

Resetting the relationship with the Aboriginal community

2016 – 2017 KEY ACTIVITIES

The landmark achievement of constitutional recognition for Tasmanian Aboriginal people marked a high point in the Government's commitment to reset the relationship with the community in 2016-17.

Work also continued to improve access to Aboriginal specific programs and services, and increase employment and career development opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Moving forward, a key focus will be joint land management and land handback arrangements that support the Aboriginal community to connect to country and culture.

Key Priority 1 - A new approach to Aboriginal Eligibility

A new approach to eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services commenced in July 2016.

This more inclusive approach aligns with that of the Australian Government and aims to ensure that all Aboriginal people are eligible to access Tasmanian Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services.

Key Priority 2 - Focus on Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture in the delivery of the Australian curriculum

This work is supported by \$520,000 over two years secured in the 2016-17 State Budget.

Five professional learning videos and accompanying learning tasks were launched in December 2016, aimed at raising awareness and improving understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal histories and cultures in schools.

Further curriculum resources are currently under development covering topics such as ochre and stone tools.

Consultation has also been undertaken with the Aboriginal community on the development of an Aboriginal Histories and Cultures Framework, as a way of organising the content to be shared in schools.

Key Priority 3 - Constitutional recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal people

An historic amendment to Tasmania's Constitution to recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people received Royal Assent on 15 December 2016.

This long overdue change introduced a clear statement of acknowledgement of the First Tasmanians in the Preamble of our Constitution.

Key Priority 4 - Explore joint land management arrangements and review the current land return model

This priority area is supported by:

- \$800,000 over four years secured in the 2016-17 State Budget for joint management of the Aboriginal cultural values of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area; and
- \$660,000 to employ two additional people under the

Parks and Wildlife Service
Aboriginal Trainee Ranger
Program.

Activities in 2016-17 focused on improving stability and enhancing functionality of the Aboriginal Heritage Register, developing the Aboriginal Heritage Property Search website and initial scoping of Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) management reserves for Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania staff and Council members.

The selection of the new recruits to the Trainee Ranger Program was also finalised.

Land management and return will be a focus for further activity in 2017-18.

Key Priority Area 5 – Closing the Gap

The Government is continuing to advance the Council of Australian Government's Closing the Gap agenda at the local level, including projects to reduce family violence; to improve employment and career development opportunities through its approaches to employment and procurement; and to support Aboriginal tourism through the *wukalina* cultural walk.

Planning for the Aboriginal Family Safety Initiative has been finalised, which will see the employment of Aboriginal Family Safety Workers at Child and Family Centres at

Bridgewater, Ravenswood and Burnie.

These workers will engage Aboriginal families with children from birth to five years. They will deliver support and activities that promote family safety, and which address family violence and its impact on children.

This Program is supported by \$333,340 over three years secured in the 2016-17 State Budget. The program will commence operation in 2017-18.

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Tasmanian State Service is under development.

The Strategy will support a service-wide employment target through improved recruitment and retention practices, including raising cultural competence across the Service and working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to identify stronger pathways for young people to engage with employment opportunities.

Work is underway to develop an Indigenous Procurement Policy that will leverage the Tasmanian Government's purchasing power by giving preference to suppliers able to demonstrate significant rates of Aboriginal employment.

During 2016-17 the Tasmanian Government continued to provide financial support to the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania for the

development of the *wukalina* Cultural Walk from *krakani lumi* in Mount William National Park to *larapuna / Eddystone Lighthouse*.

The *wukalina* Cultural Walk will be a signature tourism experience drawing on the cultural and natural values of the North-East and will deliver strong benefits to the Tasmanian tourism sector.

It also offers significant potential to deliver new jobs and pathways to skills development for Aboriginal people.

The project reflects the aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to develop the cultural tourism sector and recognition of the community's traditional and continuing custodianship of *lutruwita / Tasmania*.

Additional activities

Additional activities undertaken in 2016-17 included:

- the introduction of amendments to the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 (Tas)* in Parliament; and
- the employment of an additional three Aboriginal Early Years Workers located in Child and Family Centres, to increase participation in early childhood initiatives for improved education outcomes and school readiness.