



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP Premier of NSW Minister for Western Sydney

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AUDIT REPORT SHOWS LABOR FAILED ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The NSW Auditor-General's report into *Two Ways Together* (TWT) reflects a very serious policy failure by the former Labor Government, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello said today.

The Auditor-General's report chiefly acknowledges the former Labor Government's failure to be accountable, as well as the fact that *TWT* '*...has not delivered the improvement in overall outcomes for Aboriginal people that were intended*'^[1].

"My Government is determined for there to be improvement in the lives of Aboriginal communities and therefore we will be taking the Auditor-General's findings and recommendations extremely seriously," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The complete lack of accountability and transparency combined with total absence of political leadership at the top of Government raises significant concerns about the former Labor Government's approach to Aboriginal affairs," he said.

"Sadly, there have been significant human and financial costs as a result of Labor's policy failure.

"My Government will talk openly and honestly with Aboriginal people about the challenges that we jointly face and how to ensure that the mistakes of the previous Government are not repeated," Mr O'Farrell said.

Mr Dominello condemned Labor for allowing a program to run for almost a decade without effectively monitoring its results.

"There were 250 targets, indicators and measures under *TWT*, but with limited accountability, it led to limited or no improvement in Aboriginal communities," Mr Dominello said.

"*TWT* failed because it was politically abandoned. It's the politicians who are to blame – not Aboriginal communities or those earnest public officials on the ground," Mr Dominello said.

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[1] NSW Auditor General's Report, the *Two Ways Together - NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan*, p3

“While one of the key *TWT* goals was to develop ‘...committed partnerships between Aboriginal people and Government’^[2], Aboriginal people have told me that they came to consider *Two Ways Together*, as *Two Ways Apart*.

“While I acknowledge the complexities of closing the gap in Aboriginal disadvantage, it is clear we must build real and effective linkages between State Government and Aboriginal communities, put locally-driven solutions for economic and cultural empowerment front and centre, and involve independent and non-Government voices.

“In the coming period, the new Government – including Premier O’Farrell, my Ministerial colleagues, the senior management of Aboriginal Affairs and other public sector managers – will frame a new direction for Aboriginal affairs policy in NSW in concert with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders.

“One thing will be absolutely certain: political leadership and Ministerial accountability will be the cornerstones of our direction. Unlike Labor, we will stand up and welcome full scrutiny for delivering results,” Mr Dominello said.

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^[2] Ibid