



DOING TIME – Time for Doing

Report tabled 20 June 2011

Twenty years after the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has tabled a report into the high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system.

The report focuses on prevention and early intervention in order to identify strategies to reduce the alarming detention and incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians.

The report is supportive of progress made in some areas, particularly by local grassroots organisations, and critical of gaps, inefficiencies and attitudes in other areas. The Committee made a total 40 recommendations. The main findings include:

- a National Partnership Agreement, with specific justice targets, dedicated to the Safe Communities Building Block under the Closing the Gap strategy
- strengthening positive social norms through families, communities, mentoring and sport and recreation
- accommodation options for Indigenous youth, including those who have been granted bail
- holistic health and wellbeing programs which involve family, mentors and Indigenous leaders
- addressing hearing impairments amongst Indigenous youth
- addressing alcohol and substance abuse and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Indigenous communities
- better education outcomes for Indigenous students through positive relationships between schools and Indigenous communities, teacher development and recognition, and improved student attendance
- improving the transition for education to the workforce through initiatives such as increasing the uptake of Indigenous apprentices and assisting young people in remote and regional areas to obtain driving licences
- improving interpreting and legal services for Indigenous youth,
- cultural awareness and diversion training for police, and increased Indigenous employment with police
- alternative sentencing options and pre-court conferencing
- parliamentary Indigenous representation and an Indigenous Law and Justice Advisory Body

- building Indigenous capacity in program development and delivery, and
- expanding data collections, improving government policy and coordination, and sustained and flexible funding of Indigenous offender programs.

The Committee Chair, Mr Shayne Neumann commented that 'It is my hope that this report, *Doing Time – Time for Doing*, will assist in bringing about positive change for Indigenous Australians and that the future will be one of strength and partnership between all Australians.'

The inquiry received 110 submissions and conducted 18 public hearings around Australia in metropolitan, regional and remote communities and visited three youth detention centres.

The report is available on the website at

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/sentencing/report.htm>

A media conference is scheduled for 12:15pm on Tuesday 21st June 2011 in the Senate Courtyard, Parliament House. Audio webcast available:

<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media comment, please contact:

Committee Chair Mr Shayne Neumann MP on (02) 6277 4755 or 0437 343 817

For background information and information on key witnesses who are available for interviews or to provide independent comments on the report, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au