**DFFH All Staff Forum - Aboriginal and Self Determination Outcomes Division (ASDO) (Edited)**

0:18  
It's time for 60 seconds with stakeholder Engagement.

0:22  
Our guest today is Mandy Griffiths, Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Events, here to answer questions about plain language.

0:29  
Are you ready Mandy?

0:30  
I'm ready.

0:31  
Start the clock in plain language.

0:32  
Explain what is plain language.

0:35  
It's writing content in a way that is easy to read, understand and act on.

0:39  
It is an intentional way of writing that focuses on the experience of the reader.

0:42  
Why is it important for people to use plain language?

0:45  
44% of Australian adults have what is considered to be low literacy.

0:49  
If we're not writing for this audience then it's potentially we're missing that 44% of the public.

0:54  
I see myself as a bit Shakespearean but think I can make it more interesting Yonder way by I'm getting a DRAM creative.

1:00  
Wouldn't that be better?

1:02  
Nobody has ever complained that something was too easy to read.

1:05  
If the information I'm communicating is complex, how do I make it easy to understand?

1:10  
You can try reading it out loud, don't use jargon and use Hemingway app which can give you a readability score.

1:16  
Are there any situations where plain language is not appropriate?

1:19  
I'm going to waste pressure seconds here on a dramatic pause no, and now quick fire word swaps.

1:26  
What should I write instead of in the event of if retain keep numerous many utilise use deconflict overlapping priorities.

1:37  
Don't use that one that's submitted up.

1:40  
Thank you Mandy, how do I find out more?

1:42  
I can go to our new Writing plain language for government E learning course.

2:02  
Kiora, Tina, Kato Kato, and welcome to today's All Star Forum.

2:07  
I'm Ruth Ward, Chief of Public Engagement, and I'll be your facilitator for today.

2:13  
I would like to begin today's forum by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we're meeting today and pay my respects to Elders past and present, as well as to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members joining us today.

2:27  
I'd also like to acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

2:30  
This is, was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

2:35  
The session will be recorded and shared on the intranet for anyone who hasn't been able to attend.

2:41  
I do hope you all enjoyed that video with Mandy Griffiths.

2:44  
Plain language is important for our department as many of the communities we support face barriers to accessing information and I am excited to announce that the department has committed to a new accessible Communications policy, which will apply to staff will be providing you with many resources to help you understand and apply the policy in your work and more will be communicated soon.

3:10  
Today is all about the Aboriginal Self Determination and Outcomes Division, also known as ASDO, and highlighting the importance of self determination.

3:20  
We'll be hearing from our secretary Peter Mccammon, ASDO Deputy secretary Raylene Harridine, and departmental staff Jade Hull and Dee Tamino.

3:30  
We're also privileged to be joined by guest speakers Dallas Widdecombe and James Atkinson.

3:37  
There won't be time for our presenters to take questions, but the Q&A chat is open if you'd like to submit a comment.

3:43  
Remember, we can't share anonymous comments, so please include your name.

3:48  
We're joined by our Ozlan interpreters, Rihanna and Jamila, and this session is captioned by Bernadette and I believe instructions have been shared in the Q&A.

3:59  
Also in chat, we're sharing our feedback form that you can fill in at the end of the session.

4:04  
I'd now like to welcome our Secretary and ASDO Deputy Secretary.

4:09  
Welcome Peter and Raylene.

4:11  
Good day.

4:13  
Hello.

4:14  
Hey Ray.

4:16  
So this session is focused on self determination and the ASDO division supporting Aboriginal communities, including young people.

4:25  
So I'll start with you first.

4:28  
Ray, why do you believe self determination is so important for First Nation communities?

4:39  
Sorry.

4:40  
When I think about self determination in particular, self determination is inherently linked to all other indigenous rights.

4:51  
It is about the ability of individuals to make choices and determine their own actions.

4:56  
So I think when I think about my whole journey, work life journey, I think it's better.

5:04  
Outcomes are really achieved by bringing individuals along on the journey and self determination.

5:09  
Really.

5:10  
We've seen so many successes just in terms of that I think when I look at particularly articles three and four of the United Nations Declaration on human rights of indigenous peoples, the Andre And that really confirms that indigenous peoples have the right to self determination under international law, which ultimately means our society is obliged to ensure that indigenous peoples have a say about their social, political, culture, cultural and economic needs.

5:42  
And it requires official or recognition of Indigenous nations and people's representatives and institutions community do call it out and expect us to act in alignment with what's stated in the Android.

5:57  
Thanks, Ray and and Peter, what about you?

5:59  
What why do you believe that, that it's important for First Nations communities?

6:05  
Yeah.

6:05  
I mean, not a lot to add to Raylene there.

6:08  
I think, you know, really comprehensive response.

6:11  
I think I just say, you know, self determination is, as Ray said, a human right.

6:16  
And and I think we all, you know, we all want self determination over our lives.

6:22  
But if we think about the history of First Peoples for so much of the last 200 years have not had any self determination quite like the complete opposite really.

6:33  
So I think I think like looking back as is important about where that right, why that right is so important.

6:41  
And also as Raylene said, I think that also not not just from a right space, but also in terms of determining solutions and things for people's own lives.

6:54  
Usually you usually end up with the best outcomes for individuals when you follow that.

6:58  
So that's probably just to add from Raylene that kind of probably leads us into the next question, Peter, which is, you know, I'm aware that you are very passionate about this topic as a, as a non aboriginal person.

7:17  
What kind of what, what drives that, that passion for Aboriginal issues and self determination?

7:26  
Yeah, I think, I think, you know, when I was reflecting on this as a question, the word sort of Fair kept coming into my mind.

7:35  
And I I, you know, I'm passionate around concepts of fairness.

7:40  
And I think in terms of advocating for self determination for first peoples of this country, I can't think of anything else that isn't more fair then then that.

7:53  
And then I think also for our department where, you know, we have such an over representation of Aboriginal people in terms of children in care.

8:02  
Also we see that in terms of family violence, homeless, homelessness and housing.

8:08  
It's also an imperative for us in terms of ensuring that, you know, self determination, working with Aboriginal communities to arrest that issue in a way.

8:23  
So that, and when I think about concepts like closing the gap, you know, these these are basic sense of fairness, aren't they?

8:31  
To to sort of have the same expectations as everybody else in the community.

8:36  
So I think it's kind of right and just isn't it?

8:39  
Yeah.

8:39  
So I think that's what that's what drives me in this in that regard.

8:44  
Thanks Peter Ray, what are what are the, what are some of the ways that that ASDO and the department are facilitating that that self determined decision making?

8:58  
Well, some of the ways that we've, we've we've been enacting over the past couple of years is the facilitating, well, it is around the three self determination is by including the sector stakeholders in decision making.

9:15  
And, and that's through a few things such as I can touch on the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum, which we'll talk a bit more about later in more detail.

9:27  
There's also the Aboriginal Workforce Fund, which is a good example of community advising us what decisions they wanted to be responsible for.

9:37  
As part of that, we established a working group of community sector stakeholders and we worked in partnership with them and that was around to make decisions to support better outcomes, but also to have that thorough and throw that word in fair processes that we, we, you know, because it is part of our, you know, our title, you know, Department of Fair, you know, fairness housing.

10:01  
So those sort of processes and we also learned a lot from this working group and as a consequence of that, we're now taking all of that knowledge to inform how we work without closing the gap, which Peter mentioned, closing the gap priority reform working groups which fall out of the ASGF.

10:21  
So there we've had some, you know, some really to date, some really strong successes just in the last past, you know, early part of this year.

10:31  
So it just goes to show that, you know, that is some of the ways that we've done really critical work for communities, but also being in partnership with the department to really, and I think the communities have the appetite.

10:46  
They want to work with us and we want to work with them.

10:50  
Thanks, Ray.

10:52  
Peter as as secretary, what are some things that you've learned from your engagement with with the Aboriginal community and, and those key partners?

11:04  
Yeah, and I'll probably preface that not just in my time as secretary, but you know, work extend beyond that.

11:12  
But probably a couple of things that I'd reflect that I've learnt.

11:18  
You know, one, I think we talk a lot about Echo service delivery and I think this real service model around whole person.

11:28  
I mean, they're sort of our bureaucratic terms, aren't they?

11:30  
But but you know, in, in, in terms of providing support for people as they, you know, people talk to me about someone comes in the door.

11:40  
You know, the ECHO essentially tries to wrap around about what are the supports that that family or that individual needs, which, you know, is difficult in the bureaucratic world that we we live in, in terms of programmatic lines.

11:51  
And they're things that they're the Echo's push us.

11:54  
And I know Dallas might have something to say on that.

11:56  
He's been doing a lot of work with the North about about some of that.

12:01  
And I think we all aspire to sort of work in that way.

12:05  
So definitely something that I've learned a lot.

12:08  
And the other I would say that I've learned a lot.

12:12  
I find that the sense of accountability back to community in the Aboriginal community is markedly different and like a heightened sense of community, a heightened sense of accountability back to their community.

12:33  
I don't, I, I don't get that concept when I talk to mainstream providers.

12:38  
Can you, can you explain that, what that kind of looks like?

12:43  
I mean, I think, you know, we have concepts of boards and things like that and funders and, and they're the environments that echoes.

12:52  
And maybe maybe James and Dallas will be able to speak to it better than I, you know, because this is my observation.

12:58  
But you know, if I talk to an echo like it's in the dialogue about their relationship to their community and it's in their sense of what good performance looks like.

13:14  
And it's something that is it comes in the room, I find when I'm engaging with echoes about much more touch points about what, what, what the community wants us to do, what the community, how the community thinks we're doing, what the community's priorities are.

13:31  
I, I that I've, I've learned a lot about that, you know that.

13:37  
So it's kind of always, always present and at the forefront.

13:42  
Yeah.

13:42  
And I mean, Ray Ray probably, you know, has lived and breathed it more than me.

13:46  
She might have something to to, but it's I, I, I noticed that more in my conversations with Echoes and my conversations in forums then then potentially in a then, you know, mainstream service providers.

14:02  
Thanks, Peter.

14:04  
Ray, is there anything else that that you would like to add?

14:08  
I think not at this stage.

14:10  
I think what I might have to do is leave it up to James and Dallas.

14:15  
I think they'll, you know, give us a really good the the their their work that they're doing and they'll share with us is going to be really critical.

14:25  
And I think it'd be good for everyone to hear that.

14:27  
But I do agree with Pater.

14:28  
It is it's a different space and it is around doesn't matter.

14:33  
You know what we do, we always accountable.

14:35  
So and just being in that space is really be a bit overwhelming at times.

14:42  
But I think thoroughly, like I said, with partnerships we have with with our communities and the relationship, we always come just, you know, we always on come to agreement.

14:55  
So which is really, you know, just I say is a really great thing for our department and you know, the work that and that we do, but also how, you know, we all the other divisions also lean into.

15:07  
So it's really just say at play.

15:11  
Fantastic.

15:12  
Well, thank you both.

15:14  
Peter, I know you have to run off to a meeting after the next session.

15:17  
So I'll say now thank you for joining us today and I'll hand over to you, Ray, so you can lead the next session.

15:25  
Thank you very much.

15:27  
Thanks, Ruth.

15:29  
Thanks, Ruth.

15:31  
I would now like to welcome Peter.

15:34  
So Peter is remaining with us as part of our panel.

15:37  
Guest speakers along with Dallas and Jane tell us where to come in.

15:42  
James Atkinson, Dallas is CEO of Benny Young District Aboriginal Cooperative and chair of the Lord and Mellie Aboriginal Reference Group, and James is CEO of the Aboriginal Community Elder Service or ACES we call it, and deputy chair of the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum.

16:01  
So welcome, Dallas and James.

16:03  
Thanks, Riley.

16:05  
Thanks, Riley.

16:06  
So James and Dallas, we have a couple of questions.

16:09  
So for I have a couple of questions for both of you.

16:12  
But the first question is, and in no sort of particular order, I'm just you know, but James, I'll go with you first.

16:21  
But can you tell us about the role of the ASGF and both of your roles within it?

16:27  
Yeah.

16:28  
So you've already sort of alluded to my role as the CEO of the Aboriginal Community Service, but I'm also the deputy chair.

16:37  
So I support Annie Linda and I must acknowledge Annie Linda Bama for her work as the chair of the Career caucus.

16:44  
The Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum is a forum that was established to support the Crown Crown ballot Jack strategy for the department and the community.

16:55  
It was to it was a plan that would look at the priorities and what that would approach to look at in terms of the department and the programmes.

17:08  
The department work with the Aboriginal community on the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum does bring together all of the CEOs and Aboriginal leaders from across Victoria to look at the monitoring and overseeing of the role of the Crum Coral ballot.

17:28  
Jack and I might just stop it there for now because I realised we're time sensitive.

17:34  
OK, thank you.

17:35  
James Dallas, would you like to add?

17:39  
Thanks, Raelene.

17:40  
I'll just add that my role within the, I've got 2 roles on the ASGF.

17:45  
First one being that I'm the representative for the, the, I guess the regional part of the north of the state.

17:53  
So my role as the Chair of Lamarg that gives me a seat on the ASTF and the other, the other role very initial stages.

18:03  
But it is the the chair of the funding reform piece that we're doing as part of the ASTF, which we've done a little bit locally here in Bendigo.

18:15  
But we just want to make it, I guess, more self determined.

18:24  
And like Peter was saying earlier, there is so much accountability.

18:29  
I will just add some things petty because I know you said it, that I might have some opinions on that.

18:35  
I there's a real sense of ownership.

18:37  
We we were created as echos because there wasn't anywhere else.

18:41  
So our community do own the service.

18:44  
So we are completely accountable.

18:46  
Most of us are part of the community.

18:47  
So there's a there's a sense of accountability where we can't become ACEO or senior staff and just leave the place like we're part of the community.

18:54  
People have done this forever, but the funding reform piece for me is it it becomes hard if there's too much red tape and things around funding, it's it if a family needs a service and we can't provide it because they're not meeting this threshold of family violence or homelessness or something like that, it, it becomes hard.

19:14  
So I think if we can be more self determined and, and bring as many buckets in as possible, it'll allow us to provide a service to our community.

19:23  
Thanks Ray.

19:24  
Thank you Dallas.

19:25  
Both very comprehensive explanations so really good.

19:30  
Another question for both of you is why is a strong relationship with community central to self determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people?

19:44  
Look, I'll I'll jump in.

19:46  
I think what it's important to do is it ensures that it sets an agenda with for the Aboriginal community and just touching on the points that Dallas just made.

19:58  
Then it is about making sure the voices of the Aboriginal community are heard, especially in any of the programmes or the development programmes that are going to affect them and their communities.

20:11  
And we must move beyond what is being the strong relationship to what should be a formal partnership for Aboriginal community.

20:20  
And I just want to tie that back to the ASGF in.

20:24  
For a short moment, when you think about the principal decision making and the setting of the those strategic directions, they need to be informed from the ground up.

20:34  
And I think what makes it important is that you're actually hearing those voices and the needs of those communities.

20:44  
Thank you, James.

20:46  
Yeah, that was a pretty good summary.

20:47  
I I think it just add that outcomes will be driven if we have community ownership and also we, we know what goes on in our communities.

20:58  
So we're best placed to be able to assist for better outcomes.

21:06  
Thank you.

21:07  
OK, thank you, Dallas.

21:09  
I think we might go to PETA.

21:12  
So we have a few questions for you, PETA.

21:17  
How does the department use the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum to meet its commitments?

21:24  
Thanks, Arlene.

21:26  
And I would say, and just also James acknowledged, Arnie Linda, like we've been working hard at this, I think the last couple of years about trying to make the ASGF as strategic as possible.

21:40  
And as James said, because there's a lot of, you know, all the deputies come to that meeting CE OS regional groups.

21:47  
So there's a lot of time that people invest in the strategic governance forum and people also invest time in the children's forum, Delta, the housing forum, housing and homelessness forum.

21:59  
So trying to use the strategic governance forum of what are the obviously as James said, the pillars that in the KKBD, but also the priority reforms that sit under closing the gap.

22:12  
And but in sort of real terms what that tends to mean, it's those issues that keep coming up in a lot of those forums.

22:20  
So to give an example, we had a really great discussion at the last forum in Bendigo around Workforce.

22:28  
So workforce is an issue that comes up in Delcha, it comes up in children's forum.

22:33  
So how do we elevate for that group to look at some of those issues that we do need a bit more of a strategic lens, a coordinated lens.

22:42  
We're also be need to look in that forum, as Dell said around funding reform, what does data sovereignty mean?

22:50  
What does agreement making look like?

22:52  
So trying to use that forum for those issues that bubble up.

22:58  
And also I would say the other, the other and I know Raylene, you've been particularly passionate about this.

23:04  
How do we make sure that forum is hearing the voices from the strong regional groups equally into that room as well?

23:16  
So that's been another piece that trying to trying to support the regional groups.

23:21  
And we got a great presentation from Lamarg at the last forum as well, which was so yeah, that's how I that's how I see, you know, the benefit of the forum.

23:33  
But it's been hard work, hasn't it, James?

23:36  
Yeah, absolutely.

23:39  
Yes, yes.

23:41  
And you know you've touched on some of that Peter and it is like you said, it is that there is the hard work behind the scenes just in bringing that forum up to that strategic level.

23:54  
So I think and we have are having really positive outcomes as a consequence of the work that we're doing and how that affects other parts of the sector as well.

24:05  
So the next question, I think you've touched on a little bit, but I'm not more detail who's responsible from your leadership group for ensuring the shared commitments from the forum are delivered.

24:18  
I think it's all the board.

24:21  
So and all of EDB in, in that regard, obviously ASDO have a very strong role to play to support the board.

24:30  
But at the end of the day, it's it's the board and as I said, it's the entire EDB that goes to that as well.

24:39  
And and that's some that just demonstrates the commitment that we have.

24:44  
Thank you, Peter.

24:46  
I think I'll go to James now.

24:50  
So James, can you tell us a bit about the refresh of current current valid check?

24:56  
Yeah, look with the refresh and probably throughout the discussion with Petter and certainly with Dallas is we probably would have heard a lot about close the gap, the treaty and there's a whole lot of other things that are going on.

25:10  
And and then also the reviews that that we're currently involved across the three year span of the cruel, cruel barrel Jack, a lot of things were reported in those those outcomes of those findings.

25:25  
And So what what was really required was about looking at crunk about Jack in terms of how it could support some of the outcomes and findings from those reviews and certainly from some of the things around close the gap and treaty.

25:43  
So the ash Jeff did endorse a refresh into Jack because one of the things he did want to do is create a system reform overarch in terms of how it looked across the department's portfolios.

26:01  
One of the things that we didn't want to make sure we we lost sight of is between what was the findings of the review, what was the current crew about Jack plan and then close the gap and treaty and how they would all interconnect.

26:14  
So one of the things was about making sure that we're able to maintain those.

26:21  
And what we did do is look at what would also be some of the emerging priorities for us at the ISGFI.

26:28  
Just want to touch just if I can really quickly.

26:31  
The reason why it's called the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Firm is because we wanted to make sure we were elevated above an advisory so that we did have oversight, the ability to have negotiations that were about supporting and elevating the voices from our regional counterparts, our regional chairs, but also from community and their needs.

26:53  
A work plan was developed.

26:54  
Sorry, my sensor lights going out in my office, so it looked like I was putting on my hand.

27:03  
So if you look at it, there were three sort of phases in terms of that.

27:06  
One was to look at the back a new agreement, but it was to align the closing the gap for priority forms, maintaining the Krumkumar Jack 5 pillars and then looking at how that would all intersect and work with Victoria's closing the gap implementation plan and so and any other of the emerging priorities.

27:28  
So essentially that's that's the process in terms of wanting to do the refresh some of the things that we're looking at that was how it would work by essentially regionally and likely.

27:42  
So it gave us an opportunity to then look at that and what that would look like.

27:49  
I might stop that.

27:50  
Thank you.

27:52  
Thank you, James, very comprehensive.

27:54  
Sorry.

27:55  
I look forward to seeing what that looks like.

27:57  
And I'm sure we, you know, that work's going to be critical.

28:01  
Tell us kitten, I've got one question for you.

28:07  
Can you tell us a bit about your role?

28:09  
I think you've touched a little bit on about the mag, but also it is a long standing regional governance group.

28:15  
Can you, can you give some history around the mag?

28:22  
Absolutely.

28:25  
Thanks Raylene.

28:26  
So Lamarg, it'd have to be the longest, probably the longest Aboriginal forum in the state.

28:33  
It started in 1997, so I was at primary school, but there's still a lot of people that were around that remember when it started.

28:47  
You know, I, I could talk about this stuff all day because the history and passion of the people before me really driven it into me.

28:54  
Why this forum's so important?

28:57  
So the mark consists of the whole Longmelly area, so MVAC in Robinvale, Madasa in Swan Hill, Mildura and Korang and Nanduran and Chica.

29:09  
So it's a forum where you know, a lot of our senior staff get to get get together.

29:18  
At the moment it's in a one day format.

29:20  
So for the first half a day we work with, it's just our eco staff.

29:26  
We talk about, you know, we've got communities of practise, so things like all our quality people meet, all our finance people meet our practise managers.

29:37  
There's a couple of others, our learning and development team.

29:40  
So they they work together and talk about some of the models they haven't successfully so we can replicate them in other areas.

29:47  
Some of the other stuff we do together is we don't compete for funding.

29:50  
So it's really important that we're communities as CEOs and organisations to, to find, you know, to see where the priority areas are and, and we'll all support their funding submissions.

30:08  
And then the second half of the day we bring in all parts of government, which changes a fair bit, but we bring in DFFH, education, justice, the NI, AA, so some federal parts of it.

30:25  
And we also have like Murray, PHN and Benny your health come in this.

30:32  
This allows us to have the whole purpose of out why it was set up at the time was that we can have many of our conversations with government at one forum and it doesn't require all these meetings around the state.

30:47  
We've currently we've just done our strategic plan recently where we have focused on less is better.

30:55  
So we're just working with 1A group of our young people from 10 to 17.

31:01  
So we've asked the department.

31:03  
We're just trying to build a baseline, I guess a health check now where our young people are up.

31:08  
So we've asked for we're presented data every, every the mug meeting every quarter.

31:16  
And you know that that's given us a real baseline about where we need what, what gaps are out there and where we need to fill the gaps.

31:27  
We've I can keep going.

31:30  
I'll just say a couple other things, right.

31:32  
So we've done some really like historic work where we've affected change for the whole state.

31:43  
So one of them was where we changed legislation.

31:51  
So in the past we know that like our our really young children suffer tooth decay at a higher rate.

32:00  
So we were able to, we sent some other models around other states where Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal health practitioners were able to apply fluoride to applications, a year of fluoride varnish, which you know, really it just pretty much stops decaying teeth in our young people.

32:20  
So we took four years.

32:24  
I had the front up to the Poisons Board, which was a strange set up, but they were great and we were able to get it through.

32:34  
Parliament changed some legislation.

32:36  
So now we can allow and it's statewide our Aboriginal health practitioners to obtain, store and apply for advantage.

32:47  
So that's that's just one of the small projects.

32:49  
We've written heaps of research papers with so much stronger as a force and it you know it, it's just a real honest to be able to chair that such a a long standing committee.

33:05  
Thank you, Dallas.

33:05  
That's, that's amazing work.

33:07  
And just to I'm sitting here in the London office and we have on the ground floor, we have a room dedicated to Auntie Melvin Johnson, who was the instigator of the mark, actually, who many years ago that set up the mark.

33:24  
So that's one of the legacies that she's left as part of her work really significant elder in the Achica community.

33:33  
So yeah, thank you for that.

33:35  
We've only got, I think I've been probably only a few minutes left.

33:42  
I do have one question for you, James, but I do actually want to leave anything if there's anything that Peter wanted to add.

33:49  
So I think I might have I don't have very long, but I I think just coming for you James, coming back to the refresh of Konkon Bell Jag and following the recommitment to the to strengthen ASGF.

34:05  
What are the expectations from the Creek hawkers for all divisions of differ to embed self determination and noting that, you know, we are running short on time.

34:15  
So if you could, yeah, look, I'll just say 2 a few things, but really quickly in acknowledging some of those ladies like Annie Melva certainly would be remiss of me not to acknowledge people like Annie Linda Bamblett and Annie Muriel Bamblett and a mural, certainly a driving force at the forums and certainly her work and commitment over the last especially the life of Karungkar, Valid Jack and all the other elders who were certainly participating in that.

34:49  
Unlike Dallas, I was I was a young person back then.

34:54  
So I do remember, I think it's important to understand self determination in terms of what you identified in the United Nations in the ANDROM as it's called rights of Indigenous people.

35:07  
But I think what virtually is underpinning is Cecily, that means that rather than Aboriginal people merely being engaged, consulted as advisors or Co designers of services and policies that are authorised and empowered to iron and direct and make the strategic directions that affect their everyday lives.

35:29  
So moving from the disadvantaged and I think for me that's important.

35:36  
The refreshes is definitely about giving us the opportunity to work with the department in an authorising environment and that we look forward to working with.

35:49  
And there is consultations on the way I should say in terms of it that refresh that we're currently going for at the moment.

35:54  
But it is about capacity to coordinate the work across looking at that in terms of regions and communities around close the gap, the Krumkuru ballot Jack refresh stuff, moving to place based governance.

36:07  
So, you know, Dallas just talked about Lamarg and and Widak and places like that, which is the other one.

36:15  
And looking at how to design with clear governance, what that looks like, the opportunity to develop more processes and systems in terms of accountability and what that looks like and the balance of strategic policy setting, programme practise.

36:29  
These are sort of things that I think enable us to be part of the decision making, empower us.

36:36  
And I think what's really great is that this has been a a shared and committed understanding between the department and the ASGF.

36:46  
And I think I certainly want to acknowledge PETA in terms of your work in this space because this is the sort of stuff that I think will make the real difference in inroads that we need for the refresher.

36:58  
Cruel, cruel about Jack closing the gaps.

37:01  
Finally, I want to say that it's really important that as a state we own our change.

37:09  
We seek, we are seeking the change, but we have to own our change.

37:13  
And it's really good the pillars and in some of the consultations that's been happening is about how do the pillars align with the priorities of close the gap so that we still maintain who we are as Victorians going forward.

37:27  
Thank you, James, that's I think.

37:30  
And finally, I know Peter needs to leave shortly.

37:33  
So Peter, is there any last last thing or you know, remarks that you'd like to leave before only?

37:41  
I think maybe that James should have the last word on that, I think.

37:45  
Yeah, I think that was a really good summary.

37:47  
And I I, I think it's appropriate that James, you know, so I don't have anything else to add to that.

37:53  
OK, Thank you.

37:57  
That's all we have time for today.

37:58  
So I want to thank you to all our panel members, Dallas, James and Peter for joining us today.

38:05  
It's been a real privilege, me sitting on this side of the table instead of the other being interviewed.

38:10  
So thank you, Ruth.

38:11  
So I'm going to hand it back to you.

38:14  
Thanks very much, Ray, and thanks to to Dallas, James and Peter for giving up time to be here today.

38:20  
It was a very interesting and and engaging panel discussion.

38:25  
So thank you.

38:26  
I'd now like to introduce our final two guests.

38:30  
We have Jade Hull, who's Director of Aboriginal Policy and Strategy in Asda.

38:35  
Hey Jade, nice to see you.

38:39  
And we have Dee Tamino.

38:41  
Dee is Manager for Card Operations and Seniors Festival in the Disability Fairness and Emergency Management Division, otherwise known as DFEM.

38:50  
Welcome, Dee.

38:52  
Thanks very much.

38:52  
Ruth, to start this is for you both.

38:56  
Can you talk to us a bit about the, the collaboration between ASDO, the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum, Corey Caucus and the seniors portfolio on senior of the year awards and and seniors card?

39:13  
Dean, maybe we'll we'll start with you first.

39:17  
Yeah, no problems at all.

39:18  
So my team within Carter Presence and Seniors Festival benefit from quite a very strong working relationship with ASDO and Curry Caucus over the years.

39:27  
But our attention has really heightened in the last six months.

39:31  
So we're currently working on some eligibility changes to the Victorian Seniors Card programme.

39:36  
And we've also sought some support on improvements that we can make to the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards, which is actually part of a broader remit to deliver the Victorian Seeing his festival across the month of October.

39:50  
So our seeing his card changes will actually see us expanding the eligibility of the Victorian Seeing His Card programme to allow First Nations people from Australia to apply for the card from 50 rather than 60.

40:03  
And this programme change is actually a key action deliverable in the Ageing Well in Victoria Action Plan, which is Government's action plan for strengthening the well being of senior Victorians.

40:15  
So the ASDO and Curry Caucus have played a really critical role in the evolution of these changes, with ASDO working with us to obtain endorsement from the relevant ministers on the proposed changes.

40:27  
Engagement with Curry Caucus, including the establishment of a subcommittee which has helped engage community via consultations led by that show as a Curry Caucus member, and has also supported the department's decision to implement in full the recommendations presented in these consultations.

40:44  
We're nearing the end of our journey with the eligibility changes for the Seniors Card programme set to be implemented in the coming weeks, and we just can't wait to have this delivered.

40:53  
I'm sitting on the edge of my seat and waiting for this to be done.

40:58  
And in doing so, I'm so proud to say that Victoria will be the first state or territory to lower the eligibility age for First Nations people for the Seniors Card across the country from 60 to 50.

41:10  
So this is something that we're really, really proud of for more than 30 years on the Singers Victorian Singer of the Year awards side of things.

41:19  
We've celebrated the awards for over 30 years and it's a celebration and of the contributions and achievements of Alder Victorians who share their skills, time and energy with our community.

41:30  
People can be nominated for an award if they're 60 and over, but for First Nations people it's 50 and over.

41:38  
Over the last three years we've had very low nomination activity from First Nations people and while we'd engage with First Nations people and First Nations stakeholders on how we could improve these numbers, we also sought advice from ASDO.

41:53  
So ASDO were fantastic.

41:54  
They provided a really balanced viewpoint and felt Curry Caucus was best placed to add value in this area in record speed.

42:02  
And I'm talking we're talking about papers being prepared, presented to Curry Caucus and responses as Asda supported us preparing everything, engaging with Curry Caucus and within six weeks we actually had a really balanced viewpoint.

42:17  
Fantastic feedback from Curry Caucus that has really helped improve our processes for the awards.

42:24  
A Nominations closed for the Victorian Singer of the Year Awards on the 8th of June and I'm pleased to advise that we actually had a fivefold increase in nomination activity from First Nations people compared to the last three years, which is really fantastic to see.

42:38  
So we're not only having that engagement with ASDO, I know Ruth, it's fantastic engagement with ASDO and Crew Caucus.

42:45  
We're seeing benefits like physical benefits coming out of it.

42:49  
It's amazing.

42:50  
That's brilliant.

42:52  
Jade, is there anything from your perspective that you'd like to add to to, to that in terms of that collaboration?

43:00  
Yeah, so I guess the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum is one of the departments for Aboriginal governance mechanisms and where DFFH is unique to other departments as we have three areas, specific governance forums oversighting their own strategies as well as the ASGF.

43:20  
So the ASGF oversights the implementation of current Chrome ballot Jack as well as DFF HS implementation for priority reforms under Closing the Gap and DFFH policy and programme issues that arise within programme areas that don't fit within those other three specific forums such as the Aboriginal Children's Forum, Delta Partnership Forum or the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum.

43:45  
So the ASGF includes senior executive representatives from across DFFH and the ASGF Quarry Caucus.

43:54  
And so the Quarry Caucus is made up of Aboriginal community members from across Victoria, including the CE OS of statewide Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations funded by DFFH and elected representatives from each region, ensuring A diverse range of voices and perspectives are included in providing feedback to projects such as this.

44:17  
So the collaboration between the Seniors Portfolio as Joe and the ASGF on the Seniors of the Year Awards and the Seniors Card allowed the strategic governance for him to have meaningful input into the process and enabled the Seniors for Portfolio to get community feedback on a way forward for both programmes.

44:37  
And as Dave said, the Seniors Portfolio worked with ASDO and ASDO facilitated the consultation with the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum and its caucus.

44:46  
And the caucus really welcomes this opportunity for consultation and provided meaningful feedback on both programmes that they've just talked through how they've been considered.

44:55  
And we're seeing improved outcomes and the profile raising of the seniors awards and also reducing the age of access to 50 for Aboriginal people for the seniors card.

45:11  
Yeah, sorry, it's it's been a great process to collaborate with seniors portfolio on and, and a great outcome as well.

45:19  
I think.

45:19  
So Jade, just just talk to us a little bit about why the the project in in both aspects, really both the the seniors card and and the awards like why is that project significant for first for first peoples?

45:36  
Well, these two projects have a lot of significance for Aboriginal people and the Aboriginal community.

45:42  
Firstly, the seniors card reducing the age to 50 is critical as Aboriginal people statistically experience a shorter life expectancy compared to non Aboriginal Australians.

45:52  
So a lot of Aboriginal men and women may not live to the age of 60, which is the current age threshold to access the seniors card.

46:00  
So reducing the age for Aboriginal people to access a seniors card means that more Aboriginal people will have a greater chance to access the seniors card in their lifetime.

46:12  
We're also more likely than non Aboriginal Australians to be affected by socio economic disadvantage.

46:18  
So the ability for Aboriginal people to access the benefits of this card earlier will have a positive impact on people's lives.

46:26  
I guess this project's a really good example of the department having meaningful consultation with the community and having an outcome that's been informed and supported by the Aboriginal community and will benefit the community.

46:41  
And then with regard to the Seniors Festival, this engagement with the IFGF and other mechanisms has really raised the profile of the Seniors Festival and the awards and looked at alternative ways to engage with community around the nomination process.

47:01  
And as a result, as Dee mentioned earlier, there's been a huge increase in applications this year already, which is fantastic because it's really important that our Aboriginal algorithm seniors are recognised for their contributions through these awards.

47:17  
Thanks Jade.

47:18  
Dee, how did you find the process of embedding self determination in your work, particularly through the engagement and collaboration with ASDO and the ASGF?

47:29  
Well, engaging with ASDO made the process of embedding self determination work very easy.

47:35  
So I'd completed DFFH training before and I've done the Melbourne Uni short course training components as well.

47:42  
But actually putting it into practise is actually quite different because self determination is not a one size fits all.

47:49  
And of course, so having the support from ASDO was invaluable for us to guide us through that process.

47:56  
So for me, self determination doesn't have to be difficult.

48:00  
In fact, in fact, by working with ASDO, we were able to ensure we worked with Query Caucus, which reflects A broader range of First Nations organisations across the state.

48:10  
But as doing career caucus, we're efficient, they're effective and acknowledged our challenges and limitations like just budget and what we possibly could do across the border, hard programmes within Australia.

48:23  
And so while ensuring career caucus and consultation with community was provided for a true self determined approach for me.

48:30  
So, so much so that all the recommendations that were actually presented by career caucus and by the community consultations will be implemented as part of the senior's card eligibility changes.

48:41  
It's also evidenced as well with the increase in the nomination activity that we've had with Victorian singer, Victorian Singer of the Year awards as well.

48:49  
So yeah, excellent.

48:52  
This one's for the both of you.

48:55  
What else should should other areas across the department consider when when initiating kind of any new policies or programmes or or initiatives?

49:05  
You got any advice?

49:08  
Who wants to go first?

49:09  
Jade, you go first.

49:11  
So a few things I'd encourage teams to keep in mind when developing new initiatives and policies.

49:18  
Firstly, engage early and with intent.

49:21  
Don't decide for Aboriginal communities before speaking with them and find ways to let Aboriginal communities set their own priorities and determine how they want to be involved.

49:31  
Ask yourself who are the right people to engage?

49:34  
It's not always A1 size fits all, so depending on the issue it could be traditional owner groups, Aboriginal Community controlled organisations, community leaders or governance bodies like this Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum.

49:48  
And importantly, engage with Asda early, especially if your work aligns with priority reform areas.

49:54  
This gives us a chance to provide advice and connect you with any relevant engagement that's already occurred or identify opportunities to align our efforts and reflect where your work sits on the self determination continuum within the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs framework.

50:12  
If you're just informing the Aboriginal community, you might like to think about how you can strengthen that approach.

50:18  
Could you be moving more towards collaboration or even enabling Aboriginal LED decision making, which is the long term goal, not just for engagement, for engagement sake.

50:31  
And and importantly, come informed if there's community input or evidence relevant to your work.

50:37  
Take the time to do your own research.

50:40  
The Justice Commission's truth telling work, for example, is an incredibly powerful way to understand community perspectives from Aboriginal community members, but it's also still really important to be open to being corrected and being, you know, navigated in a different direction, if that's what community are telling you.

51:03  
Thanks Jade.

51:04  
Dee, anything that you would like to throw into that mix?

51:08  
Oh, echo Jade's thoughts there for sure.

51:10  
And definitely confirm that engaging ASTO as early as possible is really important to help sort of navigate that self determination and how it can be applied.

51:21  
I think though, for some people, some people may have misconceptions about what applying self determination looks like.

51:30  
Perhaps maybe mis misunderstanding, thinking it's complex, time consuming or places you're in a position where you're unable to deliver what you were intending to deliver.

51:40  
But for me, that just wasn't the case.

51:42  
So being transparent with our asks of ASDO and Curry Caucus and community on what we can and can't, can't do has been really important.

51:52  
And as a result, the feedback that's been provided to us has been really well balanced and well thought through and has provided practical ways to implement changes that improve outcomes for older First Nations people across the Seniors Card programme, but also the Victorian Singer of the Year Awards.

52:09  
So, but in addition to our ASDO colleagues, I'd also recommend linking in with the Truth and Treaty colleagues as well to determine if you need to engage with First People's Assembly of Victoria at any particular point in time.

52:24  
The Truth and Treaty team are working very closely with DPCS, First People State relations and so they can advise you on whether the Assembly needs to be engaged or not.

52:35  
Thanks Dee Jade, we might have time for just one quick last question.

52:41  
And what does this project tell us about the role all divisions and staff have in in assuring that new policies programmes are considered in the context of self determination and enable that that timely consultation with ASGF Corey Caucus.

53:00  
Yeah.

53:00  
So I think this question speaks to a really important cultural and structural shift that we all need to keep building across the department.

53:07  
So self determination is everyone's responsibility.

53:10  
It's not just something that should always be directed to Aboriginal staff in your team, as that can create an unfair burden and often goes well beyond their role description, embedding self determination as a whole of department business.

53:25  
It's also not just Asdo's job either.

53:27  
We're always happy to help, but every person, every team in every division has a role to play in getting this right, Probably also taking accountability for your role in the system.

53:39  
Every team has a role in challenging business as usual, including shaping whose voices are heard and how decisions are made and how policy advice is shaped.

53:49  
Self determination isn't something that sits off to the side, it should be shaping the entire approach and timely consultation means starting early.

53:59  
If engagement with ASGF, Corey Caucus or other community stakeholders as needed, it needs to be planned for.

54:08  
Please don't come to us at the end of a process.

54:11  
Come at the beginning when there's space to genuinely shape outcomes.

54:16  
Engaging meaningfully means this process needs to be kicked off well before a papers going up to be signed off.

54:24  
It happens so often that we get these requests at the last minute and it can place pressure on our community stakeholders who really do want to have input into the process.

54:40  
Sorry, am I going over time?

54:41  
No, no, no, no, you're right.

54:44  
And I was going to say and, and engaging isn't about slowing things down.

54:48  
It's about doing things right.

54:49  
And when we get things right, the work is stronger, more relevant, and more likely to lead to improved outcomes that actually last.

54:59  
Thank you that, that does round out all we have time for today.

55:03  
So I, I thank you both very much for, for taking time and, and to be part of this forum this morning.

55:10  
Oh, sorry, this afternoon.

55:11  
Very, very valuable input.

55:13  
And it, it's really great to see that collaboration, like true collaboration and, and the benefits that that is brought to, to the community.

55:24  
So, so thank you very much.

55:27  
Before we conclude today's event, we're now going to to queue a video with ASDOS Carol Lee Fry, who talks about her involvement with the Aboriginal Staff Network and what day Doc Week means to her.

55:44  
Roll the tape.

55:59  
I remember when I was a kid going to the night out marches up in Darwin every year and my dad and my uncle would be in attendance and would often speak at the marches afterwards.

56:13  
Sort of gone through and walked through the city at the time as a kid didn't really have that appreciation for how significant they were in the community and the leaders that they were.

56:24  
I think it was really, it really impacted on me now sort of thinking back on the people that I was surrounded by.

56:34  
My dad was the longest standing chief executive officer for the Northern Land Council and at the time there was a lot of High Court cases that were very high profile.

56:46  
He worked really closely with community leaders.

56:48  
Galloway Unipengu or Wonder Why Unipengu, Wonder Why was actually the lead sort of singer in the the indie band.

56:57  
And I remember watching the Sydney Olympics and he was performing and I just thought that was amazing.

57:03  
He was, you know, just in my sort of house and I'd sort of, you know, been talking to him and that was a really good experience to sort of see that on the screen.

57:13  
In terms of how that's influenced me.

57:17  
We grew up with a very, very much education is, is key around knowledge sharing.

57:23  
When I reflect on how that goes towards our NATO theme, strength, vision, legacy, drawing from our yeah, culture, our community, our elders, I guess reimagining and shaping our future through our policy and, and programmes that we have, particularly within DFFH in terms of legacy, that's what we would pass on to the next generation.

57:51  
And, and that wisdom and knowledge sharing and apply that to this contemporary sort of society and, and what we've got going on in the department at the moment.

58:00  
The Aboriginal Staff Network and DFH provides Aboriginal people, Aboriginal employees the opportunity to come together in an environment where they feel safe and where they can share their experiences and where we can sort of learn together.

58:16  
Might be one of the only platforms to be able to speak to those other Aboriginal leaders directly.

58:22  
They a few are out in the regions, I suppose.

58:25  
Yeah, in other divisions.

58:26  
So it's nice to sort of see that representation as well, because all of the work we do and asdo, you know, effects people that work out in the frontline sort of services, you know, so it's it's really interesting to sort of connect with them and learn about their experiences as well.

58:47  
After the Asni feel a lot more how do I put like a fire in the valley?

58:55  
You know, like it's, I'm sort of re re energised to sort of get back into the work and remember why we do these things and that we're not alone and together we're stronger.

59:17  
I'd just like to say a huge thank you to Carol Lee for sharing her reflections.

59:23  
It's a it's a great video, a reminder as well that NAIDOC week is coming up.

59:29  
It's a significant time to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

59:38  
Once again, thank you to all our presenters, Peter, Ray, Jade, Dee, Dallas and James.

59:46  
Thank you also to our Auslan interpreters, Rihanna and Jamila and Bernadette, who has been captioning for us.

59:54  
A feedback form is in the Q&A chat.

59:56  
We'd love to hear your thoughts about our session today.

59:59  
Have a lovely afternoon everyone.

1:00:01  
Go well and see you next time.

1:00:03  
Thanks.