



12 September 2007

**Legislative Council
Standing Committee on Social Issues**

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

The first inquiry of the Standing Committee on Social Issues in the new Parliament will examine the policies and programs aimed at addressing the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Committee will conduct an audit of these policies and programs and seek meaningful assessment of their effectiveness in closing that gap. The inquiry was referred to the Committee by the Hon Paul Lynch, MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Chair Ian West MLC said, "The scope of the Committee's inquiry is very challenging and far reaching. The Committee will consider the impact of health, education, employment and housing on Indigenous disadvantage."

"The Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that, based on available data, in 2005 the estimated Indigenous life expectancy is 59 years for males and 65 years for females. This is about 17 years below life expectancy for all males and females respectively."

Mr West continued, "The inquiry terms of reference ask us to look at the policies and programs operating in New South Wales and Australia that are aimed at closing the acute life expectancy gap, as well as successful programs internationally, for example in New Zealand, Canada and North and South America."

"The Committee will also investigate opportunities for strengthening cultural resilience within Indigenous communities, focusing on language, cultural identity and self-determination."

"Importantly, as part of its inquiry, the Committee will assess the Government's progress in implementing recommendations from previous Social Issues Committee reports" Mr West said.

Mr West said, "On behalf of the Committee I'd like to encourage interested people and organisations to contribute to this very important inquiry."

The Committee is to produce an interim report by 30 June 2008 and a final report by 30 November 2008.

For further information, including how to make a submission to this inquiry and copies of the terms of reference, please contact the Committee secretariat on 02 9230 3078 or via email to socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

It is also possible to lodge a submission via the NSW Parliament website at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues. The closing date for submissions is 30 November 2007.

*For further comment please contact Ian West MLC, Committee Chair, on
9230 2126*