

Ministerial Blog - Ms Roddick

Anti-Racism Interim Governance Group (AIGG) Community Engagement Event - December 2023

Last month, I was sorry to have to miss an event held by the Anti-Racism Interim Governance Group – an important moment to pause, reflect, and acknowledge that we all have so much more work to do to progress infrastructure in Scotland that is truly anti-racism.

Ima Jackson and Talat Yaqoob, co-chairs of the group, the AIGG youth panel, community researchers, and everyone who participated in any way in the community research have all done so much to get us to this point. We are so close to your vision becoming a reality.

I know that the people most impacted by racism, including communities of colour, want to know that the government is listening to what they're saying, and not repeating mistakes of the past, or even just continuing with doing things the way we always have – which we know doesn't work and can only strengthen systemic inequalities.

I am listening and the Scottish Government is ready to be bold in the ways we work with people and communities to drive change. We don't want to do policy to you, we want to build policies with you, and enjoy healthy scrutiny throughout, and after, they are brought in.

I was really looking forward to meeting many of the wonderful people behind this work at the event, and to announcing that a procurement exercise is the next step to identify a suitable host for the Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland (AROS).

The AROS will focus on dismantling structural racism – this will benefit all communities. It will work collaboratively with stakeholders to drive collective change for everyone impacted by racism.

AROS funding is standalone – that is, separate from and additional to, existing Scottish Government budgets. There will be ongoing engagement as we make progress in implementing AROS.

So, thanks once again to all those involved in the AIGG. The value of your contributions has been huge; to me, as Minister for Equalities in understanding what needs to be done, to the Government, as it embarks on this exciting new journey which we want to get right, and to your whole community. This will result in systemic change and a positive impact for all who experience racism. Thank you.