

WHAT IS THE ABORIGINAL STRATEGIC DIRECTION (ASD)?

The ASD is a working document (policy) that identifies where Police can have significant input to decrease the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. The ASD guides police in its management of Aboriginal issues and seeks Aboriginal community ownership and involvement through a consultative and proactive approach. The theme of this Policy is to involve Aboriginal people including (grass roots members) in consultation so that they understand what NSW Police Force is attempting to achieve and their role (the community) in the process.

THE SEVEN OBJECTIVES OF THE ASD

The Objectives describe the seven key issues that we will address during the implementation of the ASD. These Objectives are linked to our Corporate Plan, which has as its Goal; a safe NSW with a respected police force working with the community to reduce violence, crime and fear.

The Seven Objectives are:

- 1 Improve communication and understanding between Police and Aboriginal people.

- 2 Improve community safety and reduce fear of crime.
- 3 Seek innovation in the provision of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Aboriginal recruitment and retention.
- 4 Divert Aboriginal youth from crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 5 Establish an integrated approach to managing Aboriginal family violence (5a domestic violence and 5b: sexual assault)
- 6 Develop a strategic response to Aboriginal substance abuse.
- 7 Reduce offending and over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

The Objectives provide the basis for which Local Area Command Aboriginal Action Plans can be developed. Local Area Commands (LACs) will be required to take the lead in their development, however wide consultation with the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders must take place so that real working partnerships can be established.

LOCAL AREA COMMAND ABORIGINAL ACTION PLANS

A focus of the ASD will be engaging the Aboriginal community in the development of Local Area

Command Aboriginal Action Plans that will guide police/Aboriginal interventions. This provides Aboriginal people a say in how their community is policed and is achieved through:

- listening to and understanding Aboriginal people in the communities we police; and
- working with Aboriginal people and communities in a proactive partnership.

The abovementioned Local Area Command Aboriginal Action Plan must demonstrate community involvement by being co-signed by the Local Area Commander and an Aboriginal person (LAC Aboriginal Consultative Committee member) nominated by the community.

THREE TIER ABORIGINAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

Communication with the Aboriginal community is a fundamental principle driving the ASD. We will work with Aboriginal people to explore what self-determination and cultural appropriateness means for them with regard to how leadership on law and justice issues can be achieved locally. The forum to achieve this will be through the following Aboriginal Advisory Committees which we have established to strengthen relations with Aboriginal people across NSW:

- 1 Local Area Command Aboriginal Consultative Committee (LACACC);
- 2 Regional Aboriginal Advisory Committee (RAAC); and
- 3 Police Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Council (PASAC).

These committees aim to:

- Break down the barriers between police and Aboriginal people;
- Provide a forum for Aboriginal people and police to participate in decision making;
- Identify strategies in the development of joint action plans; and
- Address Aboriginal issues at a local and regional level as well as those that have a state-wide implication.

The LACACC is where the Aboriginal community and police meet to discuss crime and violence issues in their LAC and develop Local Area Command Aboriginal Action Plans. The Terms of Reference for the above Committees are available from local police on request.

OUTCOMES

The success or otherwise of the ASD will be monitored internally by police, externally by the

NSW Ombudsman's Office and our partners through the Police Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Council.

We will work within a whole of government framework to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the direction of the NSW Government. We will report against and implement where deemed necessary, the relevant Reports, Recommendations, Taskforces or Summits that drives the work of Government in its management of Aboriginal issues in NSW.

This includes (but is not limited to) the *Two Ways Together Plan* (Whole of Government approach driven by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs), the *NSW Interagency Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities 2006 – 2011*, the *NSW State Plan* and the *NSW Aboriginal Justice Plan*.

NSW STATE PLAN

The State Plan, *A New Direction for NSW*, was launched by the Premier, Morris Iemma in November 2006. The State Plan is set out in terms of five areas of activity for the NSW Government.

The ASD is consistent with the following Key Goals and Priority Areas in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 from

the NSW State Plan:

- Chapter 2 – Rights, Respect and Responsibility - *the justice system and services that promote community involvement and citizenship*.
- Keeping people safe.
 - Priority R1; Reduced rates of crime, particularly violent crime
 - Priority R2; Reduced re-offending.
- Building harmonious communities.
 - Priority R3; Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour
 - Priority R4; Increased participation and integration in community activities.
- Chapter 4 – Fairness and Opportunity - *services that promote social justice and reduce disadvantage*.
- Strengthening Aboriginal Communities.
 - Priority F1; Improved health and education for Aboriginal people.

NSW ABORIGINAL JUSTICE PLAN (AJP)

The ASD is consistent with the AJP aims and its 7 strategic directions. The ASD primarily aims to improve and strengthen the relationship between police and Aboriginal communities.

ABORIGINAL COORDINATION TEAM

Manager
(02) 8835 9129

ACLO State Coordinator
(02) 8835 9545

Aboriginal Family Violence Officer
(02) 8835 8003

Program Officer
(02) 8835 9130

Program Support Officer
(02) 8835 8918

ACT ADDRESS

Level 8A
Commissioners Inspectorate
Executive Support Group
NSW Police Force
1 Charles Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

We will continue to link our work to and implement the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

To ensure our management of Aboriginal issues is open and transparent we will engage and consult with:

- Aboriginal people (at the grass roots level) and communities;
- Aboriginal organisations;
- Non-government organisations servicing Aboriginal people; and
- other Commonwealth, State or Local Government Agencies.

We will strive to develop partnerships with the Aboriginal community, government, and non-government service providers. This approach will recognise the important role other agencies or Aboriginal controlled services can provide in bringing about successful outcomes for Aboriginal people and minimise any negative contact with police.

COMMUNITY WORKING PARTIES / ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY JUSTICE GROUPS

While we seek that our Three Tier Aboriginal Consultative model is implemented to address justice issues and drive our policy, we are aware that other community forums currently exist. Flexibility is recommended where Community Working Parties and/or Aboriginal Community Justice Groups have been established.

In implementing the ASD, police will need to identify locally, how this might best be achieved. In smaller communities in may not be practical to have a LACACC, a Community Working Party and an Aboriginal Community Justice Group as members will usually be the same group of committed people.

INNOVATION IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS

We will encourage our officers to work with Aboriginal communities to seek innovative solutions that result in positive outcomes for Aboriginal people and police. Officers will be encouraged to explore a range of diversion options in partnership with the Aboriginal community and service providers or other Justice Agencies.

New ways of addressing Aboriginal disadvantage are being implemented or considered in many forums

across the State. We will participate in discussions that identify communities where alternative law and justice initiatives for Aboriginal people may be introduced. Through consultation with Aboriginal people we will seek and promote local solutions for local problems.

IDENTIFYING AND RESPECTING THE ROLE OF ELDERS

We recognise the significance of Aboriginal Elders as custodians of knowledge and teachers of lore and customs to Aboriginal people. It is important that we acknowledge the position of Aboriginal Elders in the community by seeking their input on matters affecting the community wherever possible.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BUSINESS

Men's Business and Women's Business refers to cultural knowledge, history, stories and traditions that are shared or passed down to others based on gender. It is forbidden to discuss men's business in the company of women and vice versa.

It is important for Police to understand this when they are interacting with Aboriginal people as victims, offenders or through any other form of consultation or contact with the Aboriginal community.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICERS

ACLOs are employed to liaise, develop and maintain open communication with the Aboriginal community. The ACLO assists in the development of LAC Aboriginal Action Plans and other crime prevention initiatives within their community.

ACLOs are not police officers; they are field-based and are provided ongoing training and development that enables them to offer appropriate advice and assistance to the community. We will seek to ensure that female ACLOs are available to cater for Aboriginal women ("women's business").

LOCAL AREA COMMAND ABORIGINAL ISSUES OFFICERS

Local Area Command (LAC) Aboriginal Issues Officers are Inspector level Police Officers and have a key role in the management of Aboriginal issues at the LAC. This role ensures the flow of information and the regular reporting on Aboriginal issues are maintained at the LAC.

The role requires the LAC Aboriginal Issues Officer to develop an awareness of a range of Aboriginal issues and support other initiatives where appropriate.

REGION ABORIGINAL SPONSORS

Region Aboriginal Sponsors are Superintendent level police officers whose role is to oversee the implementation of Aboriginal policy within their respective police region. The establishment of Region Aboriginal Sponsors within the organisation came about to ensure that information flowing into and out of each region concerning Aboriginal issues was centrally coordinated.

The role requires the Region Aboriginal Sponsor to develop an awareness of a range of Aboriginal issues and support other initiatives where appropriate. Region Aboriginal Sponsors report to the ASD Steering Committee on Region progress of the ASD.

CORPORATE SPOKESPERSON FOR ABORIGINAL ISSUES

The Corporate Spokesperson for Aboriginal Issues is an Assistant Commissioner level officer and is one of many corporate spokespersons within NSW Police Force.

The Spokesperson Program gives nominated senior officers the corporate responsibility to develop an overview of strategy, policy and operational practice in a particular portfolio; to maintain the corporate profile for the portfolio and to be an advocate for the area when required.

The Corporate Spokesperson chairs the Aboriginal Strategic Direction Steering Committee which meets quarterly. This internal Committee is responsible for reporting against and ensuring that the seven objectives of the ASD are being implemented.

ABORIGINAL COORDINATION TEAM (ACT)

The role of the ACT is to develop and implement corporate policy and respond to legislation in relation to Aboriginal issues and to support / lead the various structures that manage Aboriginal issues across the organisation. Employees of the ACT are non-sworn officers (not police officers) and are of Aboriginal descent.

