



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail UN.Geneva@dfat.gov.au

Chemin des Fins 2, Petit Saconnex, 1211 Geneva 19 Ph +41 22 799 9100 Fax +41 22 799 9175 www.geneva.mission.gov.au

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

EMRP 2014

Seventh Session – 7-11 July 2014

Follow-up on Thematic Studies and Advice: Right to Participate in Decision-Making

Australia is committed to the principle that all peoples, including Indigenous people, should be able to engage fully and freely in democratic processes and be consulted where decisions affect them.

Australia's reform agenda in Indigenous Affairs has, at its core, a new engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

These reforms aim to ensure funding will achieve real results in the priority areas of getting children to school, adults into jobs and making communities safe. These priorities are critical to improving life outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

The Empowered Communities initiative presents a practical example of the Government's reform programme. The Empowered Communities model aims to strengthen local Indigenous leadership and governance and build strong, healthy, prosperous and safe communities.

The initiative is being developed by the Empowered Communities Group comprised of local leaders from eight regions across Australia. The model aims to ensure Indigenous people have a greater say about how government services are delivered in their regions.

This development approach recognises that Indigenous, locally-led responsibility is crucial to effective and sustainable reform.

Australia consults with a broad cross-section of Indigenous institutions, peoples, communities and groups to help inform the development and implementation of Indigenous Affairs policies and programmes.

One of these consultative groups is the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council. This Council focuses on practical changes to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians and inform the Government's policy implementation.

The Indigenous Advisory Council is comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians with a broad range of skills, including experience in the public sector, business acumen and a strong understanding of Indigenous culture.

The early focus of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council is on improving school attendance and educational attainment, creating lasting employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the economy, empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and improving community safety.