

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Empowered Communities Project

Senator: Moore, Claire

Question reference number: 107

Type of question: FPA Friday 12 February 2016, Pages 45 & 46

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 1 April 2016

Number of pages: 48

Question:

Mr Tongue: The Prime Minister has written back to the authors of the report, and Minister Scullion has written to the eight communities involved as well as to states and territories. I have written to my counterparts—

Senator MOORE: Can we be written to? Can we find out what is going on around that?

Mr Tongue: Certainly. Would you like me to provide copies of the letters?

Senator MOORE: That would be really good. It is just that this is being talked about. We know it is still being negotiated, but there does not seem to be a process on the website or anything so that I can go along and say, 'Hey what's happening in this community?'

Mr Tongue: Certainly.

Answer:

The following correspondence is attached:

1. Letter from the Prime Minister to Empowered Communities Co-Chairs
2. Letter from the Minister to Empowered Communities Co-Chairs
3. Letters from the Minister to Empowered Communities leaders:
 - Andrea Mason
 - Chris Ingrey
 - Nolan Hunter
 - Paul Briggs
 - Fiona Jose
 - Shane Phillips
 - Denise Bowden
 - Ian Trust

4. Letters from the Minister to State Premiers and NT Chief Minister:

- NT
- NSW
- SA
- WA
- Vic
- Qld

5. Emails from Andrew Tongue to heads of first ministers departments:

- NT
- NSW
- SA
- WA
- Vic
- Qld



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: C15/96976

7 DEC 2015

Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson
Co-Chairs, Empowered Communities
PO Box A199
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235

Sean and Noel,
Dear Mr Gordon and Mr Pearson

Thank you for your letter dated 24 September 2015 regarding the Empowered Communities report which was submitted to Government for consideration in March 2015.

I understand that the Empowered Communities report represents the culmination of ground-breaking work by Indigenous leaders and organisations across eight urban, regional and remote regions nationally. I am conscious that the ideas set out in the report are founded in the collective wisdom and experience of Indigenous leaders built over many decades, with a view to creating positive futures for people in their communities for generations to come.

Following our consideration of the Empowered Communities report, the Australian Government would now welcome the opportunity to work with Empowered Communities leaders to implement a regionally focussed response, including collaboration on regional planning and investment. This response would be based on a genuine commitment to transparency and a partnership that enables, rather than diminishes, Indigenous ownership and responsibility, particularly in critical areas such as school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety.

The Government strongly supports the broad, place-based whole-of-government approach outlined in the report. We believe this is a powerful model that could be applied to the 8 Empowered Communities sites, and other communities where the right pre-conditions exist.

It is important that we continue to make every effort to partner with relevant states and territories, and local government. Where possible, collaboration with the corporate sector is also an invaluable asset.

Progress would be reviewed annually, with a more substantive evaluation after three years, giving us sufficient time to embed the regional response at a level where outcomes can be realised and measured. At this point it may be appropriate to consider the future of

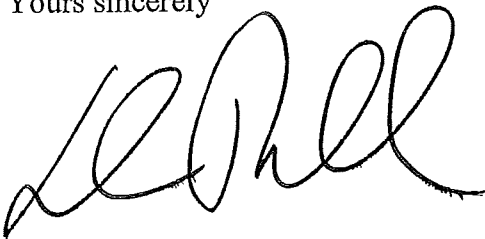
Empowered Communities and the broader national governance elements of the Empowered Communities proposal.

It is clear that the Australian Government needs better engagement with Indigenous people both within Empowered Communities regions and more broadly if we are to achieve the ambitious agenda set out under the Closing the Gap targets. The proposal from Empowered Communities leaders for a new partnership with the Australian Government is an exciting opportunity to address the challenges faced by Indigenous Australians. We will embrace opportunities to partner with other committed Indigenous leaders in locations where there is momentum to drive positive community change, particularly in relation to education, employment, economic development and safety.

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion has primary responsibility for Empowered Communities on behalf of the Australian Government. I have copied this letter to Minister Scullion, who will contact you shortly to outline the approach and practical arrangements in more detail.

I am grateful for the hard work, dedication and commitment of the Indigenous leadership group in producing this significant agenda for reform and I look forward to working with you on achieving a successful outcome.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Turnbull', written in a cursive style.

MALCOLM TURNBULL

Cc: Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: C15/96976

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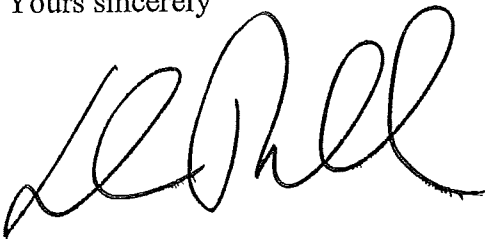
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Cc: Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Ms Andrea Mason
Coordinator
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council
PO Box 8921
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

Dear Ms Mason

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

To support this collaboration, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information for each of the eight regions to share with Empowered Communities leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We also intend to engage with relevant state and territory governments to seek their participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this approach.

Funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region would be provided under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account of the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location. To enable time for these discussions to occur and to ensure a smooth transition to implementation through the

Backbone Organisations, I have approved a three month extension of the current Empowered Communities Regional Coordinator contract, until 31 March 2016.

The PM&C Regional Network arrangements currently in place are well suited to a devolved approach to delivery, and would be supported by a small national office team. To ensure implementation generates appropriate traction, I have asked the PM&C Secretary, the Associate Secretary, Indigenous Affairs and the Deputy Secretary, Indigenous Affairs to take responsibility for the initial discussions regarding Empowered Communities implementation in each region, including negotiation of 'First Priorities Agreements'. I am also prepared to consider secondments of PM&C staff to Backbone Organisations where Empowered Communities leaders believe this would be beneficial.

I am excited about the potential for greater collaboration between Indigenous leadership and Government to achieve real, lasting change in communities across Australia. This potential is already starting to be realised in some locations, for example in relation to the Pemulwuy Project in Redfern, NSW, the Cashless Debit Card in the East Kimberley, and the work being led by Empowered Communities leaders to promote economic development and respond to substance abuse in the Central Coast. I am looking forward to building on these projects and to developing others across each of the Empowered Communities regions.

Place-based collaboration with Indigenous community leaders also extends beyond the eight Empowered Communities regions. For example, significant work is underway in the Murdi Paaki region, NSW and Ceduna, SA. We will look to grasp opportunities to build on this approach in other locations as part of a broader agenda to empower local Indigenous leadership.

As the report indicates, it will be important that analysis of progress and integrity of implementation is iterative and ongoing. I also anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. This substantive evaluation could inform possible broader consideration of the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, any discussions regarding these elements will need to take account of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the NPY region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Mr Chris Ingrey
Chief Executive Officer
La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council
PO Box 365
MATRAVILLE NSW 2036

Dear Mr Ingrey

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the Inner Sydney region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

To support this collaboration, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information for each of the eight regions to share with Empowered Communities leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We also intend to engage with relevant state and territory governments to seek their participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this approach.

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Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the Inner Sydney region.

Yours sincerely

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NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Mr Nolan Hunter
Chief Executive Officer
Kimberley Land Council
PO Box 2145
BROOME WA 6725

Dear Mr Hunter

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the West Kimberley region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

To support this collaboration, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information for each of the eight regions to share with Empowered Communities leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We also intend to engage with relevant state and territory governments to seek their participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this approach.

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Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the West Kimberley region.

Yours sincerely

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NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Mr Paul Briggs
Chairman
Kaiela Institute
PO Box 1412
SHEPPARTON VIC 3630

Dear Mr Briggs

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the Goulburn-Murray region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

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Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the Goulburn-Murray region.

Yours sincerely

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NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Ms Fiona Jose
General Manager
Cape York Partnership
PO Box 3099
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Dear Ms Jose

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the Cape York region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

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Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the Cape York region.

Yours sincerely

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NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Mr Shane Phillips
Chief Executive Officer
Tribal Warrior Association Inc.
PO Box 3200
REDFERN NSW 2016

Dear Mr Phillips

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the Inner Sydney region.

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Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the Inner Sydney region.

Yours sincerely

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NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Ms Denise Bowden
Chief Executive Officer
Yothu Yindi Foundation
GPO Box 3234
DARWIN NT 080

Dear Ms Bowden

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the North East Arnhem Land region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

To support this collaboration, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information for each of the eight regions to share with Empowered Communities leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We also intend to engage with relevant state and territory governments to seek their participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this approach.

Funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region would be provided under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account of the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location. To enable time for these discussions to occur and to ensure a smooth transition to implementation through the

Backbone Organisations, I have approved a three month extension of the current Empowered Communities Regional Coordinator contract, until 31 March 2016.

The PM&C Regional Network arrangements currently in place are well suited to a devolved approach to delivery, and would be supported by a small national office team. To ensure implementation generates appropriate traction, I have asked the PM&C Secretary, the Associate Secretary, Indigenous Affairs and the Deputy Secretary, Indigenous Affairs to take responsibility for the initial discussions regarding Empowered Communities implementation in each region, including negotiation of 'First Priorities Agreements'. I am also prepared to consider secondments of PM&C staff to Backbone Organisations where Empowered Communities leaders believe this would be beneficial.

I am excited about the potential for greater collaboration between Indigenous leadership and Government to achieve real, lasting change in communities across Australia. This potential is already starting to be realised in some locations, for example in relation to the Pemulwuy Project in Redfern, NSW, the Cashless Debit Card in the East Kimberley, and the work being led by Empowered Communities leaders to promote economic development and respond to substance abuse in the Central Coast. I am looking forward to building on these projects and to developing others across each of the Empowered Communities regions.

Place-based collaboration with Indigenous community leaders also extends beyond the eight Empowered Communities regions. For example, significant work is underway in in the Murdi Paaki region, NSW and Ceduna, SA. We will look to grasp opportunities to build on this approach in other locations as part of a broader agenda to empower local Indigenous leadership.

As the report indicates, it will be important that analysis of progress and integrity of implementation is iterative and ongoing. I also anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. This substantive evaluation could inform possible broader consideration of the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, any discussions regarding these elements will need to take account of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the North East Arnhem Land region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

Mr Ian Trust
Executive Chair
Wunan Foundation
PO Box 1338
KUNUNURRA WA 6743

Dear Mr Trust

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

Local Indigenous leadership is critical to achieving sustainable positive change in communities, and I would like to extend my thanks to you for both your involvement in preparing the report and for your leadership in the East Kimberley region.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety and I am keen to work with you in these areas.

To support this collaboration, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information for each of the eight regions to share with Empowered Communities leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We also intend to engage with relevant state and territory governments to seek their participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this approach.

Funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region would be provided under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account of the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location. To enable time for these discussions to occur and to ensure a smooth transition to implementation through the

Backbone Organisations, I have approved a three month extension of the current Empowered Communities Regional Coordinator contract, until 31 March 2016.

The PM&C Regional Network arrangements currently in place are well suited to a devolved approach to delivery, and would be supported by a small national office team. To ensure implementation generates appropriate traction, I have asked the PM&C Secretary, the Associate Secretary, Indigenous Affairs and the Deputy Secretary, Indigenous Affairs to take responsibility for the initial discussions regarding Empowered Communities implementation in each region, including negotiation of 'First Priorities Agreements'. I am also prepared to consider secondments of PM&C staff to Backbone Organisations where Empowered Communities leaders believe this would be beneficial.

I am excited about the potential for greater collaboration between Indigenous leadership and Government to achieve real, lasting change in communities across Australia. This potential is already starting to be realised in some locations, for example in relation to the Pemulwuy Project in Redfern, NSW, the Cashless Debit Card in the East Kimberley, and the work being led by Empowered Communities leaders to promote economic development and respond to substance abuse in the Central Coast. I am looking forward to building on these projects and to developing others across each of the Empowered Communities regions.

Place-based collaboration with Indigenous community leaders also extends beyond the eight Empowered Communities regions. For example, significant work is underway in in the Murdi Paaki region, NSW and Ceduna, SA. We will look to grasp opportunities to build on this approach in other locations as part of a broader agenda to empower local Indigenous leadership.

As the report indicates, it will be important that analysis of progress and integrity of implementation is iterative and ongoing. I also anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. This substantive evaluation could inform possible broader consideration of the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, any discussions regarding these elements will need to take account of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people and communities. I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the East Kimberley region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

The Hon Adam Giles MLA
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 3146
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Chief Minister

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety, objectives that I know are shared by your Government.

The Australian Government has also indicated that it is prepared to consider funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location.

Your Government was represented on the Steering Committee overseeing the development of the Empowered Communities report. I understand there has been further contact between officials as the Australian Government has considered its response to the report.

It is clear that a better engagement between all levels of government and Indigenous people and a stronger role for proactive Indigenous leaders is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that both our governments have committed to under the Closing the Gap agreement. I believe that Empowered Communities offers a positive opportunity for governments to achieve this. I am also conscious that there are other relevant initiatives being progressed by state and territory governments, and I am keen to ensure that Empowered Communities complements rather than duplicates these other reforms. Where there are other locally led reform initiatives we are also keen to engage with these in conjunction with any work we are doing with Empowered Communities.

It will be important that analysis of the progress of implementation of Empowered Communities is iterative and ongoing. I anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. The Australian Government has indicated to the Empowered Communities leaders that the national policy and governance agenda articulated in their report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council* will not be implemented at this time. We have however, advised that the findings of the three year evaluation could inform possible consideration of these elements at a later date. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications of the national governance agenda, I would expect state and territory governments to be critical partners in any future consideration of these matters. We have also made it clear to the Empowered Communities leaders that any consideration of national policy and governance will need to take account of the Australian Government's commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

For the Empowered Communities approach to achieve its overarching aim of a new partnership between Indigenous leaders and all governments, the Northern Territory will need to be a critical partner. The letters sent to the Empowered Communities leaders by the Prime Minister and I have been broadly framed with a view to direct involvement by your Government in the next stage of discussions, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties. I have instructed senior officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to make contact with your Department to begin discussions to ensure that we can work cooperatively to achieve this end.

To support the collaboration with Indigenous leaders at the regional level, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information mapped by Empowered Communities region to share with Indigenous leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We are also seeking your participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this aspect of the approach.

My intention is to reserve public announcements regarding Australian Government action in response to the Empowered Communities report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working collaboratively across governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I am excited about the opportunity presented by Empowered Communities to work with you to this end.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a stylized flourish at the end.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

The Hon Mike Baird MP
Premier of New South Wales
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Premier

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety, objectives that I know are shared by your Government.

The Australian Government has also indicated that it is prepared to consider funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location.

Your Government was represented on the Steering Committee overseeing the development of the Empowered Communities report. I understand there has been further contact between officials as the Australian Government has considered its response to the report.

It is clear that a better engagement between all levels of government and Indigenous people and a stronger role for proactive Indigenous leaders is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that both our governments have committed to under the Closing the Gap agreement. I believe that Empowered Communities offers a positive opportunity for governments to achieve this. I am also conscious that there are other relevant initiatives being progressed by your government, including the Local Decision Making model and I am keen to ensure that Empowered Communities complements rather than duplicates these other reforms. Where there are other locally led reform initiatives we are also keen to engage with these in conjunction with any work we are doing with Empowered Communities.

It will be important that analysis of the progress of implementation of Empowered Communities is iterative and ongoing. I anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. The Australian Government has indicated to the Empowered Communities leaders that the national policy and governance agenda articulated in their report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council* will not be implemented at this time. We have however, advised that the findings of the three year evaluation could inform possible consideration of these elements at a later date. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications of the national governance agenda, I would expect state and territory governments to be critical partners in any future consideration of these matters. We have also made it clear to the Empowered Communities leaders that any consideration of national policy and governance will need to take account of the Australian Government's commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

For the Empowered Communities approach to achieve its overarching aim of a new partnership between Indigenous leaders and all governments, NSW will need to be a critical partner. The letters sent to the Empowered Communities leaders by the Prime Minister and I have been broadly framed with a view to direct involvement by your Government in the next stage of discussions, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties. I have instructed senior officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to make contact with your Department to begin discussions to ensure that we can work cooperatively to achieve this end.

To support the collaboration with Indigenous leaders at the regional level, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information mapped by Empowered Communities region to share with Indigenous leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We are also seeking your participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this aspect of the approach.

My intention is to reserve public announcements regarding Australian Government action in response to the Empowered Communities report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working collaboratively across governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I am excited about the opportunity presented by Empowered Communities to work with you to this end.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

The Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Premier of South Australia
GPO Box 2343
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Premier

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety, objectives that I know are shared by your Government.

The Australian Government has also indicated that it is prepared to consider funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location.

Officers from the South Australian Government were briefed by PM&C officials during the development of the Empowered Communities report by Indigenous leaders. I understand there has been further contact between officials as the Australian Government has considered its response to the report.

It is clear that a better engagement between all levels of government and Indigenous people and a stronger role for proactive Indigenous leaders is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that both our governments have committed to under the Closing the Gap agreement. I believe that Empowered Communities offers a positive opportunity for governments to achieve this. I am also conscious that there are other relevant initiatives being progressed by state and territory governments, and I am keen to ensure that Empowered Communities complements rather than duplicates these other reforms. Where there are other locally led reform initiatives we are also keen to engage with these in conjunction with any work we are doing with Empowered Communities.

It will be important that analysis of the progress of implementation of Empowered Communities is iterative and ongoing. I anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. The Australian Government has indicated to the Empowered Communities leaders that the national policy and governance agenda articulated in their report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council* will not be implemented at this time. We have however, advised that the findings of the three year evaluation could inform possible consideration of these elements at a later date. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications of the national governance agenda, I would expect state and territory governments to be critical partners in any future consideration of these matters. We have also made it clear to the Empowered Communities leaders that any consideration of national policy and governance will need to take account of the Australian Government's commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

For the Empowered Communities approach to achieve its overarching aim of a new partnership between Indigenous leaders and all governments, South Australia will need to be a critical partner. The letters sent to the Empowered Communities leaders by the Prime Minister and I have been broadly framed with a view to direct involvement by your Government in the next stage of discussions, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties. I have instructed senior officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to make contact with your Department to begin discussions to ensure that we can work cooperatively to achieve this end.

To support the collaboration with Indigenous leaders at the regional level, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information mapped by Empowered Communities region to share with Indigenous leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We are also seeking your participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this aspect of the approach.

My intention is to reserve public announcements regarding Australian Government action in response to the Empowered Communities report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working collaboratively across governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I am excited about the opportunity presented by Empowered Communities to work with you to this end.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a stylized flourish at the end.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

The Hon Colin Barnett MLA
Premier of Western Australia
1 Parliament Place
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety, objectives that I know are shared by your Government.

The Australian Government has also indicated that it is prepared to consider funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location.

Your Government was represented on the Steering Committee overseeing the development of the Empowered Communities report. I understand there has been further contact between officials as the Australian Government has considered its response to the report.

It is clear that a better engagement between all levels of government and Indigenous people and a stronger role for proactive Indigenous leaders is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that both our governments have committed to under the Closing the Gap agreement. I believe that Empowered Communities offers a positive opportunity for governments to achieve this. I am also conscious that there are other relevant initiatives being progressed by your government, including Regional Services Reform and I am keen to ensure that Empowered Communities complements rather than duplicates these other reforms. Where there are other locally led reform initiatives we are also keen to engage with these in conjunction with any work we are doing with Empowered Communities.

It will be important that analysis of the progress of implementation of Empowered Communities is iterative and ongoing. I anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. The Australian Government has indicated to the Empowered Communities leaders that the national policy and governance agenda articulated in their report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council* will not be implemented at this time. We have however, advised that the findings of the three year evaluation could inform possible consideration of these elements at a later date. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications of the national governance agenda, I would expect state and territory governments to be critical partners in any future consideration of these matters. We have also made it clear to the Empowered Communities leaders that any consideration of national policy and governance will need to take account of the Australian Government's commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

For the Empowered Communities approach to achieve its overarching aim of a new partnership between Indigenous leaders and all governments, Western Australia will need to be a critical partner. The letters sent to the Empowered Communities leaders by the Prime Minister and I have been broadly framed with a view to direct involvement by your Government in the next stage of discussions, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties. I have instructed senior officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to make contact with your Department to begin discussions to ensure that we can work cooperatively to achieve this end.

To support the collaboration with Indigenous leaders at the regional level, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information mapped by Empowered Communities region to share with Indigenous leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We are also seeking your participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this aspect of the approach.

My intention is to reserve public announcements regarding Australian Government action in response to the Empowered Communities report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working collaboratively across governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I am excited about the opportunity presented by Empowered Communities to work with you to this end.

Yours sincerely

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NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

The Hon Mr Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria
1 Treasury Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Premier

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety, objectives that I know are shared by your Government.

The Australian Government has also indicated that it is prepared to consider funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account of the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location.

Officers from the Victorian Government were briefed by PM&C officials during the development of the Empowered Communities report by Indigenous leaders. I understand there has been further contact between officials as the Australian Government has considered its response to the report.

It is clear that a better engagement between all levels of government and Indigenous people and a stronger role for proactive Indigenous leaders is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that both our governments have committed to under the Closing the Gap agreement. I believe that Empowered Communities offers a positive opportunity for governments to achieve this. I am also conscious that there are other relevant initiatives being progressed by state governments and I am keen to ensure that Empowered Communities complements rather than duplicates these other reforms. Where there are other locally led reform initiatives we are also keen to engage with these in conjunction with any work we are doing with Empowered Communities.

It will be important that analysis of the progress of implementation of Empowered Communities is iterative and ongoing. I anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. The Australian Government has indicated to the Empowered Communities leaders that the national policy and governance agenda articulated in their report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council* will not be implemented at this time. We have however, advised that the findings of the three year evaluation could inform possible consideration of these elements at a later date. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications of the national governance agenda, I would expect state and territory governments to be critical partners in any future consideration of these matters. We have also made it clear to the Empowered Communities leaders that any consideration of national policy and governance will need to take account of the Australian Government's commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

For the Empowered Communities approach to achieve its overarching aim of a new partnership between Indigenous leaders and all governments, Victoria will need to be a critical partner. The letters sent to the Empowered Communities leaders by the Prime Minister and I have been broadly framed with a view to direct involvement by your Government in the next stage of discussions, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties. I have instructed senior officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to make contact with your Department to begin discussions to ensure that we can work cooperatively to achieve this end.

To support the collaboration with Indigenous leaders at the regional level, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information mapped by Empowered Communities region to share with Indigenous leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We are also seeking your participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this aspect of the approach.

My intention is to reserve public announcements regarding Australian Government action in response to the Empowered Communities report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working collaboratively across governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I am excited about the opportunity presented by Empowered Communities to work with you to this end.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: C15/96976

The Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MLA
Premier of Queensland
PO Box 15185
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Premier

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull and I recently wrote to Mr Sean Gordon and Mr Noel Pearson in their capacity as Co-Chairs of the Empowered Communities Indigenous leadership group expressing our thanks for the Empowered Communities report and outlining a regionally focussed response from the Australian Government.

The response outlined in my letter to Messrs Gordon and Pearson focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility in their regions. We have a particular interest in school attendance and attainment, economic development and employment and community safety, objectives that I know are shared by your Government.

The Australian Government has also indicated that it is prepared to consider funding support for Backbone Organisations to implement and deliver Empowered Communities arrangements in each region. This would be negotiated between the Department's Regional Managers and Empowered Communities leaders in each region, taking into account the varying needs, challenges and opportunities present in each location.

Your Government was represented on the Steering Committee overseeing the development of the Empowered Communities report. I understand there has been further contact between officials as the Australian Government has considered its response to the report.

It is clear that a better engagement between all levels of government and Indigenous people and a stronger role for proactive Indigenous leaders is essential if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that both our governments have committed to under the Closing the Gap agreement. I believe that Empowered Communities offers a positive opportunity for governments to achieve this. I am also conscious that there are other relevant initiatives being progressed by state and territory governments and I am keen to ensure that Empowered Communities complements rather than duplicates these other reforms. Where there are other locally led reform initiatives we are also keen to engage with these in conjunction with any work we are doing with Empowered Communities.

It will be important that analysis of the progress of implementation of Empowered Communities is iterative and ongoing. I anticipate reviews at the end of each year with a more substantive evaluation after three years. The Australian Government has indicated to the Empowered Communities leaders that the national policy and governance agenda articulated in their report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council* will not be implemented at this time. We have however, advised that the findings of the three year evaluation could inform possible consideration of these elements at a later date. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications of the national governance agenda, I would expect state and territory governments to be critical partners in any future consideration of these matters. We have also made it clear to the Empowered Communities leaders that any consideration of national policy and governance will need to take account of the Australian Government's commitment to red tape reduction and low cost approaches.

For the Empowered Communities approach to achieve its overarching aim of a new partnership between Indigenous leaders and all governments, Queensland will need to be a critical partner. The letters sent to the Empowered Communities leaders by the Prime Minister and I have been broadly framed with a view to direct involvement by your Government in the next stage of discussions, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties. I have instructed senior officials from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to make contact with your Department to begin discussions to ensure that we can work cooperatively to achieve this end.

To support the collaboration with Indigenous leaders at the regional level, work is already underway to prepare Commonwealth funding information mapped by Empowered Communities region to share with Indigenous leaders. This will create a transparent platform to commence shared planning and decision-making regarding discretionary regional investment. We are also seeking your participation in a whole-of-governments commitment to this aspect of the approach.

My intention is to reserve public announcements regarding Australian Government action in response to the Empowered Communities report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working collaboratively across governments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I am excited about the opportunity presented by Empowered Communities to work with you to this end.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

9 December 2015

From: Tongue, Andrew
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 12:02 PM
To: 'John.coleman@nt.gov.au'
Cc: Tongue, Andrew
Subject: Response to Empowered Communities Leaders [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear John

The Prime Minister and Minister Scullion have recently written to the Empowered Communities Indigenous leaders outlining a regionally focussed response to their report, which focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility.

Minister Scullion will write to relevant First Minister's shortly, providing further information about the Commonwealth's response to EC and seeking to partner with the Northern Territory on the approach in the North East Arnhem Land and Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) regions. The intention is to reserve any public announcements regarding a response to the EC report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, it is possible that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Key elements of the Commonwealth's approach would include working with the EC leaders on:

- practical projects that enable Indigenous responsibility for education, starting with improving education and employment, economic development and community safety in each EC region;
- transparency of Government funding at the EC regional level, and
- planning and investment decisions regarding discretionary funding at the EC regional level.

To enable this approach, the Commonwealth proposes to provide modest operational 'Backbone' funding to the EC leadership in each region. Minister Scullion has agreed to extend the existing EC Regional Coordinator positions in each region until 31 March 2016, to enable time for smooth transition from these administrative arrangements to the Backbone Organisations.

Work is already underway to map Commonwealth funding in Empowered Communities regions and provide this information to the Indigenous leaders. The purpose of this is to be in a position to involve the leaders in determining where action is needed, and to enable a greater level of Indigenous responsibility for funding decisions and associated outcomes. Noting that the majority of primary services in communities are funded and delivered by jurisdictions, the Commonwealth is very keen to work with the Northern Territory to build an integrated, cross-jurisdictional picture of government investment in the North East Arnhem Land and NPY regions.

At this stage, the Australian Government has not committed to implement the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, we do expect there to be annual reviews of progress and a more substantive evaluation after three years. Findings of the evaluation could inform possible future consideration of the national policy and governance agenda. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications, states and territories would be critical partners in any future consideration of the national governance elements.

I would like to make a time to discuss with you the letter from Minister Scullion to Chief Minister Giles and how the Northern Territory could be part of the next stage of discussions with Empowered Communities leaders, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties.

Kind Regards,
Andrew

Andrew Tongue | Associate Secretary
Indigenous Affairs
p. 02 6271 5880
e andrew.tongue@pmc.gov.au

The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

From: Tongue, Andrew
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 11:59 AM
To: 'blair.comley@dpc.nsw.gov.au'
Cc: Tongue, Andrew
Subject: Response to Empowered Communities Leaders [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Blair

The Prime Minister and Minister Scullion have recently written to the Empowered Communities Indigenous leaders outlining a regionally focussed response to their report, which focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility.

Minister Scullion will write to relevant First Minister's shortly, providing further information about the Commonwealth's response to EC and seeking to partner with NSW on the approach in the Inner Sydney and Central Coast regions. The intention is to reserve any public announcements regarding a response to the EC report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, it is possible that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Key elements of the Commonwealth's approach would include working with the EC leaders on:

- practical projects that enable Indigenous responsibility for education, starting with improving education and employment, economic development and community safety in each EC region;
- transparency of Government funding at the EC regional level, and
- planning and investment decisions regarding discretionary funding at the EC regional level.

To enable this approach, the Commonwealth proposes to provide modest operational 'Backbone' funding to the EC leadership in each region. Minister Scullion has agreed to extend the existing EC Regional Coordinator positions in each region until 31 March 2016, to enable time for smooth transition from these administrative arrangements to the Backbone Organisations.

Work is already underway to map Commonwealth funding in Empowered Communities regions and provide this information to the Indigenous leaders. The purpose of this is to be in a position to involve the leaders in determining where action is needed, and to enable a greater level of Indigenous responsibility for funding decisions and associated outcomes. Noting that the majority of primary services in communities are funded and delivered by jurisdictions, the Commonwealth is very keen to work with NSW to build an integrated, cross-jurisdictional picture of government investment in the Inner Sydney and Central Coast regions.

At this stage, the Australian Government has not committed to implement the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, we do expect there to be annual reviews of progress and a more substantive evaluation after three years. Findings of the evaluation could inform possible future consideration of the national policy and governance agenda. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications, states and territories would be critical partners in any future consideration of the national governance elements.

I would like to make a time to discuss with you the letter from Minister Scullion to Premier Baird and how NSW could be part of the next stage of discussions with Empowered Communities leaders, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties.

Kind Regards,
Andrew

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Indigenous Affairs
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e andrew.tongue@pmc.gov.au

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From: Tongue, Andrew
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 12:03 PM
To: 'winter-dewhirst.kym@dpc.sa.gov.au'
Cc: Tongue, Andrew
Subject: Response to Empowered Communities Leaders [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Kym

The Prime Minister and Minister Scullion have recently written to the Empowered Communities Indigenous leaders outlining a regionally focussed response to their report, which focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility.

Minister Scullion will write to relevant First Minister's shortly, providing further information about the Commonwealth's response to EC and seeking to partner with the South Australia on the approach in the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) region. The intention is to reserve any public announcements regarding a response to the EC report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, it is possible that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Key elements of the Commonwealth's approach would include working with the EC leaders on:

- practical projects that enable Indigenous responsibility for education, starting with improving education and employment, economic development and community safety in each EC region;
- transparency of Government funding at the EC regional level, and
- planning and investment decisions regarding discretionary funding at the EC regional level.

To enable this approach, the Commonwealth proposes to provide modest operational 'Backbone' funding to the EC leadership in each region. Minister Scullion has agreed to extend the existing EC Regional Coordinator positions in each region until 31 March 2016, to enable time for smooth transition from these administrative arrangements to the Backbone Organisations.

Work is already underway to map Commonwealth funding in Empowered Communities regions and provide this information to the Indigenous leaders. The purpose of this is to be in a position to involve the leaders in determining where action is needed, and to enable a greater level of Indigenous responsibility for funding decisions and associated outcomes. Noting that the majority of primary services in communities are funded and delivered by jurisdictions, the Commonwealth is very keen to work with South Australia to build an integrated, cross-jurisdictional picture of government investment in the NPY region.

At this stage, the Australian Government has not committed to implement the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, we do expect there to be annual reviews of progress and a more substantive evaluation after three years. Findings of the evaluation could inform possible future consideration of the national policy and governance agenda. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications, states and territories would be critical partners in any future consideration of the national governance elements.

I would like to make a time to discuss with you the letter from Minister Scullion to Premier Weatherill and how South Australia could be part of the next stage of discussions with Empowered Communities leaders, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties.

Kind Regards,
Andrew

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e andrew.tongue@pmc.gov.au

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From: Tongue, Andrew
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 12:02 PM
To: 'peter.conran@dpc.wa.gov.au'
Cc: Tongue, Andrew
Subject: Response to Empowered Communities Leaders [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Peter

The Prime Minister and Minister Scullion have recently written to the Empowered Communities Indigenous leaders outlining a regionally focussed response to their report, which focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility.

Minister Scullion will write to relevant First Minister's shortly, providing further information about the Commonwealth's response to EC and seeking to partner with Western Australia on the approach in the East Kimberley, West Kimberley and Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) regions. The intention is to reserve any public announcements regarding a response to the EC report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, it is possible that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Key elements of the Commonwealth's approach would include working with the EC leaders on:

- practical projects that enable Indigenous responsibility for education, starting with improving education and employment, economic development and community safety in each EC region;
- transparency of Government funding at the EC regional level, and
- planning and investment decisions regarding discretionary funding at the EC regional level.

To enable this approach, the Commonwealth proposes to provide modest operational 'Backbone' funding to the EC leadership in each region. Minister Scullion has agreed to extend the existing EC Regional Coordinator positions in each region until 31 March 2016, to enable time for smooth transition from these administrative arrangements to the Backbone Organisations.

Work is already underway to map Commonwealth funding in Empowered Communities regions and provide this information to the Indigenous leaders. The purpose of this is to be in a position to involve the leaders in determining where action is needed, and to enable a greater level of Indigenous responsibility for funding decisions and associated outcomes. Noting that the majority of primary services in communities are funded and delivered by jurisdictions, the Commonwealth is very keen to work with Western Australia to build an integrated, cross-jurisdictional picture of government investment in the East Kimberley, West Kimberley and NPY regions.

At this stage, the Australian Government has not committed to implement the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, we do expect there to be annual reviews of progress and a more substantive evaluation after three years. Findings of the evaluation could inform possible future consideration of the national policy and governance agenda. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications, states and territories would be critical partners in any future consideration of the national governance elements.

I would like to make a time to discuss with you the letter from Minister Scullion to Premier Barnett and how Western Australia could be part of the next stage of discussions with Empowered Communities leaders, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties.

Kind Regards,
Andrew

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p. 02 6271 5880
e andrew.tongue@pmc.gov.au

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From: Tongue, Andrew
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 11:58 AM
To: 'chris.eccles@dpc.vic.gov.au'
Cc: Tongue, Andrew
Subject: Response to Empowered Communities Leaders [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Chris

The Prime Minister and Minister Scullion have recently written to the Empowered Communities Indigenous leaders outlining a regionally focussed response to their report, which focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility.

Minister Scullion will write to relevant First Minister's shortly, providing further information about the Commonwealth's response to EC and seeking to partner with Victoria on the approach in the Goulburn-Murray region. The intention is to reserve any public announcements regarding a response to the EC report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, it is possible that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Key elements of the Commonwealth's approach would include working with the EC leaders on:

- practical projects that enable Indigenous responsibility for education, starting with improving education and employment, economic development and community safety in each EC region;
- transparency of Government funding at the EC regional level, and
- planning and investment decisions regarding discretionary funding at the EC regional level.

To enable this approach, the Commonwealth proposes to provide modest operational 'Backbone' funding to the EC leadership in each region. Minister Scullion has agreed to extend the existing EC Regional Coordinator positions in each region until 31 March 2016, to enable time for smooth transition from these administrative arrangements to the Backbone Organisations.

Work is already underway to map Commonwealth funding in Empowered Communities regions and provide this information to the Indigenous leaders. The purpose of this is to be in a position to involve the leaders in determining where action is needed, and to enable a greater level of Indigenous responsibility for funding decisions and associated outcomes. Noting that the majority of primary services in communities are funded and delivered by jurisdictions, the Commonwealth is very keen to work with Victoria to build an integrated, cross-jurisdictional picture of government investment in the Goulburn-Murray region.

At this stage, the Australian Government has not committed to implement the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, we do expect there to be annual reviews of progress and a more substantive evaluation after three years. Findings of the evaluation could inform possible future consideration of the national policy and governance agenda. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications, states and territories would be critical partners in any future consideration of the national governance elements.

I would like to make a time to discuss with you the letter from Minister Scullion to Premier Andrews and how Victoria could be part of the next stage of discussions with Empowered Communities leaders, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties.

Kind Regards,
Andrew

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p. 02 6271 5880
e andrew.tongue@pmc.gov.au

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e andrew.tongue@pmc.gov.au

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From: Tongue, Andrew
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 11:59 AM
To: 'dave.stewart@premiers.qld.gov.au'
Cc: Tongue, Andrew
Subject: Response to Empowered Communities Leaders [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Dave

The Prime Minister and Minister Scullion have recently written to the Empowered Communities Indigenous leaders outlining a regionally focussed response to their report, which focusses on working with each of the Empowered Communities leaders to jointly agree on priorities and practical projects that promote Indigenous responsibility.

Minister Scullion will write to relevant First Minister's shortly, providing further information about the Commonwealth's response to EC and seeking to partner with Queensland on the approach in the Cape York region. The intention is to reserve any public announcements regarding a response to the EC report to allow time for the Indigenous leaders and relevant states and territories to also consider, discuss and agree a shared approach. However, it is possible that the Empowered Communities leaders will choose to make their own public statement prior to this.

Key elements of the Commonwealth's approach would include working with the EC leaders on:

- practical projects that enable Indigenous responsibility for education, starting with improving education and employment, economic development and community safety in each EC region;
- transparency of Government funding at the EC regional level, and
- planning and investment decisions regarding discretionary funding at the EC regional level.

To enable this approach, the Commonwealth proposes to provide modest operational 'Backbone' funding to the EC leadership in each region. Minister Scullion has agreed to extend the existing EC Regional Coordinator positions in each region until 31 March 2016, to enable time for smooth transition from these administrative arrangements to the Backbone Organisations.

Work is already underway to map Commonwealth funding in Empowered Communities regions and provide this information to the Indigenous leaders. The purpose of this is to be in a position to involve the leaders in determining where action is needed, and to enable a greater level of Indigenous responsibility for funding decisions and associated outcomes. Noting that the majority of primary services in communities are funded and delivered by jurisdictions, the Commonwealth is very keen to work with Queensland to build an integrated, cross-jurisdictional picture of government investment in the Cape York region.

At this stage, the Australian Government has not committed to implement the national policy and governance agenda articulated in the Empowered Communities report, including the *Indigenous Empowerment Act* and an *Indigenous Policy Productivity Council*. However, we do expect there to be annual reviews of progress and a more substantive evaluation after three years. Findings of the evaluation could inform possible future consideration of the national policy and governance agenda. Given the cross-jurisdictional implications, states and territories would be critical partners in any future consideration of the national governance elements.

I would like to make a time to discuss with you the letter from Minister Scullion to Premier Palaszczuk and how Queensland could be part of the next stage of discussions with Empowered Communities leaders, during which regional arrangements are to be considered and agreed between all parties.

Kind Regards,
Andrew