

## **Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

#### **Inquiry into the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Extend Family Assistance to ABSTUDY Secondary School Boarding Students Aged 16 and Over) Bill 2019**

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** Identification Issues

**Senator:** Siewert

**Question reference number:** Committee Hearing

**Type of question:** Verbal

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 3 September 2019

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

**Senator SIEWERT:** It's also an issue with drivers licences, and that's where I'll go to the agency. Is the government now developing a common approach or does the government have a common approach to these ID issues? Senator McCarthy and I were having a very quick side conversation about it; more broadly, it's about ID.

**Mr Exell:** I might have to take that one on notice. I'm aware there have been conversations around ID and drivers licences and literacy, in support to retain, and access to police and testing and things. But I might have to take on notice where that's up to overall.

**Senator SIEWERT:** You're spot on in terms of literacy, but the other specific issue is ID and birth certificates.

**Mr Exell:** Yes, I will take that on notice.

#### **Answer:**

#### **Is the government now developing a common approach or does the government have a common approach to these ID issues?**

State and territory governments are legislatively responsible for birth registration and certification. In all jurisdictions, this function is delivered through a Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages overseen by a Registrar or Registrar-General. The Registrars and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) form the National Civil Registration and Statistics Improvement Committee (NCR SIC) and work together to improve the quality and coverage of birth (and death) registration, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian birth registration and certification a priority.

In the case of drivers licences, responsibility for regulation of light vehicle driver licencing rests with road transport and traffic agencies in each state and territory. The National Transport Commission in conjunction with state and territory governments have developed administrative guidelines on evidence of identity requirements.

There is not one single organisation responsible to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and young people who do not have identification or birth certificates. The Australian Government provides support in various ways, including:

- Employment Services Providers (through the Community Development Program, Vocational Training and Employment Centres and Tailored Assistance Employment Grants) can support job seekers to gain drivers licences as part of the job seekers pathway to employment.
- Applications for ABSTUDY can be completed over the phone and a verbal declaration is given from the student or person applying on their behalf that information provided is true and correct, avoiding the need for a birth certificate.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who need to confirm their identity for other Centrelink purposes can complete a Centrelink Confirmation of Identity form without the need for a birth certificate or other identification documents.
- Through the NIAA Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS), funding has been provided for a number of projects designed to help young people overcome barriers to engaging with education and employment. Examples include:
  - Pathfinders National Aboriginal Birth Certificate Program to provide birth certificates to Indigenous preschool children, primary school, secondary school and vocational training students, as well as early and transitioning job seekers.
  - Kalumburu Youth Program that includes helping participating youth to acquire birth certificates, bank accounts, drivers licences and health checks.
  - Lower Lachlan Community Services 3ARE1 Transition project aimed at engaging young people aged 13 to 25 at risk of disengaging from school or unemployed. Support through this project includes assistance with obtaining drivers licenses, birth certificates, tax file number registration, creating bank accounts and accessing relevant government support.