



7 December 2017

Chris Clarke
Chair
Woor-Dungin

Dear Chris

Re: Submission to 49th Aboriginal Justice Forum re: The Criminal Record Discrimination Project

We are pleased to support The Criminal Record Discrimination Project's (The Project) submission to the Aboriginal Justice Forum. We are concerned that Aboriginal people in Victoria are disproportionately impacted by the lack of a spent convictions scheme and the absence of any protection from discrimination on the ground of irrelevant criminal record. We hope that the weight of support across the state will bring about necessary reform.

We support the need for the reforms recommended in The Project's submission that would see:

1. The introduction of a legislated spent convictions scheme in Victoria, and
2. An amendment to the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)* to prohibit discrimination against people on the basis of an irrelevant criminal record.

The Project's submission explicitly addresses four of the five reconciliation dimensions that we have defined with community and partners in Reconciliation Victoria's Strategy:

1. Overcoming racism and understanding white privilege and power relations: Strong legal protection against racism; zero tolerance for racism across the community; strong cultural awareness and competence within organisations and communities.
2. Achieving equitable outcomes in justice, health, education and employment between Aboriginal and other Victorians: Appropriately resourced programs enabling the achievement of equity through self-determination; Victorian government achieving Closing the Gap targets.
3. Ensuring government, corporate and community accountability: State government policy outcomes are transparent; appropriate protocols/principles inform state government policy development; organisations are accountable for their reconciliation plans and commitments, and are developing MOUs with Aboriginal groups and communities.
4. Addressing historical injustice: Including but not limited to truthful education of Australian history and integration of Aboriginal history into curriculum; full implementation of the Bringing Them Home Report (1997) recommendations to address lack of justice for Stolen Generations.

We commend all of those that contributed to The Project to bring about change.

Yours faithfully,

Belinda Duarte and Michelle Isles
Co-Chairs of Reconciliation Victoria