



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

## MEDIA RELEASE

### URGENT NEED FOR ACTION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

30 SEPTEMBER 2016

The State Development Committee today released its report into Economic Development in Aboriginal communities. The report follows the release of a discussion paper in July.

“The report was unanimous and bipartisan” said Chair, Hon Greg Pearce MLC. “We have sought views and listened to stakeholders, especially aboriginal people, organisations and businesses to identify practical measures the New South Wales government might take to overcome the unacceptable level of disadvantage in Aboriginal communities across New South Wales.” he said.

“There is widespread commitment to engage to address problems, particularly from Aboriginal communities themselves and there are many examples of successful Aboriginal economic activities.” continued Mr Pearce. “Whilst governments, bureaucrats and others have made genuine and often positive efforts, it is disappointing that the Gap has not Closed.”

“We are recommending that eliminating disadvantage and supporting Aboriginal economic development receive a major push from the NSW Government” said Mr Pearce. “We have recommended that Aboriginal Affairs be front and centre of government and that the Premier convenes an advisory board on Aboriginal economic development comprising of key ministers, Aboriginal representatives and the broader community to identify Aboriginal objectives, programs, policies and spending, and to monitor outcomes “

“The advisory board should be supported by a high-level public sector group to ensure consistency and coordination of outcomes across all departments and alleviate concerns about the duplication of services” said Mr Pearce.

Other recommendations include:

- funding for capacity development programs for Aboriginal organisations and individuals and a finance option for aboriginal organisations and businesses
- reforming the land claims system to allow the prioritising of claims and to realise the economic prosperity and development opportunities envisaged by returning land to Aboriginal communities under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*
- reform of the local aboriginal land boards system to ensure it responds to current requirements and opportunities and does not unduly restrain economic development
- specific suggestions including in relation to government procurement targets, education, training and support a mechanism for planning to recognise aboriginal land use and recognition of aboriginal connection with water.



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

“We recognise that these are entrenched and difficult issues to deal with and hope that our report will lead to a bipartisan attempt to make significant progress in alleviating aboriginal disadvantage and supporting aboriginal economic development” said Mr Pearce. “The government will now consider our recommendations and suggestions and its response.”

For more information visit the committee’s website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/statedevelopment](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/statedevelopment).

-ENDS-

*For further comment please contact the Hon Greg Pearce MLC,  
Committee Chair, on 9230 2328*