no cost.
- The Roebourne Police utilise Ngurrangga Tours to provide cultural inductions to staff.
- South Hedland officers join with industry in a local induction, and are consulting with Elders from the 13 different local groups to facilitate increased engagement with police..

### Goldfields/Esperance

- Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Laverton, Leonora, Wiluna and Warakurna are in discussions with organisations and local groups to provide cultural inductions.
- Wiluna Police have an informal induction conducted by community elders.

### Midwest/Gascoyne

- In Mullewa, new officers are involved in a personal introduction to local elders and are taught the importance of culturally significant periods such as Lore, Sorry Time and the local importance of NAIDOC week.

### Wheatbelt

- The District Office is recruiting an Aboriginal Senior Constable who will assist in developing formal induction processes in collaboration with local Aboriginal groups.

## Great Southern

- The Great Southern District is currently working with local Aboriginal people to develop local reference groups specific to the area.

## South West

- The South West District is currently in discussions to determine what services can be utilised to provide culturally appropriate inductions across the District.

The WA Police Force recognises the need to enhance awareness of FASD and cognitive impairment to assist frontline officers in recognising the signs of and how to appropriately address and manage any interactions with community members with these conditions. The University of Notre Dame has audited the WA Police Force's Aboriginal Cultural Training and the WA Police Force is working to implement short and longer term training reforms. This includes the rewriting of the Aboriginal Cultural Training unit for recruits, with Aboriginal Police Officers being involved in its design, development and delivery. The new unit has been trialed with new recruit schools and frontline officers.

To address cognitive impairment, FASD and vulnerable persons training, the Western Australian Police Force advise that compulsory ongoing training will now apply to all serving police officers.

Some examples of the training offered include investigative training, where interviewing training packages for recruits and serving frontline officers encompass cognitive impairment, FASD, vulnerable person, cultural awareness and relevant Criminal Investigation Act legislation. In addition, the WA Police Force advise that Detective training courses now include the ANUNGA guidelines as well as the implications of Operation Aviemore.

I also wish to report that the chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Corruption and Crime Commission Report No.8 noted the positive signs shown by the WA Police Force and its enhanced practices with regard to its dealings with Aboriginal people.

I thank the Committee for its report and its ongoing commitment to improve criminal justice in Western Australia.