



Legislative Council

**INQUIRY INTO OVERCOMING INDIGENOUS
DISADVANTAGE IN NEW SOUTH WALES
INTERIM REPORT**

Committee Chair, the Honourable Ian West MLC, today tabled the Standing Committee on Social Issues Interim Report of their Inquiry into overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in New South Wales. Mr West thanked the Indigenous elders, representatives, service providers and organisations that gave of their time and expertise in examining the impact of environmental health, health and wellbeing, education, employment, housing, incarceration and the criminal justice system on the current lifetime expectancy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Mr West said: 'Despite many good policies and programs and a genuine commitment to address Indigenous disadvantage, the life expectancy of Aboriginal people remains dramatically lower than that of non-Aboriginal people. We have identified wide gaps in all outcome areas.'

Mr West identified the mood of hope following the Federal Government's Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and called on Indigenous and non-Aboriginal Australians to work together to address the very real and pressing needs of the Aboriginal population.

Through written submissions and site visits to a range of locations in Sydney, Bidwill in Sydney's west, Redfern in the inner city, and the regional areas of Kempsey, Dubbo and Nowra, the Committee identified key issues in need of further consideration. Many of these issues come together into themes that relate to each of the key factors affecting the life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia.

Mr West said: 'These broad themes relate to the fundamental nature of service provision, the need to accurately measure outcomes, sufficient program funding, the employment of, and support for Aboriginal people.'

The message from this Inquiry so far is that there must be significant reform to the delivery of services to Aboriginal people if the gap between the circumstances of Indigenous and non-Aboriginal Australians is to be overcome. It is vital to build effective partnerships with the Aboriginal community, and for communities to have real ownership of programs and outcomes.'

In its Final Report, due in late November, the Committee will make recommendations for a way forward. The Final Report will examine the issues identified in this Interim Report as well as the remaining terms of reference. The Committee intends to conduct further hearings and site visits, engaging with Aboriginal communities and will also use evidence already gathered to inform its recommendations. The Interim Report is available on the Committee's website at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues.

**For further comment please contact the Committee Chair,
Mr Ian West MLC on 9230 2052**