

27 November 2008



**Legislative Council
Standing Committee on Social Issues
Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in
New South Wales**

The Chair of the Social Issues Committee, the Hon Ian West MLC, today tabled the Committee's Final Report of its 18-month inquiry into overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in New South Wales.

Mr West said "We heard about a lot of problems during this Inquiry. But we also heard tremendous stories of personal pride, strength in the face of adversity, and cultural resilience. The main message we heard was that, where there are problems in Aboriginal communities, governments need to listen to those communities and work with them to come up with and implement appropriate solutions."

"The report recognises that there is no 'quick fix'. The 23 recommendations in this report, if adopted and properly implemented, will bring Indigenous issues into sharper focus and bring meaning to the term 'partnership'.

"What is needed is a radical change in the way that restrictive bureaucratic systems are imposed on Aboriginal communities. There is a pressing need for greater flexibility in service design, provision and implementation."

Mr West said "Accountability for achieving successful outcomes for Aboriginal people must have a high priority for every government department. This report elevates the task of overcoming Indigenous disadvantage to an integral part of the core business of every government department, and increases the authority of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to facilitate between agencies and ensure targets and objectives are met."

"Following the National Apology there is hope that this country has good intent and goodwill. Governments must not allow political or economic cycles to be excuses for nice words and little implementation. The opportunity for good intentions to translate into reality is waiting to be fully taken" said Mr West.

Electronic copies of the report can be obtained from the Committee's website at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues. Hard copies are available on request from the Committee Secretariat on 02 9230 3504 or email socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

For further comment please contact the Hon Ian West MLC,

Committee Chair, on 9230 2052