



Attorney-General

Reference: MC23-041899

Ms Yasmin Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance

By email: ceo@natsiwa.org.au

Dear Ms Johnson

Thank you for your email correspondence of 11 September 2023 to the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women and the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, Minister for Social Services.

In your email, you expressed concern about the shortage of Indigenous interpreters in remote parts of the country and the impact of this on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women within the justice system. As the issue raised falls within my portfolio responsibilities as the Attorney-General, your email was referred to me for reply. I have copied this letter to the Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians.

All Australian Governments have committed to implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which includes Priority Reform Three, to transform our justice systems so that they work effectively for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The Attorney-General's portfolio also supports the Justice Policy Partnership (JPP) which is also a commitment established under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The JPP is made up of leaders from the Coalition of Peaks, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice experts and Commonwealth, state and territory government representatives. The JPP finalised its Strategic Framework in 2023 which embeds Priority Reform Three through a range of justice priorities and initiatives. A focus of the JPP will be to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to design and implement culturally safe, community-led approaches to policing, court and other justice-based processes. You can follow the progress of the JPP at the JPP website, available at: <https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/closing-the-gap/justice-policy-partnership>.

The purpose of the JPP and other policy partnerships is to work in a joined-up way to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The Language Policy Partnership (LPP) is focused on ensuring that First Nations culture and languages are strong, viable and supported. Opportunities are being identified for ways in which the LPP and JPP work together to improve intersecting policy issues.

As indicated by the Hon Linda Burney MP in her correspondence to you of 30 November 2023, states and territories are responsible for their own justice systems. The Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) meetings are a forum through which I work with states and territories to raise and discuss legal and justice issues. I share your concern about the shortage of Indigenous interpreters in remote parts of the country and the impact of this for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in accessing justice and plan to raise this issue at a future SCAG meeting.

I am grateful to you for raising your concerns and trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



THE HON MARK DREYFUS KC MP

26/1/2024