

Indigenous Affairs

ACT Labor respects the heritage and customs of our Indigenous community and values the contribution Indigenous culture makes to the life of Canberra.

ACT Labor also recognises that Indigenous members of our community still experience significant disadvantage across a number of wellbeing and participation indicators.

The ACT Labor Government has taken practical steps towards reconciliation and inclusion. We established an elected Indigenous representative body to advise the Government on the delivery of services to Indigenous Canberrans and established the nation's first Aboriginal Justice Centre.

To support Indigenous children, ACT Labor introduced literacy and numeracy programs for all Aboriginal children from Kindergarten to Year 4 who fail to meet benchmarks. Labor is also giving more assistance to high-performing Indigenous students in years 6 to 9, to encourage them to remain in school and is supporting families through our successful Indigenous parenting program in Gungahlin and West Belconnen, in partnership with the Commonwealth.

To address Indigenous health outcomes, ACT Labor has committed to an Indigenous-specific drug and alcohol rehabilitation service, funded an Aboriginal Midwifery Program at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Centre and implemented a hearing health program for Indigenous infants and children, including a comprehensive school-based screening service.

To foster excellence and provide opportunities for young Indigenous people, ACT Labor has piloted a traineeship program across the ACT Public Service for young Indigenous Canberrans, with a guarantee of a job for those who complete the program.

Also, in recognition of the enduring and rich culture of the Indigenous people of our region, ACT Labor worked with the Indigenous community to establish the Cultural Centre at Yarramundi Reach.

ACT Labor is committed to improving Indigenous health, education and workforce participation outcomes, in partnership and in true consultation with the Indigenous community of Canberra.

We are committed to building a better city and a stronger community for all Canberrans.

Jon Stanhope
Chief Minister
Minister for Indigenous Affairs

Katy Gallagher
Deputy Chief Minister

A Proud Record of Supporting Indigenous Canberrans

The ACT Labor Government has worked in partnership with the Indigenous community to provide improved opportunities and to promote social inclusion.

We are closing the gaps but acknowledge that there is more to be done.

That is why Labor will continue to consult with and listen to the Indigenous community, and its representatives, to improve services and policies that affect the lives of Indigenous Canberrans.

Our Record of Achievement

Since being elected the ACT Labor Government has:

- funded literacy and numeracy support for all Aboriginal children from Kindergarten to Year 4 who fail to meet benchmarks;
- given greater support to high-performing Indigenous students in years 6 to 9, to encourage them to remain engaged with the educational system;
- constituted an elected Indigenous representative body with the first elections held in June 2008;
- pledged \$10.8 million for an Indigenous-specific drug and alcohol rehabilitation service, now in the final design phase;
- established the nation's first Aboriginal Justice Centre;
- piloted a traineeship program across the ACT Public Service for young Indigenous Canberrans, with a guarantee of a job for those who complete the program;
- in collaboration with the Commonwealth expanded a successful Indigenous parenting program in Gungahlin and West Belconnen;
- expanded the Koori preschool program to more sites across the city;
- established an Indigenous foster care program, in recognition that there is a need for stable and culturally appropriate out-of-home care of this kind;
- funded an Aboriginal Midwifery Program at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Centre;
- implemented a hearing health program for Indigenous infants and children, including a comprehensive school-based screening service;
- established a high-level taskforce of core agency heads (education, health, housing and community services) to coordinate wrap-around services for Indigenous families at risk of coming to the notice of authorities;
- co-chaired the Council of Australian Governments Working Group on Indigenous Reform, which is developing practical strategies to address indigenous disadvantage, including key initiatives to close the life expectancy gap and improve educational outcomes;

- changed the rules applying to funeral directors, to ensure better data collection on the causes of Indigenous death;
- worked with the Indigenous community to establish the Cultural Centre at Yarramundi Reach; and
- invested \$4.5 million since 2006-07 to improve housing outcomes for Indigenous Canberrans in public housing.

In the 2008-09 ACT Budget the ACT Labor Government:

- Allocated \$2.5 million over four years for integrated Aboriginal family support services for at-risk families;
- Funded NAIDOC week and the continuing work of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council.

Moving Forward

Building on the measures the Government already has in place, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will, over its next term:

- provide \$150,000 to research and compile genealogies of each of the acknowledged traditional Ngunnawal clans based in the ACT;
- design and deliver, in consultation with the Indigenous community, a \$120,000 program to support older Canberrans — in particular grandmothers — who are primary carers of their grandchildren;
- examine the outcomes of a pilot program of Indigenous public service traineeships conducted in 2008 and, on the basis of those findings and in consultation with the Indigenous elected body, provide up to \$90,000 to extend, expand or refine the program;
- provide \$505,000 to increase the number of Indigenous teachers and teacher's aides in our public schools through scholarships, traineeships and other forms of support for career progression.
- explore new and expanded approaches to develop cultural tourism in the ACT in consultation with the Ngunnawal people
- provide new funding of \$240,000 to institute an Indigenous Leadership grants program, to encourage the leaders of tomorrow to undertake capacity training today; and
- provide \$200,000 to fund an independent facilitator to support members of the elected Indigenous body and build their leadership capacities.

Support for Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren

There are many Indigenous families in which grandparents act as primary carers for their grandchildren. A re-elected ACT Labor Government will work with the local Indigenous community to design and implement a program to better support grandparents, in particular grandmothers, who are primary carers for their grandchildren. Depending on consultation, elements of the program might include social events, playgroups, assistance with transport, homework clubs and sporting activities.

Ngunnawal Genealogy Project

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will provide \$150,000 to fund the research and compilation of genealogies of each of the acknowledged traditional Ngunnawal clans based in the ACT.

This project is important because of the lack of formal genealogies that exist, which has limited the capacity of Aboriginal people who are indigenous to this region to know and tell their own histories.

Indigenous Traineeships

An Indigenous public service traineeship pilot program was conducted in 2008 and involved more than a dozen young Indigenous men and women who were placed in ACT Government agencies. Theoretical and on-the-job training was provided. Participants gained experience as teacher assistants, library assistants and clerical officers, and are now working across a number of departments in the ACT Government.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will review the outcomes of a pilot program of Indigenous public service traineeships conducted in 2008 and will commit up to \$90,000 to improve the program and its outcomes.

Indigenous Teachers and Teacher's Assistants

Experience shows that one of the most powerful positive influences on Indigenous students is the presence in the school community of Indigenous teachers and teacher's aides.

Acknowledging the importance of role-modelling in education, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will provide \$505,000 to increase the number of Indigenous teachers and teacher's aides in our public schools through scholarships, traineeships and other forms of support for career progression.

Cultural Tourism

More than half of the ACT is dedicated to national parks and reserves, and many parts of the territory have rich Indigenous histories.

In consultation with the Ngunnawal people, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will explore the potential for developing cultural tourism opportunities in the ACT that are led and delivered by local Indigenous people, particularly in Namadgi National Park, over which the Ngunnawal people share management responsibility with the Territory.

Leadership Training

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will provide \$240,000 to develop an Indigenous Leadership grants program to encourage the leaders of tomorrow to undertake capacity training today.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will also fund an independent facilitator to ensure that the members of the elected Indigenous body get a similar level of professional support and guidance to that that is given to newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly, along with ongoing support to consolidate their leadership capacities.