



Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services

File No: PSB/00094
Ref No: 04040-2016 LE

Level 24 State Law Building
50 Ann Street Brisbane
PO Box 15195 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3035 8300
Facsimile +61 7 3220 6229
Email police@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

19 MAY 2016

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April 2016, about Petition No. 2512-15, received by the Legislative Assembly requesting the House amend the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* to appoint a second Commissioner of Police, with the requirement that this person must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

While the Government has no plans to appoint a second Commissioner of Police or change the executive structure of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) based on a person's racial profile, I can assure the petitioners and the Queensland community that the QPS provides many forums to engage with Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is committed to diversity within its ranks. Consequently, the QPS undertakes a wide range of community engagement activities throughout Queensland to promote mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and trust between police and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Within the QPS, the Cultural Support Unit promotes and maintains effective relationships with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities and its members and senior QPS executives work with community members in a number of forums to address issues or concerns. The Indigenous Reference Group and the Police and Ethnic Advisory Group both meet bi-monthly with representation from the Commissioner of Police and members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Commissioner of Police also meets annually with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mayors to improve policing relationships as part of the Indigenous Mayors Summit held in conjunction with the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Additionally, the QPS has annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Directions and associated Action Plans, which outline strategies and priorities for promoting the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the provision of appropriate policing services. These initiatives contribute to a range of national, state and local initiatives, including the Australian Government's Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disadvantage and Queensland Government strategies such as the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Items contained within the 2015-2016 QPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Annual Action Plan include strengthening employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the QPS; improving the knowledge and skills of QPS employees working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and within these Indigenous communities; strengthening engagement to foster understanding and partnerships; and strengthening the capacity of police to respond to matters involving Indigenous people, in particular alcohol related domestic violence and incidents involving at-risk youth.

Through the Cross Cultural Liaison Officer, Police Liaison Officer and Torres Strait Island Police Support Officer roles across the State, the QPS also has direct engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a culturally aware and sensitive way. These roles work to improve police relations with communities and assist police understanding of cultural matters. They identify and report potential problems and difficulties for communities before they escalate, and engage with and encourage communities to contact police with issues and concerns.

In addition, the QPS has established local Indigenous Community/Police Consultative Groups (ICPCGs) in a number of areas to develop better relationships between police and Indigenous communities and to assist police better serve those communities in an informed and co-operative way. ICPCGs:

- provide a forum for discussion of matters relating to the policing of the community;
- act as a facilitating agent through which representations can be made at a local level for the purpose of improving the service provided by local police;
- provide an understanding of QPS policies, ideas and directions; and
- provide access to members of the community requiring police information or assistance, particularly for those unable to voice their concerns directly to a police officer.

Furthermore, the QPS offers cadetships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in preparation for direct entry into the Recruit Training Program. The Indigenous Cadetship program is a 10 week, full-time course at the QPS Academy and forms part of the Service's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity in employment.

I can assure petitioners that Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are a key consideration in all QPS initiatives and the QPS will continue to build on its relationships to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provide appropriate policing services for them.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



The Honourable Bill Byrne MP

**Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and
Minister for Corrective Services**