

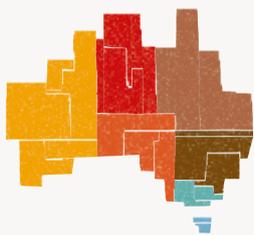


Australian Government



Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2011





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The cut paper shapes depicted throughout this report are derived from a map of Australia and use the seven Closing the Gap brand colours to reference the seven States and Territories of Australia and the seven Council of Australian Governments (COAG) building blocks.

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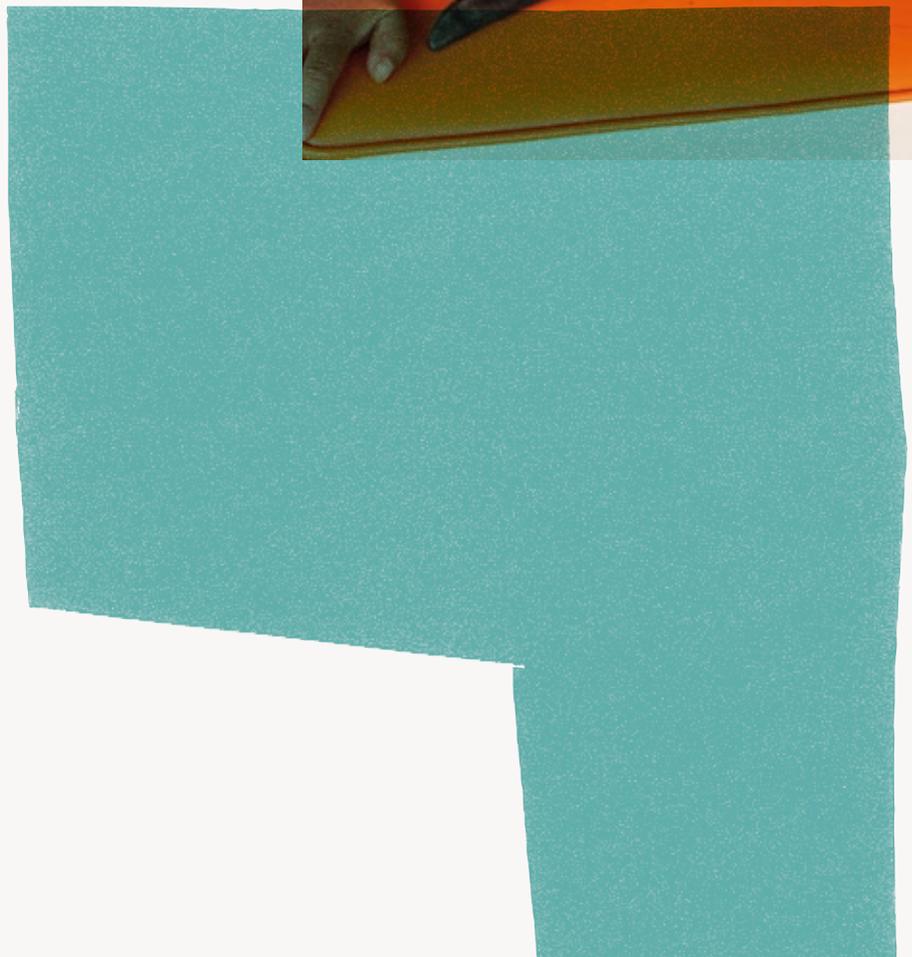
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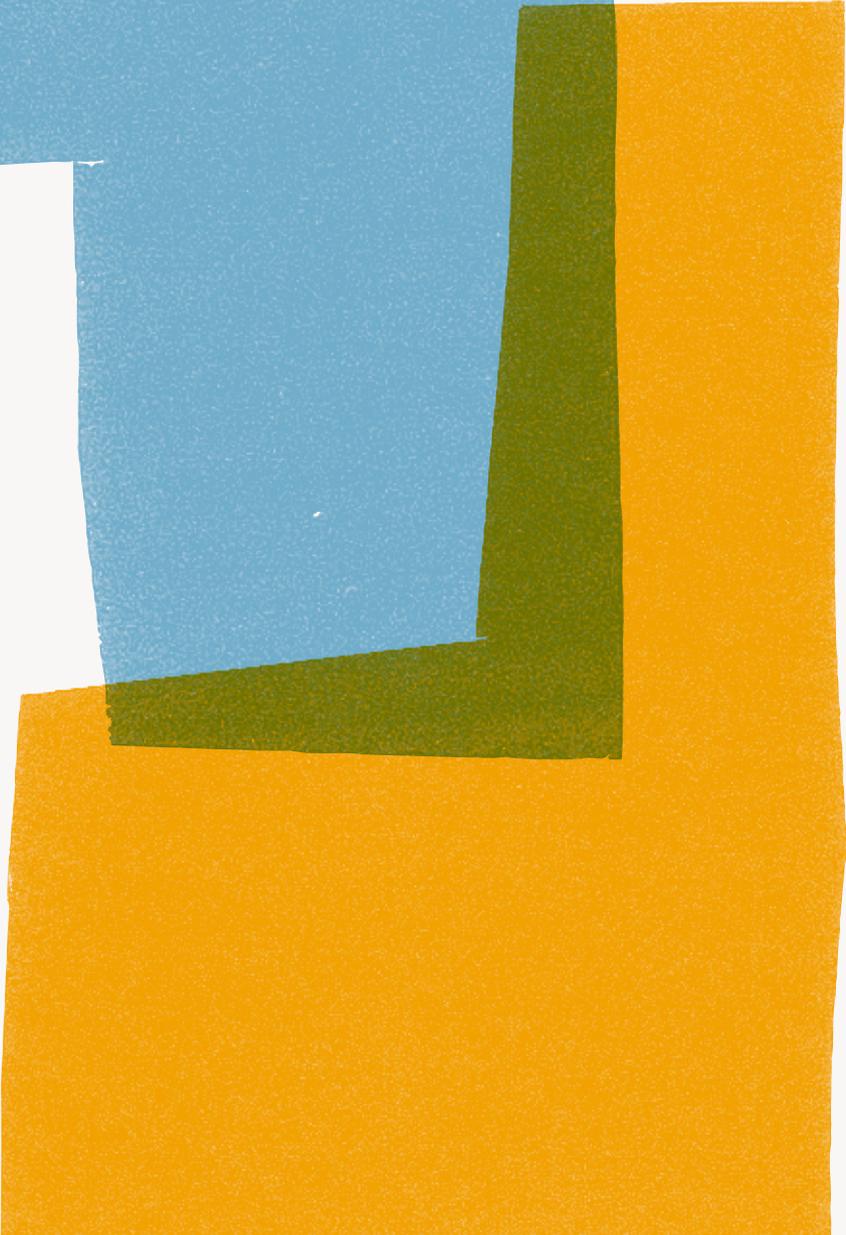


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Photograph

Amata, South Australia,
Lorrie Graham 2010



Executive summary

The Australian Government's agenda to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage is driven by three important imperatives: to overcome decades of under-investment in services and infrastructure; to encourage and support personal responsibility as the foundation for healthy, functional families and communities; and to build new understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Tackling Indigenous disadvantage is a national responsibility and a national challenge. It demands ongoing collaboration between all levels of government working in partnership with Indigenous Australians, the corporate sector and community organisations.

The challenge of closing the gap requires that governments address previous under-investments in housing, policing, health and education in Indigenous communities and that mainstream services are specifically designed to directly benefit Indigenous Australians.

Beyond government, there is a role for each individual, family and community to take responsibility for rebuilding the social norms that are the foundation of lasting change and governments must support this. Positive social norms lead to personal choices that result in healthier individuals and families and greater life opportunities.

The Government is working to find solutions to the complex problems which underpin Indigenous disadvantage and have been decades in the making. Major reforms and unprecedented investment have been made in education, health, employment, remote housing and services, governance and infrastructure.

The Australian and state and territory governments have made significant investments on Indigenous specific measures in a sustained effort to close the gap. This is in addition to funding for mainstream programs that also benefit Indigenous Australians.

Clear targets have been set to close the gap in life expectancy, early childhood, health, education and employment, and building blocks are in place to focus effort for sustained change. An independent and regular reporting framework has been established through the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council to make sure that governments at every level are accountable.

Significant investment to close the gap – Indigenous Specific National Partnership Agreements

\$5.5 billion
under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

\$1.57 billion
under the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes

\$564.4 million
under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

\$228.9 million
under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation

\$291.2 million
under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery

2 | In this third annual report on closing the gap, the Government sets out the progress being made towards reaching the targets to:

- Close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2031.
- Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018.
- Ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities by 2013.
- Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement for Indigenous children by 2018.
- Halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates for Indigenous young people by 2020.
- Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018.

Progress is being made against the closing the gap targets. For example, significant improvements have been made in child mortality in recent years, although the gap still remains too large. These improvements are encouraging, but after decades of inaction and neglect achieving tangible results in all areas will take ongoing investment and time.

Investments on the ground

The Government has identified seven key building blocks, addressing specific areas of Indigenous disadvantage, which are vital to closing the gap. Governments have committed an unprecedented investment to concentrate action in these building block areas. Action is underway on the ground and is making a difference to Indigenous people's lives.

Early Childhood Building Block

- Around 47 000 Indigenous Australians used the services offered through the Family Support Program which provides help and support for families dealing with relationship problems and separation issues.
- Around 14 700 Indigenous Australians visited 45 Communities for Children sites which provide early intervention programs for families with children up to the age of 12.
- Around 1 800 Indigenous parents and children were supported through the Indigenous Parenting Support Services. By 30 December 2010, 37 sites across Australia were operating, and these are expected to increase to 51 services by June 2011.
- More than 6 150 children and parents were participating in 69 supported playgroups targeting Indigenous families.
- Services for children and families including child care, early learning, parent and family support are being expanded through a network of Children and Family Centres.
- The \$10 million Indigenous Mothers Accommodation Fund is providing new and expanded accommodation for Indigenous mothers who need to travel from

their communities for medical care. The Indigenous mothers' hostel in Katherine, Northern Territory was expanded and the new Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan mothers' centre was opened in Cairns, Queensland.

- The \$90.3 million New Directions Mothers and Babies Services program is now funding 63 services to increase access to antenatal care, improve birth weights of Indigenous babies and provide continued support in the child's early years to give them the best possible start to life.

Schooling Building Block

- Education Ministers have endorsed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan to focus action on priority areas to help improve outcomes in Indigenous education. The priority areas are: school readiness; engagement and connections; school attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership; quality teacher and workforce development and pathways to post-school options.
- More than 3 500 Indigenous young people at risk of leaving school received personal assistance under the Youth Connections program in 2010. This helps young people to stay at school, get back to school or take up training and achieve a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.
- As of November 2010, the Government had invested over \$89 million for school projects in the 29 communities covered by the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership. This includes refurbishment of outdoor covered areas, construction of new classrooms, multipurpose community halls, science centres, and library resources centres. An example is Shepherdson College in Galiwin'ku which



Photograph
Ntaria, Northern Territory,
Lorrie Graham 2010

received total funding of \$5.2 million for the construction of a covered outdoor learning area, a multipurpose community hall and a science centre.

- More than 5 000 students, at risk of not completing school, were supported in academies such as the Clontarf Foundation football academies, the Former Origin Greats Queensland academy and other sports-based academies in 2010. More than 50 per cent of participants reported improved academic performance. Positive change in the attitude and behaviour of students was also reported.
- Around 1 510 year-long scholarships will be offered between 2010 -12 to secondary school Indigenous students, with a particular focus on remote areas, to support them to continue their studies. Another 390 scholarships will be available for university students.
- The Parental and Community Engagement Program is a community driven program that assists families and communities to engage in their children's education through participation in educational decision making, developing partnerships with education providers and supporting and reinforcing their children's learning at home. Since the program started in 2009, over 8 700 parents and caregivers and a further 5 000 community members have benefited.

4 | **Health Building Block**

Under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package:

- The Government is investing \$100.6 million under the Tackling Smoking initiative over four years from 2009-10 to reduce Indigenous smoking rates. This includes the Tackling Smoking workforce, which will promote healthy behaviours and reduce lifestyle risks in Indigenous communities. The Government has also provided \$2.6 million to smoking Quitlines to make services more accessible and appropriate for Indigenous Australians.
- More than 41 000 Indigenous patients, living with or at risk of chronic disease, have benefitted from access to more affordable Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines since July 2010.
- An additional 337 new positions have been funded in the Indigenous health workforce, as part of the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package.

Other achievements in health include:

- \$50 million has been allocated from the Aboriginal Benefits Account to improve access to healthy and more affordable food in 18 remote Northern Territory community stores.
- To reduce the risk of petrol sniffing, the Government is providing an additional \$38.5 million over four years to enable at least 39 new retail sites to supply low aromatic Opal fuel in northern Australia. Independent evidence shows that Opal fuel reduced petrol sniffing by 70 per cent across communities sampled. More active and visible policing through the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks has helped to keep down levels of sniffing

and antisocial behaviour. Youth work programs in communities, including the Integrated Youth Strategy Project, are also bringing positive results.

- An additional \$49.3 million from 2008-09 has been allocated to expand and enhance treatment and rehabilitation services across Australia. This includes funding for Indigenous-specific residential rehabilitation services and day centres, Aboriginal Medical Services, sobering up shelters, wellbeing centres, and transitional aftercare services.

Healthy Homes Building Block

- The Australian Government is investing an unprecedented \$5.5 billion nationally over ten years through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The Agreement addresses overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and the severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities.
- To date under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, more than 480 new houses and 1 750 rebuilds and refurbishments have been completed across the country.
- New and refurbished dwellings are subject to new tenancy agreements, which help tenants transition to rental arrangements in line with other public housing, and ensure regular repairs and maintenance.
- The \$150 million Alice Springs Transformation Plan is delivering major infrastructure works in town camps. Eighteen new houses and 24 rebuilds and refurbishments have been completed. The \$11 million Apmere Mwerre visitor park has been opened to reduce overcrowding and provide a safe place for visitors. Refurbishment of The

Lodge is providing 35 new beds for patients receiving medical treatment in Alice Springs.

- As part of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan agreed between the Australian and state and territory governments 1 400 of the 19 600 social housing dwellings being built are specifically for Indigenous tenants. As of November 2010, 690 of the current 4 476 dwellings have Indigenous tenants.

Safe Communities Building Block

- To protect children from abuse and neglect, the Australian and state and territory governments have established the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20. The National Standards for Out of Home Care, which apply to formal care arrangements including residential care, foster care and kinship care, are a key component of the Framework. They ensure children in need of out of home care receive consistent, best-practice care, no matter where they live.
- In response to the *Growing Them Strong, Together* report in the Northern Territory,

the Australian Government announced a commitment of more than \$34 million to help protect children from neglect and abuse. This funding will support the development of new family support services for vulnerable families, as well as increase the number of child protection workers, and help strengthen alcohol controls in the Northern Territory.

- In partnership with the Northern Territory Government, the Australian Government is providing \$1.5 million to expand identity card technology to help enforce alcohol restrictions.
- Following concern in the community about the damaging impact of excessive alcohol consumption and the high number of liquor licenses in Alice Springs, funding of \$1.5 million has been provided to the Northern Territory Government for the buy-back of three take-away liquor licences. It is anticipated that the buy-back may be completed by end of June 2011 to help reduce the high level of alcohol fuelled violence and neglect in the Alice Springs town camps.
- The Indigenous Family Safety program in 2010-11 provided over \$12.5 million to non-government organisations and state and territory governments to deliver 42 Indigenous family safety programs in remote, regional and urban locations across Australia. These projects include safe houses, counselling, prevention and early intervention programs, education and behaviour change programs.
- Under the Northern Territory Emergency Response, there are now 22 safe places in 17 communities across the Northern Territory. Safe places provided shelter for 491 women, 399 children and 40 men between January 2009 and November 2010.

- The Australian Government is investing \$3.4 million over two years to support Community Engagement Police and Officers in eight remote communities with high levels of crime and violence.
- As part of the Australian Government's roll out of non-discriminatory income management across the Northern Territory, child protection income management was introduced in 2010. This means Northern Territory Government child protection workers can now refer parents to Centrelink for compulsory income management when children are being neglected or are at risk of neglect.

Economic Participation Building Block

- 58 950 Indigenous job seekers had been placed in work by the Australian Government's reformed employment services, Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services, between their implementation in July 2009 and March 2010 respectively, and 31 December 2010. Both services have a strong focus on assisting employers in addressing skills shortages and filling job vacancies.
- Over 16 000 Indigenous Australians started employment and around 12 500 began training in 2010 with support from the Indigenous Employment Program. As part of the tailored assistance element of the program, work began on projects valued at over \$180 million.
- 1 993 Indigenous Australians were supported into employment over the last twelve months through the Community Development Employment Projects program.
- Over \$4 million in contracts and \$2.9 million in transactions was generated by the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council between its members and certified suppliers. By linking corporate and government purchasers with certified Indigenous suppliers of goods and services, the Council has certified 67 Indigenous suppliers and attracted 54 members since its inception in late 2009.
- Extensive consultation on the draft Indigenous Economic Development Strategy was undertaken between May and December 2010, with over 110 written submissions received and 20 public workshops held across Australia. The strategy will be finalised by mid 2011 and will set the key priorities to support Indigenous economic development.
- Ownership of land further boosts economic participation for Indigenous Australians. The Australian Government is supporting reforms to resolve native title claims more effectively and efficiently, and to optimise outcomes for native title groups from agreement-making.
- The Indigenous Land Corporation, through Australian Government funding, plays a crucial role in Indigenous economic participation. In 2010, the Indigenous Land Corporation purchased Ayers Rock Resort at Yulara, Northern Territory, which will provide 340 Indigenous jobs by the end of 2018. The Corporation also established the Gunbalanya Pastoral and Meat Supplies which provided 28 new Indigenous jobs.
- Indigenous Business Australia's Business Development and Assistance Program supports eligible Indigenous entrepreneurs with small business loans, and expert business guidance. At the end of 2009-10, the business loan portfolio comprised 309 loans valued at \$58.7 million.



Photograph
Mimili, South Australia,
Lorrie Graham 2010

Governance and Leadership Building Block

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery, the Australian Government is contributing \$45.1 million over six years to build community governance capacity. The Australian and relevant state and Northern Territory governments are changing the way they work with Indigenous Australians in priority communities to improve access to government services, raise service standards, improve governance and leadership, increase economic and social participation and promote personal responsibility and positive behaviours.
- Governments and community members have developed Local Implementation Plans

to guide future investment and government-community cooperation and partnerships in 29 remote communities. These plans set out agreed priorities, actions, responsibilities and commitments.

- Around 700 people received corporate governance training provided by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations in 2010. This included advice on how to incorporate, corporate governance training for directors and compliance with the law.
- Nearly 650 Indigenous Australians have participated in the Indigenous Leadership Program to strengthen leadership skills.

A partnership approach

Working with Indigenous Australians

The closing the gap strategy is underpinned by a commitment to stronger engagement with Indigenous communities. Closing the gap will be most successful when driven by Indigenous Australians in partnership with all levels of government, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and the broader community. Without the building of trust, mutual respect and personal responsibility, governments will continue to struggle to create and sustain the positive changes required to achieve the ambitious closing the gap targets.

The Australian Government's commitment to progress recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Australian Constitution is another important step toward building a nation based on strong relations and mutual respect.

In 2009, the Australian Government undertook extensive consultations with Indigenous Australians across the Northern Territory

about future directions for the Northern Territory Emergency Response. The Government heard what Indigenous people were saying and changed the operation of the Emergency Response to ensure it respected the rights of Indigenous Australians and fully reinstated the application of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 in the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation.

The Australian Government has committed \$29.2 million to the setting up and initial operation of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples. The representative body will provide a central mechanism with which government, the corporate and community sector can engage and partner on policy design and implementation.

Taking responsibility

Government investment is only part of the strategy for achieving the closing the gap targets. Individuals and communities also need to take responsibility to promote positive norms and social behaviours to create lasting change. The Australian Government is supporting this through a range of measures and will continue to work with Indigenous people to build responsibility.

Measures include non-discriminatory welfare payment reform, which includes income management measures to encourage welfare recipients in identified locations to take responsibility for themselves and their families. Through income management, priority needs such as food, rent, clothing, electricity, medicine and basic household items are met. Welfare reform measures also encourage parents to enrol their children at school and make sure they attend regularly.

The introduction of alcohol management plans aims to reduce alcohol consumption through community level commitments. Following the introduction of a plan in Alice Springs in 2006, there was an 18 per cent reduction in pure alcohol sales and a decrease in the number of serious assaults. Alcohol management plans are now in place in a number of other Northern Territory towns and communities, including Tennant Creek, Katherine and Groote Eylandt.

Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia is recognised regionally for the strength of its Indigenous leadership. The community asked the Western Australia Director of Liquor Licensing to impose alcohol restrictions which were introduced in October 2007 and extended indefinitely in May 2008. The second annual review in December 2010 showed reduced level of alcohol related harm and domestic violence, families purchasing more food and clothing, being more aware of their health and taking better care of children.

In Queensland, the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial is a partnership between the Queensland and Australian Governments, Cape York regional organisations and the four communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. The trial encourages people to take responsibility for community well being by improving school attendance and child safety, tackling alcohol and drug abuse, gambling addiction and family violence and improving tenancy management.

Working with the corporate and community sector

The Australian Government is working with both the corporate and community sectors to close the gap. The Government provided Reconciliation Australia with \$10.8 million over three years from 1 July 2010 to provide national focus and leadership to work towards reconciliation. Increasingly, Australian companies and organisations have developed their own Reconciliation Action Plans, formalising their contribution towards closing the gap. Over 200 Reconciliation Action Plans are in operation and over 200 are under development. Through their Reconciliation Action Plans, organisations have committed to recruit over 8 300 Indigenous Australians and have placed an estimated 5 300 in jobs.

To harness the buying power of the Government, the Indigenous Opportunities Policy will be applied to contracts over \$5 million from 1 July 2011 in areas with significant Indigenous populations. Under the policy, Australian Government contractors will be required to provide training and employment opportunities for local Indigenous Australians and to use Indigenous businesses in their supply chain.

Transparent and accountable reporting

This report is the Australian Government's third report on closing the gap. The Council of Australian Government's Reform Council will also provide an independent and comprehensive report each year on progress against the targets. The first report on progress will be released in mid 2011.



Part A

Progress against the targets

Addressing Indigenous disadvantage is one of the most pressing challenges the nation faces. It will require sustained commitment - by governments at all levels, by the corporate sector, by social and non-government organisations, and by Indigenous people.

The closing the gap targets are ambitious and serve to focus government action over the long term. While the magnitude of the challenge cannot be understated, the Government will not take a step back from these goals. Progress is being achieved but more can and will be done to ensure we meet these commitments. Against some targets we will be able to see progress and track our performance sooner than others. After decades of inaction and neglect, achieving tangible results in all areas will take ongoing investment and time.

The closing the gap targets are all interrelated, with progress in one having a positive influence on others. Ensuring children have a positive start in life and receive a good quality education means they are more likely to be employed and healthy as adults, and therefore in a strong position to raise their own families when the time comes. Reaching our targets is therefore

an important part of addressing disadvantage, both over an individual's life cycle and from an intergenerational perspective.

This section includes a statistical overview of Australia's Indigenous population and progress against the closing the gap targets.

The COAG Reform Council will also provide a comprehensive report each year on progress against the targets. The first report which was released in June last year, provided baseline information on the targets. The next report will be released in mid-2011.

Indigenous population of Australia

Understanding the age profile of the Indigenous population is critical to ensuring that our efforts to close the gap are well directed and take account of characteristics of the Indigenous population. The profile of the Indigenous population is very different to the non-Indigenous population.

The Indigenous population is young and growing

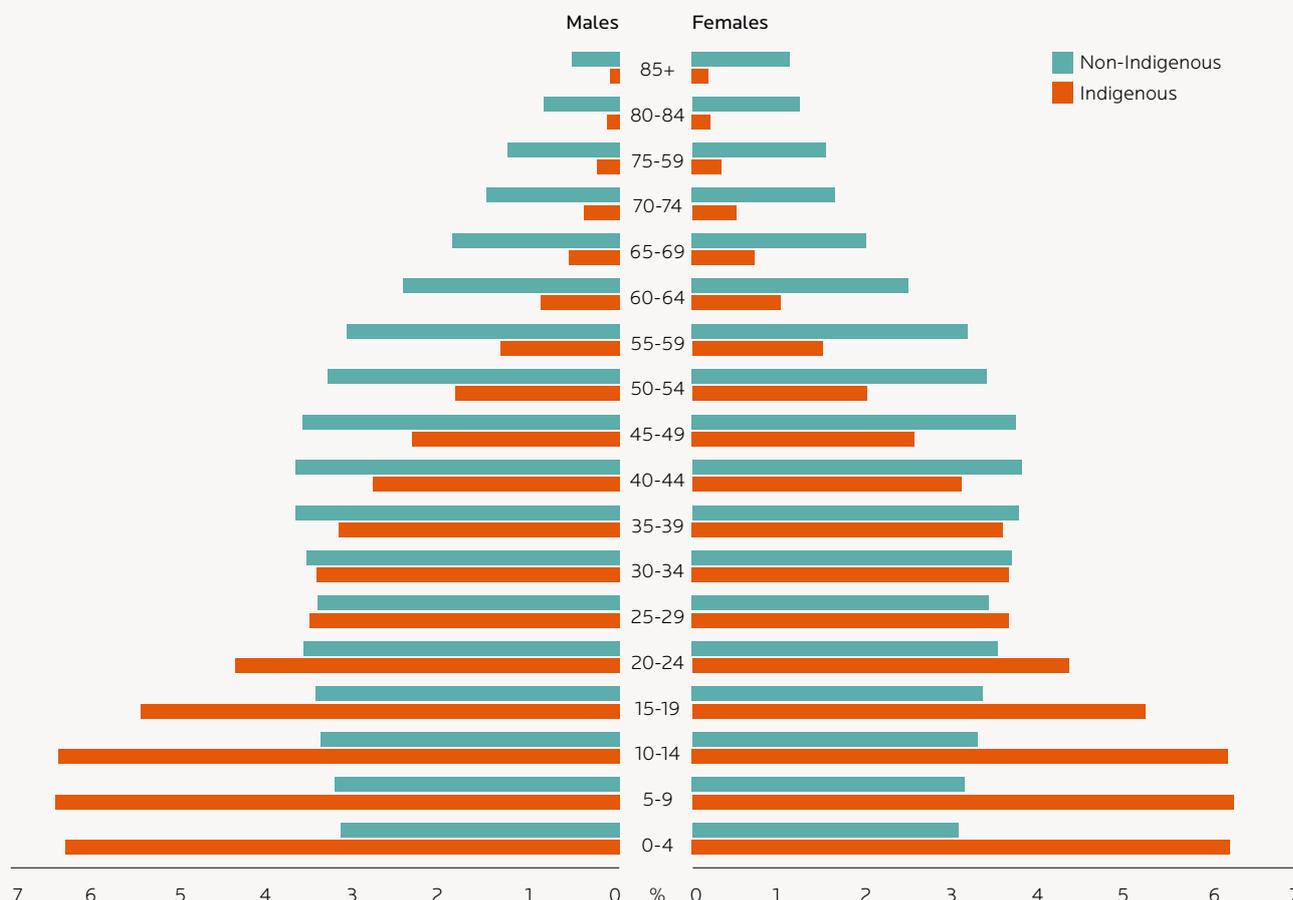
Australia's Indigenous population is growing rapidly. Indigenous Australians comprise 2.5 per cent of the population. Between 1991 and 2006, the Indigenous population grew more than twice the rate of the total Australian population. The current estimate places the number of Indigenous Australians at 517 000, with this number projected to increase

to 721 000 by 2021 - an increase of 39 per cent. Over the same period, the total Australian population is projected to increase by 24 per cent.

Australia's Indigenous population is relatively young. In 2006, half of all Indigenous Australians were aged 21 years or under. In contrast, half of all non-Indigenous Australians were aged 37 or younger. Children aged less than 15 years comprised 38 per cent of the Indigenous population, compared with 19 per cent in the non-Indigenous population.

The population pyramid below reflects not only the significant proportion of the Indigenous population aged under 20, but also the relatively low proportion aged 50 and above.

FIGURE 1: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Age Profiles – 2006



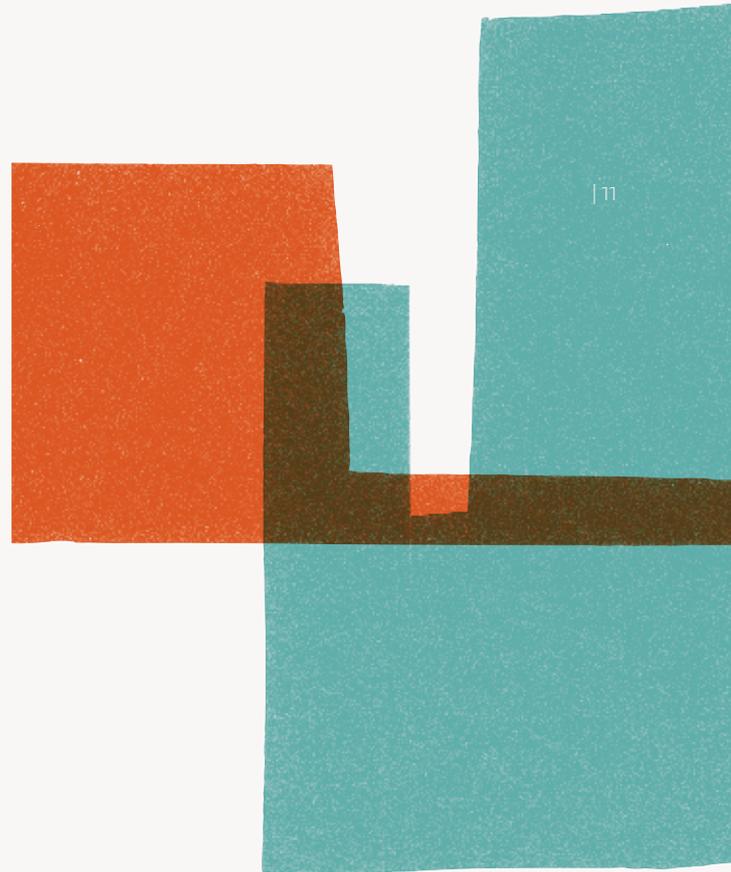
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2006, ABS Cat. 3238.0.55.001

The Indigenous population is more geographically dispersed

Almost one-third (32 per cent) of the Indigenous population live in major cities, 43 per cent of Indigenous Australians live in regional areas and some 25 per cent in remote Australia. In contrast, 69 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians live in major cities and less than 2 per cent in remote and very remote Australia.

Over half of Indigenous people live in either New South Wales (30 per cent) or Queensland (28 per cent). Approximately 14 per cent reside in Western Australia and 12 per cent in the Northern Territory.

Closing the gap will require that policies and programs focus on both remote areas, where levels of disadvantage are usually higher and major cities and regional areas where the majority of Indigenous Australians live, and which also suffer from significant levels of disadvantage.



The targets

Target: Close the life expectancy gap within a generation

Life expectancy is a widely used measure of population health. It is affected by socio-economic factors including education, employment, community functioning and housing. To meet this target requires sustained effort across all the building blocks. Official life expectancy estimates are only available every five years; however, mortality rates can be tracked on an annual basis.

The current gap in life expectancy is estimated at 11.5 years for males and 9.7 years for females. The mortality rate for Indigenous peoples living in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, the jurisdictions with adequate data for long term analysis, declined by 27 per cent between 1991 and 2009 and there was a statistically significant narrowing of the gap in mortality rates with non-Indigenous

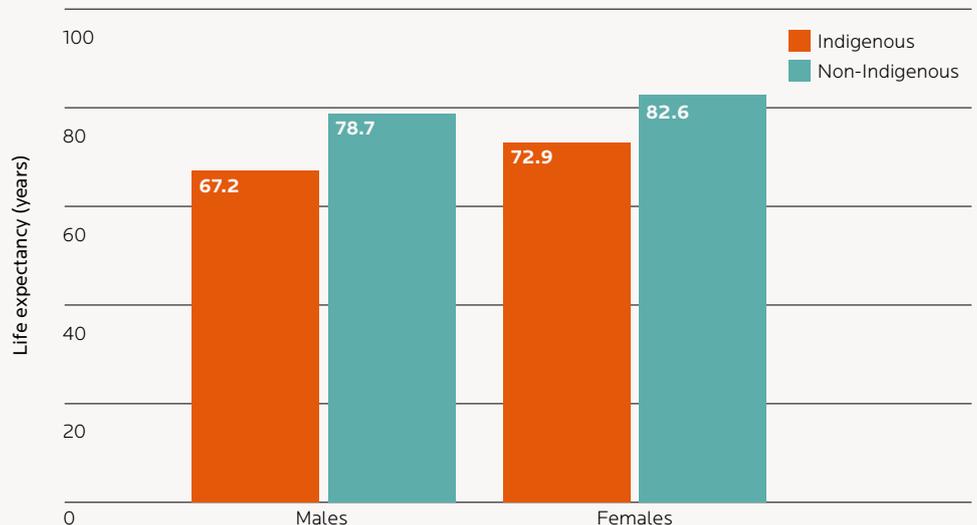
Australians over this period. However, there has also been a decline in non-Indigenous death rates so the mortality gap has narrowed but not closed.

Further, non-Indigenous life expectancy is expected to rise over coming years. This means, for example, that Indigenous male life expectancy will probably have to increase by almost 21 years by 2031 to close the gap.

Approximately 70 per cent of the gap in health outcomes is due to chronic diseases, which tend to have common lifestyle-related risk factors such as smoking, poor nutrition, obesity and low levels of physical activity. The interplay between these risk behaviours and other social determinants of health is complex and it is therefore important that we address the broader determinants of health as well as focus our efforts on prevention and better management of chronic diseases.

The implementation of the \$805.5 million Indigenous Chronic Disease Package which is designed to address this issue is on track.

FIGURE 2: The life expectancy gap, 2005-07



Source: ABS (2009) *Experimental Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2005-2007*, cat. No 3302.0.55.003

Target: Halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade (2018)

Mortality rates of children aged under five years are an important measure of child health as well as the overall health of the population, and the physical and social environment. Indigenous children are twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday as non-Indigenous children. In 2008 the national Indigenous child mortality rate was 221 per 100 000 compared to 100 per 100 000 for non-Indigenous children - giving a baseline gap of 121 per 100 000¹. To achieve the target of halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children within a decade, the mortality rate would need to fall to around 147 deaths per 100 000 by 2018.

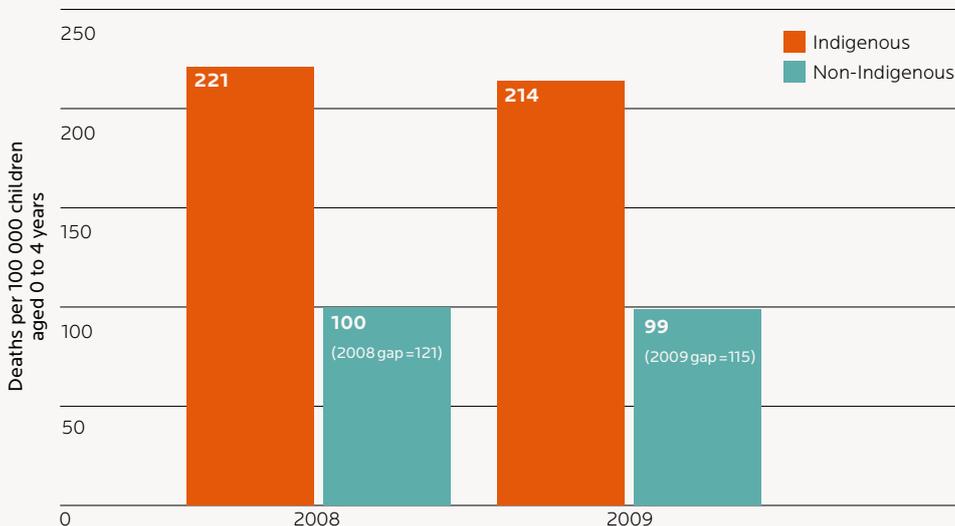
The gap in mortality rates has been closing in recent years. This is due to improvements in sanitation and public health conditions, better neonatal

intensive care, the development of immunisation programs, and the success of intervention programs for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Health system developments together with family and community engagement in rearing healthy children are helping drive these improvements

Maintaining this positive trend requires the continued expansion of preventive care and child and maternal health services, in particular, antenatal care, as well as continued efforts to address broader social factors such as socio-economic deprivation, maternal education, smoking and other behavioural risk factors.

¹ This revised baseline is based on data for the five jurisdictions (NSW, Qld, WA, SA, and NT) for which Indigenous mortality data has been assessed as having sufficient quality.

FIGURE 3: The Child mortality gap, Deaths per 100 000 children aged 0 to 4 years, 2008, 2009



Source: ABS (2009) *Experimental Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2005–2007*, cat. No 3302.0.55.003

Target: Ensuring all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years

Quality early childhood education is critical to ensuring young children have opportunities for early learning, development and socialisation. The Government is committed to providing access to early childhood education for all Australian children in the year before full-time school by 2013.

While current data are limited, the best available data suggests that 64 per cent of Indigenous children were enrolled in preschool in the year before school in 2009 compared to around to 70 per cent of all children.

The \$955 million Early Childhood Education National Partnership will contribute to attaining this target. The funding is being used to support new infrastructure, staffing and program delivery activity. The funding will be used, among other things, for participation and inclusion support services targeting Indigenous children including Indigenous children with additional needs. The mainstream funding and activities supported through the Partnership Agreement are supplemented by the \$293 million National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, which provides for 38 agreed Children and Family Centres to provide child care, early learning and parent and family support to Indigenous families. Of the 38 centres, 16 are in remote areas.

While it is a positive sign that remote Indigenous preschool enrolments are relatively high (data challenges notwithstanding), it is crucial to support children and their families to ensure more regular attendance. More detailed and robust data will be collected by the ABS during 2011, to become available in 2012.

Target: Halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade

Education is a key factor for improving wellbeing and life outcomes; it is an important determinant of health and employment. Literacy and numeracy skills are fundamental to reducing inequality in education. The gap in reading, writing and numeracy is influenced by a range of factors including school attendance, teacher quality and parental engagement. The target to close this gap consists of 12 separate goals for Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 in reading, writing and numeracy, as measured by the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

There are some positive signs. From 2008 to 2009 there was a reduction in the gap for Years 3 and 5 reading, and Year 5 numeracy. Further NAPLAN data available later in 2011 will provide additional information on progress.

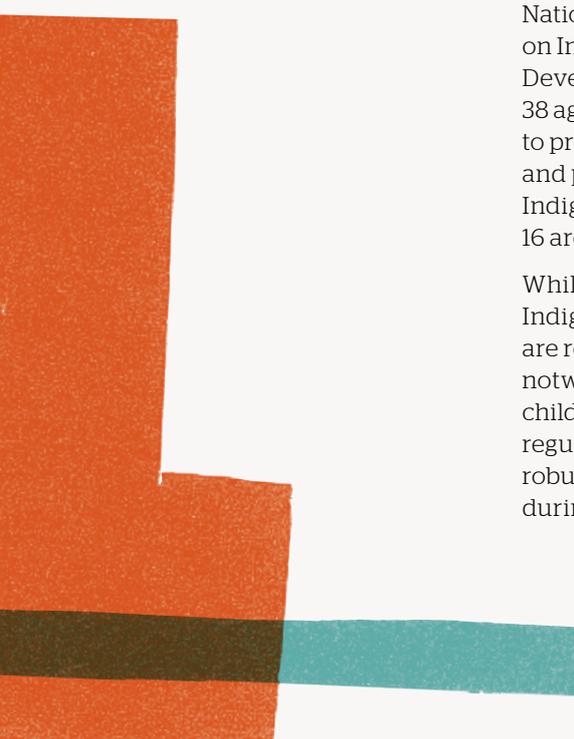
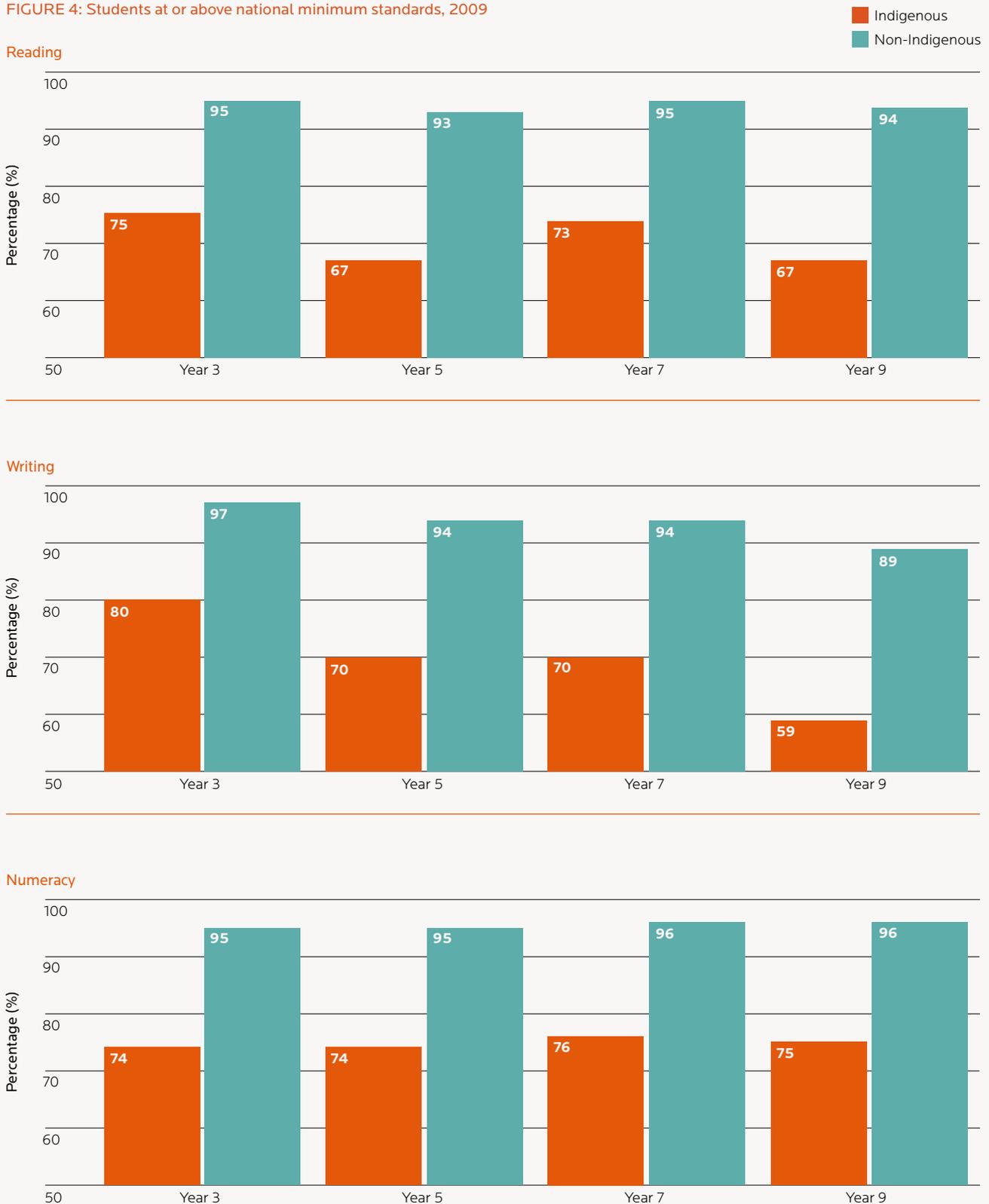


FIGURE 4: Students at or above national minimum standards, 2009



Source: MCEECDYA (2009) 2009 National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy: Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy



Photograph
Amata, South Australia,
Lorrie Graham 2010

Target: Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020

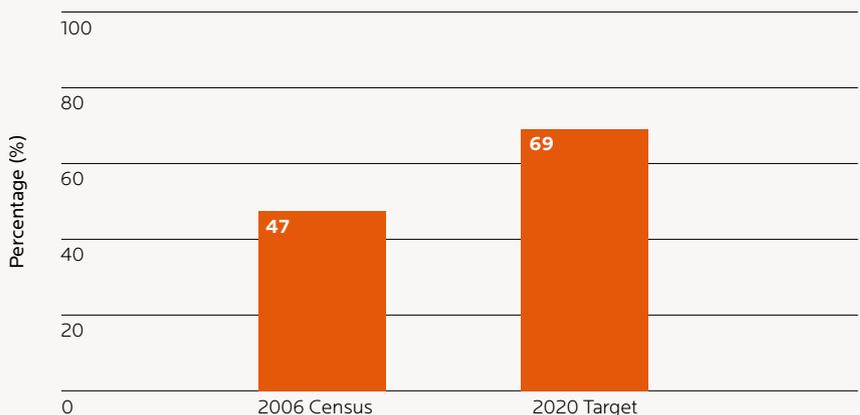
Research shows that completing Year 12 (or its equivalent) improves transitions into further study or employment, as well as broader life opportunities. In 2006, 47.4 per cent of Indigenous Australians aged between 20 and 24 achieved a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, compared to 83.8 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians in the same age group.

There is reason for optimism that progress is being made, based on existing trends. The Year 7/8 to Year 12 apparent retention rate for Indigenous students has increased from 30.7 per cent in 1995 to 45.4 per cent in 2009; in contrast, the non-Indigenous retention rate rose from 73.2 per cent to 77.3 per cent over the same period.

Indigenous Australians undertake vocational education and training at relatively high rates, representing

4.4 per cent of vocational education and training students (compared to 2.5 per cent of the general population), although completion rates tend to be low. As vocational education and training qualifications make up one fifth of Indigenous Year 12 or equivalent attainments, increasing completion rates is vital for reaching our attainment target and will result in improved employment outcomes.

FIGURE 5: Year 12 or equivalent attainment for Indigenous 20-24 year olds, current level and required level in 2020 to meet the target



Source: unpublished DEEWR analysis

Target: Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade

Secure employment is important to achieving a good standard of living and wellbeing. It benefits families and communities as well as the individual. In 2008, 53.8 per cent of Indigenous Australians aged 15-64 were employed compared to 75 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians in the same age group.

The employment gap reflects, among other things, relatively low labour force participation among Indigenous Australians. In 2008, 35.5 per cent of the Indigenous population aged 15-64 were not in the labour force, which means they were neither employed nor unemployed. In contrast, only 21.7 per cent of the non-Indigenous population aged 15-64 were outside the labour force in 2008.

Increasing numeracy and literacy skills for Indigenous people outside the labour force will be essential to meet this target.

While the challenge is considerable there have been some positive developments. For example, between 2002 and 2008 the proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 15-64 with a job rose from 48.2 per cent to 53.8 per cent and the unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians aged 15-64 decreased from 23 per cent to 16.6 per cent.

The role of the corporate and private sector is also important and there is a welcome and growing commitment of companies of all sizes to create employment and training opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous employment is strongly related to education. At relatively high education levels the employment gap is quite small. In 2006 the gap in proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 15-64 who were employed was 16.5 percentage points for those whose highest level of education was Year 10 compared to only 4.5 percentage points for those with a diploma, bachelor degree or higher.

Data limitations

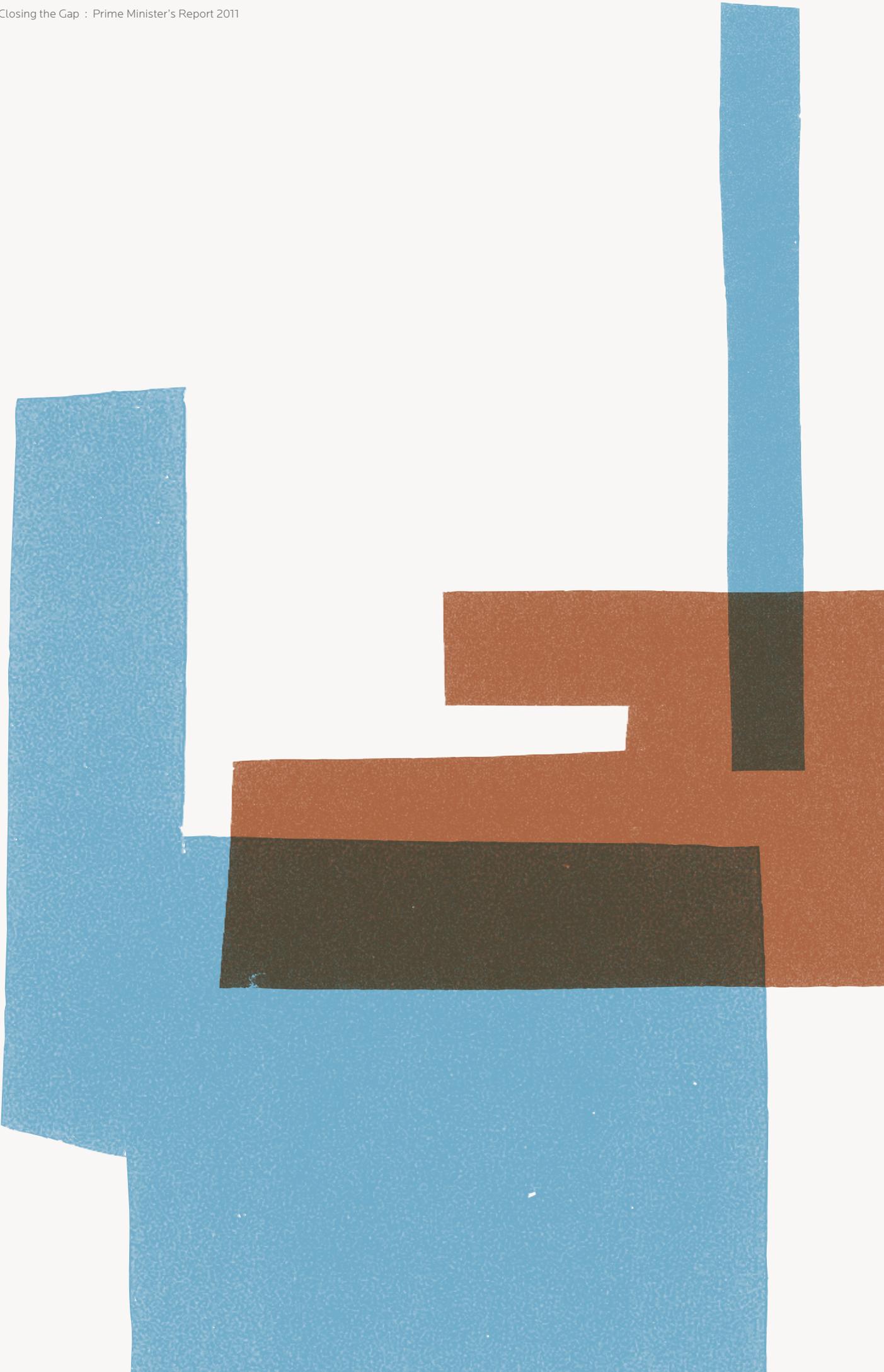
Improving the availability of reliable data remains a priority for all governments. To improve the collection and reporting of data, the Australian Government has committed \$46.4 million over four years from 2009-10. This investment will help build a better evidence base against which to measure progress.

Data quality improvements will lead to better estimates of mortality and life expectancy through improved identification of Indigenous people in the Population Census and in health administrative datasets.

FIGURE 6: Employment to population ratio (age 15-64) by level of highest educational attainment, 2006



Source: ABS, Population Census, 2006 (unpublished data)



Part B

Strengthening the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

The closing the gap strategy is underpinned by a commitment to genuine engagement with the Indigenous community. The Government has continued to build on the new relationship which began with the National Apology to the Stolen Generations in February 2008. This relationship is based on trust and mutual respect.

The Government is committed to listening to the voices of Indigenous Australians to help shape policy so that it matches the needs and aspirations of Indigenous people. Without genuine engagement, we will continue to struggle to generate local Indigenous ownership of solutions and create and sustain the positive changes required to achieve the closing the gap targets. The Government also recognises the important role the community, corporate and private sectors play in closing the gap.

National engagement

National Congress of Australia's First Peoples

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples is central to building new partnerships based on goodwill and mutual respect. The representative body will provide a central mechanism with which governments, the corporate and community sectors can engage and partner on policy design and implementation.

It will also be an informed and strong national voice for the goals, aspirations, interests and values of Indigenous Australians. This will help to ensure policies and initiatives are suitably designed and implemented to address the needs of Indigenous individuals, families and communities.

The model for the Congress was based on extensive consultation with Indigenous people and the final design was developed by an independent steering committee of Indigenous leaders, convened by the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Dr Tom Calma.

The Australian Government has committed \$29.2 million to the setting up and initial operation of the National Congress.

Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians

The Australian Government is committed to progressing recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Australian Constitution.

The Government has appointed an expert panel to lead discussion and debate about Indigenous constitutional recognition throughout 2011 and to encourage the public to put forward their views. The expert panel has been asked to develop options for constitutional change that would have the most chance of success at a referendum.

The expert panel is co-chaired by Professor Patrick Dodson and Mr Mark Leibler AC. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and the co-chairs of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples are also members of the expert panel. The expert panel will report to the Australian Government in December 2011.

20 | **Repatriation of Indigenous Ancestral Remains**

For Indigenous Australians, the return of ancestors to rest in peace in their homelands, and the associated recognition of the relationships between the land, the living and the dead is a key step towards restoring dignity.

The programs to repatriate Indigenous ancestral remains identify the origins of remains, notify communities, and assist them to store ancestral remains and sacred objects appropriately. The programs also arrange for repatriation where it is requested. Through these programs, over 1 420 remains and over 1 320 sacred objects have been returned from Australian collections and over 1 000 ancestral remains have been returned from overseas collections.

The Australian Government acknowledges that the return of Indigenous ancestral remains is an important element in healing the pain of past injustices and building trust and respect with Indigenous communities.

Local engagement

The Government recognises that closing the gap requires a genuine partnership with Indigenous Australians at all levels. It is committed to extensive consultations with local communities to help shape policy that meets local needs.

Localised Planning

Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement

The Government is working with individuals and communities in remote areas to identify local priorities under Local Implementation Plans. These plans form an important part of service planning and holding governments accountable for service delivery.

The Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement commits governments to deliver facilities and services to remote Indigenous communities comparable to those which would be expected in any Australian town of similar size, location and need. The implementation of this Agreement is being overseen by the Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services. The Coordinator-General works closely with Indigenous communities and governments to drive the implementation of the initiative.

Regional Partnership Agreements

Regional Partnership Agreements provide substantial opportunities to better coordinate government services and to give local communities greater say in program delivery.

Typically, a Regional Partnership Agreement is comprised of two parts that are developed in consultation with local communities. The first part is a statement of intent that defines the broad objectives, timeframe of the agreement and key principles as well as identifying who the parties are and their roles. The second part is the plan which outlines the actions that need to take place to address the priorities of the agreement and the contributions of each party in the implementation of projects.

The Groote Eylandt Regional Partnership Agreement which was signed between the Commonwealth Government, the Northern Territory Government and the Anindilyakwa Land Council on 20 May 2008 at Groote Eylandt was the first Regional Partnership Agreement in the Northern Territory and has already had successes in increased housing, employment, health and governance outcomes.

Northern Territory Emergency Response Redesign

During 2009 the Government undertook extensive consultations with Indigenous Australians across the Northern Territory about future directions for the Northern Territory Emergency Response. This included over 100 whole-of-community meetings covering all communities affected by the Emergency Response, 11 workshops with regional leaders and key stakeholder organisations, and numerous face-to-face discussions between Government Business Managers and individuals and small groups in communities. The consultations helped to reshape the future direction of the Emergency Response.

Reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act

The Australian Government has fully reinstated people's rights and protections under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. Under legislation that was passed by the Parliament on 21 June 2010, all of the provisions in the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation that suspended the operation of the Act have been removed. In addition, all of the provisions in the legislation

that deemed certain measures, such as income management, five-year leases, and alcohol and pornography restrictions, to be special measures, have also been repealed. This took effect from 31 December 2010. Measures have been redesigned, where necessary, to make them consistent with the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.

New Income Management

Consultations with Indigenous Australians on the future of the Northern Territory Emergency Response revealed that while there were a wide variety of views about income management, the majority of comments received indicated it should continue.

The new non-discriminatory model of income management came into effect on 1 July 2010. The model is now available across all regions in the Northern Territory and has replaced income management under the Northern Territory Emergency Response. At 31 December 2010 there were 15 825 people participating in income management in the Northern Territory.

Under its roll-out in the Northern Territory, almost 60 per cent of people eligible to exit income management have chosen to continue to receive budgeting support through voluntary income management. The high uptake of voluntary income management indicates many people who were income managed under the Northern Territory Emergency Response believe it has had a positive impact on their life and the lives of their families and provides tangible assistance to family budgeting. Many people are telling Centrelink staff they are reassured by the financial support that income management provides and the convenience of the Basics Card.

CASE STUDY

Many Rivers Regional Partnership Agreement

The Many Rivers Regional Partnership Agreement (the Agreement) is an agreement between the Australian Government, the New South Wales Government, the Many Rivers Training, Enterprise and Employment Aboriginal Corporation, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the Representatives of Industry, and the Non-Government Organisations.

The area agreement covers the Many Rivers Region, including Tweed/Byron, Ballina, Casino, Coffs Harbour, Nambucca, Kempsey, Taree, Hunter and Wyong.

It is a practical example of community engagement, promoting economic participation and strengthening communities by developing solutions that are central to addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

The agreement created the Green Team Alliance which is an incorporated company working to address high levels of unemployment among Indigenous Australians living on the coast of New South Wales from the Hawkesbury to the Tweed Rivers. The corporation's work capitalises on existing Indigenous work teams (Green Teams) which are already undertaking land rehabilitation work in this

region. There are over 70 Green Teams undertaking environmental contract work throughout the region. Many of these are in the early stage, but up to 50 Indigenous people are employed in undertaking these contracts at any one time. A major task for the Alliance is to create sustainable long-term employment opportunities in environmental work.

At present many contracts are short term. For example, 12 people are presently employed by the Ngurrula Green Team in the Nambucca Valley, and between six and ten by Border Ranges Contractors in the far north. These teams have provided full-time employment for several years.

Since its establishment and incorporation a little over a year ago, the agreement has sourced over \$5 million of major environmental work. The Australian Government has identified the Alliance as a project of national significance.

The agreement has recently secured \$1.2 million from the Government to provide for intensive training and support costs for two members each from 15 advanced Green Teams. This will commence early in 2011 and will involve an Indigenous Employment Program provider and TAFE New South Wales.



Photograph
Lajamanu, Northern Territory,
Lorrie Graham 2010

Part C

The building blocks

The Australian Government recognises that ending Indigenous disadvantage will require long-term commitment. Significant effort is being directed across strategic building blocks which support closing the gap.

The building blocks help integrate policy and recognise that achieving the closing the gap targets will require improvements across a range of areas.

To help turn around decades of under-investment and to make lasting long-term improvements for Indigenous Australians, the Australian Government is investing over \$5.75 billion over three years.

The building blocks help to shape key action the Government is taking on the ground to end Indigenous disadvantage.

Building Block: Early Childhood

The safety, protection and well-being of Indigenous children are fundamental to the Australian Government's efforts. The Government is integrating services such as child care, early learning, and parent and family supports so vulnerable children receive a better start in life.

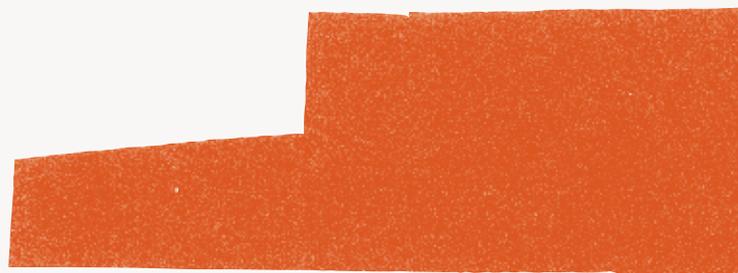
In remote locations there are additional benefits from consolidating resources to create safe and educationally focused precincts.

The Government is also ensuring mainstream services meet the needs of vulnerable Indigenous children and families.

The Australian Government has established the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20. For the first time, the Australian, state and territory governments are harnessing their combined resources to tackle child abuse and neglect; using every appropriate measure to protect children who are at risk. This includes practical

measures such as improved information sharing between Centrelink, Medicare and child protection authorities as well as national standards to ensure the safety, health and welfare of children who can no longer live safely with their families.

To protect children through the provision of intensive early intervention services, the Australian Government's \$19.9 million Communities for Children Plus program has started operating in Ipswich (Queensland), Cardinia (Victoria) and Kempsey (New South Wales). By June 2011, services will also be operating in Launceston (Tasmania), Midland (Western Australia), Campbelltown (New South Wales) and East Arnhem (Northern Territory). Over four years, these sites will provide an additional 1 200 children and families with intensive early intervention services including parenting support and mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, family violence and housing services, as well as child protection services if required.



24 | **Key achievements**

- The Indigenous Children Program delivers early intervention and prevention programs targeted at families with children at risk of abuse or neglect. The program provides a range of different services including playgroups, parenting programs, counselling, drug and alcohol education and anger management training, which work on the strengths of community members to increase their capacity to be caring parents and positive role models. There are 32 locations in cities and regional centres across Australia where this program operates.
- Sixty-nine Supported Playgroups are operating across Australia, targeting Indigenous families with more than 6 159 children and parents meeting regularly. These playgroups encourage children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development as well as supporting parents and connecting them to other community services.
- A network of 38 Children and Family Centres is being rolled out - tailoring services for children and families including child care, early learning, parent and family support. The location of 18 sites has been agreed in consultation with communities, and services are now underway at West Belconnen (Australian Capital Territory), Maningrida (Northern Territory) and Bairnsdale and Whittlesea in Victoria. By July 2011, it is anticipated that services will be available from either permanent or temporary facilities at 12 sites across Australia.

- Around 1 800 Indigenous parents and children are being supported through Indigenous Parenting Support Services to strengthen parenting skills and support the development, learning and well being of Indigenous children. The services support Indigenous families with children aged up to twelve years of age, with a particular focus on children from birth to two years, providing a range of services from home making to drug and alcohol services. By 30 December 2010, 37 sites across Australia were operating, and this is expected to increase to 51 services by June 2011.
- Around 47 000 Indigenous Australians used the services offered through the mainstream Family Support Program which provides help and support for families dealing with relationship problems and separation issues.
- Around 14 700 Indigenous adults and children visited mainstream Communities for Children sites which provide early intervention programs for families with children up to the age of twelve. There are 45 services across New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania. Activities include home visiting, early learning and literacy programs, parenting and family support programs, and child nutrition. At the Broadmeadows site in Victoria the program has seen a significant increase in the kindergarten participation rate in the city of Hume, from 79.8 per cent in 2007 to 90 per cent in 2010.

- The Australian Government has committed \$6 million over three years from 2010-11 to the Strong Fathers, Strong Families Program to provide access to male inclusive antenatal and early childhood development services for Indigenous fathers, partners, grandfathers and uncles.
- Ten new child and maternal health services have been approved for funding across Australia, bringing the total to 63 services funded under the New Directions Mothers and Babies Services program. A total of up to 11 000 Indigenous babies and their mothers may be assisted over five years under the \$90.3 million program.

Access to Early Childhood Education

The Australian Government is working closely with the state and territory governments to achieve universal access to pre-school. The Early Childhood Education National Partnership with funding of \$955 million will contribute to attaining this target.

This funding can be used to support infrastructure, staffing and program delivery activity. Some examples include pilot programs to deliver pre-school programs in remote communities and town camps in the Northern Territory; participation and inclusion support for services targeting Indigenous children and for Indigenous children with additional needs in Queensland; improving the affordability of community based pre-schools in New South Wales, and employing additional full-time teachers to support Indigenous children in South Australian pre-schools.

In addition, the \$293 million National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, provides for 38 agreed Children and Family Centres to provide child care, early learning and parent and family support to Indigenous families. Of the 38 centres, 16 are in remote areas.

There are encouraging state-wide Indigenous pre-school participation improvements in New South Wales, with an increase of 8.6 percentage points to 88.2 per cent and Victoria, with an increase of 5.3 percentage points to 69.3 per cent in 2009. South Australia and Western Australia have maintained their high enrolment rates, with South Australia improving its attendance rate gap by five percentage points.

State by state examples of key actions include:

- New South Wales is providing increased funding to 85 per cent of community pre-schools, having significantly increased subsidies for services for Indigenous and vulnerable children.
- Victoria is using state funding to pay for ten hours a week of kindergarten for eligible Indigenous three and four year old children, whose families are in receipt of a concession card.

- Queensland is providing extra kindergarten services in communities where kindergarten is under-used by Indigenous families and delivering mobile and outreach programs targeting Indigenous children in rural and regional areas where centre-based services are not available.
- Western Australia is progressively rolling out 15 hours of pre-school on a district-by-district basis, with priority given to locations with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and high numbers of Indigenous students, including remote areas such as the Pilbara and the Kimberley.
- South Australia is working to improve attendance rates among Indigenous pre-schoolers through employing additional full-time teachers to support Indigenous children in pre-schools.
- Tasmania is continuing and extending outreach efforts to Indigenous families and their children, to encourage better attendance at pre-school.
- Northern Territory is rolling out 15 hours of pre-school per week progressively from 2010 to 2013.

The Indigenous Mothers Accommodation Fund

The \$10 million Indigenous Mothers Accommodation Fund aims to improve Indigenous child and maternal health. It funds new and expanded accommodation for Indigenous mothers who need to travel from their communities for medical care in the final weeks of their pregnancies and during and immediately following the birth of their children.

A total of \$273 000 has been provided for a small extension and refurbishment to an existing 10-bed Indigenous mothers' hostel in Katherine, Northern Territory managed by Aboriginal Hostels Limited which was completed in March 2010.

Funding of \$5 million was also provided to the Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan Corporation to build a new 24-bed facility in Cairns, which was officially opened on 24 September 2010.



Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre Auspice of Yerin Aboriginal Health Services

Dhangan Gudjagan Cottage in the Wyong Shire of New South Wales has seen a tripling of its client base of pregnant women and new mothers since it opened its doors in mid-2009.

At the Cottage, the paediatric nurse and the Indigenous mothers and babies worker organise mothers and babies groups which cater for parents and their babies. Discussions focus on topics and concerns that parents have raised with staff including immunisation, dental care, active play, sleep, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome prevention, settling baby, nutrition and baby milestones.

The Cottage caters for Indigenous mums and dads and their children from birth to five years. The service is also available to non-Indigenous women with Indigenous partners. All the family is invited along and many young dads come with their partners to antenatal care appointments, to immunise their children and to attend the mothers and babies groups.

Before the Cottage opened, Indigenous women weren't seeking antenatal care until well after 20 weeks gestation. Now they are presenting much earlier in pregnancy at ten to 12 weeks gestation. All babies born since the Cottage opened have been full term and of a healthy birth weight, and there's been an increase in the attendance of women aged between 15-25 years, with the majority of women presenting being first time mums.

The Australian Government is providing \$422 685 in 2010-11 in funding under the New Directions Mothers and Babies Services program for child and maternal health services at the Dhangan Gudjagan Cottage.

Building Block: Schooling

A good education gives children the chance to reach their potential, opens up employment opportunities and encourages personal responsibility and independence. This is clearly demonstrated by the direct relationship between education attainment and employment - the greater the level of education, the greater the likelihood of employment.

Governments at all levels are taking action to improve numeracy and literacy levels for Indigenous Australians, through both mainstream and Indigenous specific programs. Funding of \$4.5 billion is being provided through the National Partnership Agreements on Improving Teacher Quality, on Smarter Schools Low Socio-Economic School Communities and on Literacy and Numeracy.

Following a public consultation process including over 100 submissions, Education Ministers have endorsed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies action across six priority areas that evidence suggests will have the greatest impact in improving education outcomes for Indigenous students.

These priority areas are: readiness for school, engagement and connections, attendance, literacy and numeracy, leadership, quality teaching and workforce development and pathways to real post school options.

A strong accountability framework including agreed outcomes, targets and performance indicators has been built into the Action Plan. Annual reporting against the actions and accountability framework, along with ongoing evaluation built into the Action Plan, will allow governments, Indigenous communities, schools and others to assess progress.

Key Achievements

- Nationally, over 2 500 schools are receiving concentrated support to improve students' educational outcomes under the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities and Literacy and Numeracy National Partnerships in 2010. These school communities have been identified through Partnership Agreements with State and Territory Governments which aim to achieve sustained improvements in educational outcomes and to improve literacy and numeracy for students in participating schools.
- As of November 2010, the Government had invested \$89.8 million under the Building the Education Revolution program for school projects in the 29 communities covered by the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership. The projects include the refurbishment of outdoor covered areas, construction of new classrooms, multipurpose community halls, science centres, and a library resource centre.
- More than 3 500 Indigenous young people, at risk of not attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, received individual case management support under the Youth Connections program in 2010. This represented around 17 per cent of the total number of young people supported by this mainstream program. Youth Connections helps young people to stay at school, get back to school or take-up training and achieve a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.
- More than 5 000 students were supported in Sporting Chance Program academies such as the Clontarf Foundation football academies, the Former Origin Greats Queensland academy and other sports-based academies in 2010. More than half the participants reported improved academic performance. Positive change in the attitude and behaviour of students was also reported.
- The \$107.8 million Supporting Remote Schools - Additional Teachers for the Northern Territory Program is on track to have 200 teachers in remote NT classrooms by the end of the 2012 school year with, 146.5 full time equivalent teachers recruited so far.
- It is expected that 40 000 primary school students and 10 000 secondary school students will be attending around 900 Focus Schools identified for concentrated assistance under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan. This represents almost half of all Indigenous primary school students.

28 | **Engaging students**

Boosting school attendance is central to the Ready and Willing for School program which is part of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan. Health checks and family assessments are being provided to make sure 300 Indigenous children are ready and able to attend school. The program, delivered by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Northern Territory Government, works closely with families, children and schools to make the transition from home to school as smooth and positive as possible.

With support from the Australian Government, the Sporting Chance Program uses sport and recreation as a means of reaching out to 10 000 primary and secondary school students at risk of not completing their schooling. In 2010 a total of 22 providers delivered 59 projects including 54 school-based sports academies and five education engagement strategies which are expected to continue until December 2012.

Eight more Clontarf Foundation football academies also started in 2010 supporting 300 students. In 2010 over 5 000 students were supported through the academies. With expanded Government funding, in 2010 the Former Origin Greats Queensland academy, along with 10 sports academies, began putting strategies and programs in place to work with girls.

The Parental and Community Engagement Program is a community driven program for parents and carers of Indigenous young Australians. It assists families and communities to engage in their children's education through participation in educational decision making, developing partnerships with education providers and supporting and reinforcing their children's learning at home. Since the program started in 2009, nearly 8 800 parents and caregivers and a further 5 176 community members have been involved in 283 diverse initiatives across all States and Territories, including metropolitan, provincial, remote and very remote areas.

Improving Literacy and Numeracy

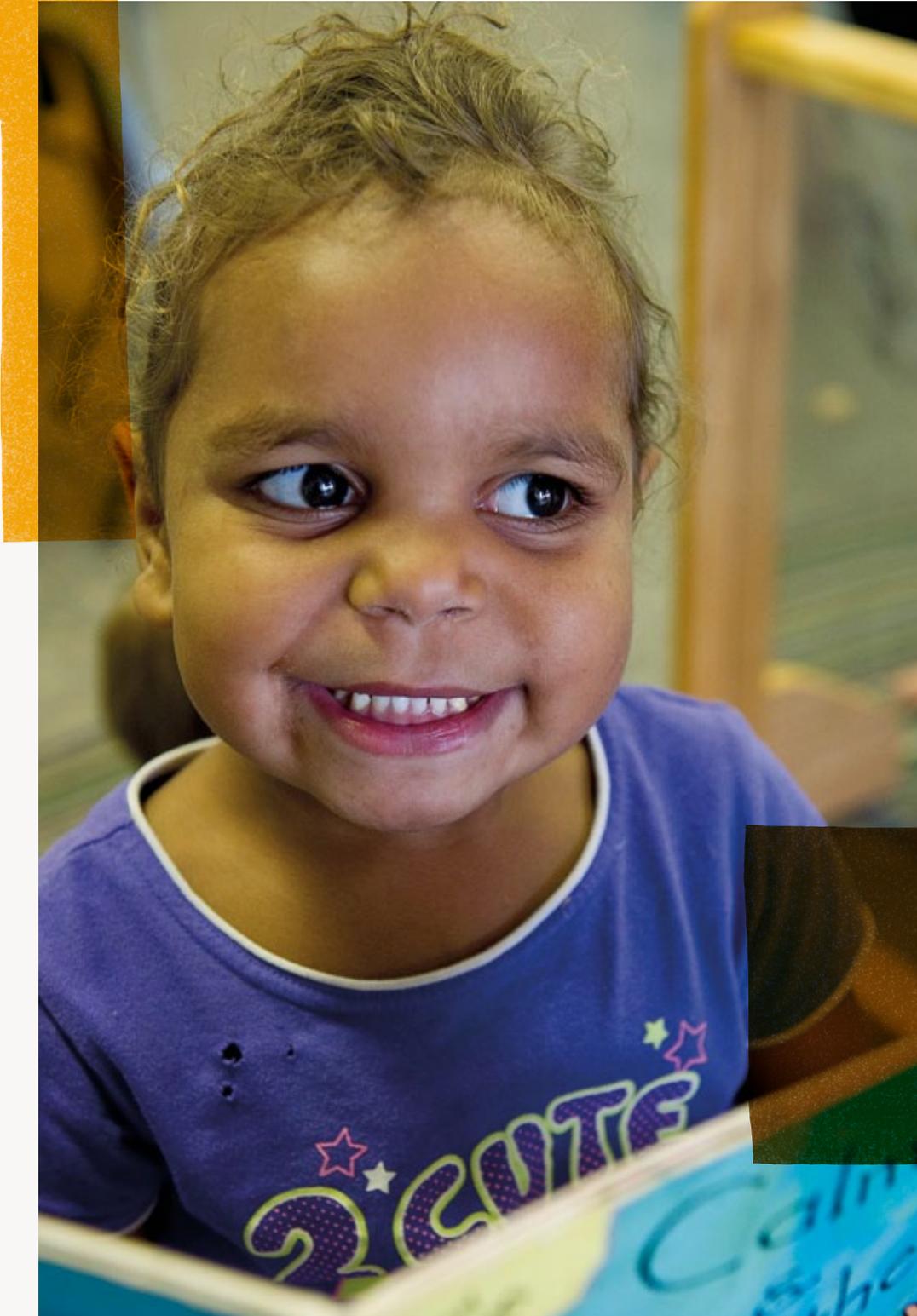
Over a quarter of all Australian schools - 2 580 - are participating in the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities and/or the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. All teachers and school leaders are targeted under the National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality. Through these agreements, each state and territory has identified specific reform activities to support the educational needs and wellbeing of Indigenous students and will report on the impact of these reforms in biannual reports.

Under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan, the expansion of intensive literacy and numeracy programs and personalised learning plans will assist Indigenous students who are not achieving at the level of the rest of their class. As well, professional development materials and support for teachers will help them prepare and maintain personal learning plans for every Indigenous student up to Year 10. A total of 33 literacy and numeracy projects have been funded across Australia over 2009-2012. The projects will also contribute to the evidence base of what works so that there is a greater understanding of how to more effectively close the gap.

Recruiting and training first class teachers

The \$107.8 million Supporting Remote Schools - Additional Teachers for the Northern Territory Program is on track to have 200 teachers in remote Northern Territory classrooms by the end of the 2012 school year. So far, 146.5 full-time equivalent teachers have been recruited and \$14.7 million has been allocated for the construction of up to 22 additional houses for teachers in priority remote communities.





Photograph
Ntaria, Northern Territory,
Lorrie Graham 2010

30 | Indigenous employees in the education sector are being given the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and develop career pathways as part of the quality teaching and enhancing literacy measures of the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement. The Australian Government has committed \$44.3 million over the three years to 2011-12 to Northern Territory education providers to support professional development and so improve student literacy and numeracy.

In 2010, three scholarships were awarded for the professional development of Indigenous Australians working in the higher education sector as part of the Indigenous Staff Scholarship Program.

The Governor-General's Indigenous Student Teacher Scholarship program began in 2010 to help Indigenous university students obtain teaching degrees and work as teachers in their communities. Scholarships of \$25 000 a year for up to four years are awarded to one teacher-education student from each state and territory but because of the outstanding quality of the applicants, in 2010 the selection committee awarded twelve scholarships.

Scholarships for Indigenous students

Under the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, scholarships are available for Indigenous students especially those from very remote and remote areas. At least 300 scholarships of up to three years' duration will be

available each year over 2010-12. From 2006 to 2009, the program provided scholarships for 481 secondary and tertiary students, with 125 students completing Year 12 and more than 60 per cent coming from very remote and remote areas.

In 2010, 362 secondary students were supported through a scholarship. This number will increase to at least 520 in 2011 and around 750 in 2012.

Tertiary scholarships provide a pathway to university for the program's Year 12 graduates. Around 120 students will receive a tertiary scholarship in 2011, growing to around 180 in 2012.

Trades Training Centres in Schools

Funding priority for the \$2.5 billion Trade Training Centres in Schools Program is being given to applications from school communities with Indigenous students and students from regional or other disadvantaged communities, including remote communities. An additional priority is to establish regional skills hubs where secondary schools in rural and regional locations develop partnerships for improved trade training delivery.

To date, four separate competitive rounds have been conducted resulting in the approval of \$1 billion to fund 288 projects which will benefit 927 schools. Twenty-nine schools have been identified in remote service delivery locations. To date, 12 of these schools have already benefited through funding. They are Wilcannia Central School in New South Wales, Angurugu School, Gunbalanya School, Ngukurr School, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic School, Wadeye, Umbakumba

School, Xavier Community Education Centre and Nguui in the Northern Territory, Doomadgee State School, Mornington Island State School, and Mossman State High School in Queensland and Amata Anangu School and Mimili Anangu School in South Australia.

Transitioning to post-school education

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions aims to increase the educational engagement and attainment of all young people and to improve their transition to post-school education, training and employment. This Agreement was established to achieve a national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 90 per cent by 2015 and halve the gap for Indigenous young people in Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020.

The Australian Government's mainstream School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) program works to increase business and community engagement with schools and foster a whole of community approach that supports young people's learning and development. This is being achieved through a national network of Partnership Brokers that are building partnerships between business and industry; education and training providers; parents and families; and community groups.

The Australian Government has introduced comprehensive reforms to remove financial barriers to make participation in education equitable so that across Australia more university students have fairer access to student income support.

Since April 2010, university students in receipt of Youth Allowance, Austudy or ABSTUDY have been eligible to receive an annual Student Start up Scholarship for each year they are studying. At the end of 2010, over 2 000 Indigenous students had received at least one payment. In 2011, Start up Scholarships will be valued at over \$2 000.

Dependent university students receiving Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY who need to move from home to study may also be eligible for a Relocation Scholarship. At the end of 2010, over 500 Indigenous students had received a scholarship. In 2011, the Relocation Scholarship will provide over \$4 000 for the first year of study and over \$1 000 for each year following.

The Commonwealth Scholarships Program is increasing higher education participation for Indigenous students. In 2010, 2 235 scholarships were made available for Indigenous higher education students. Of these, 732 were to assist with the general costs of education, and 536 were to assist students from regional and remote areas with the costs of accommodation. In addition, 967 Indigenous Access Scholarships were made available to assist commencing students to access higher education. Funding of over \$8 million was provided to support these new scholarships in 2010.

CASE STUDY

Walhallow Public School, NSW

At Walhallow Public School at Caroonna in country NSW, the 28 Indigenous students are taking big steps forward in reading, writing and maths and school attendance has risen from 85 per cent to over 90 per cent.

Since the beginning of 2010, all students have improved their reading levels. Teachers and parents say the children are more involved in reading and writing activities and they're contributing more in the classroom and the number of students achieving stage-appropriate outcomes in English and Mathematics has increased from 70 to 80 per cent. The school attributes this success to individualised programs provided under the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership. An additional teacher is on hand to mentor staff on the use of the accelerated literacy program in the classroom and the school's Aboriginal Education Officer works closely with parents to support student learning in the classroom. The parents' involvement has strengthened the program and a strong partnership is developing between the school, the Parents and Citizens' Association, community members and the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

CASE STUDY

**The Clontarf Foundation
Midwest Football Academy
Geraldton Western Australia**

In Geraldton, Western Australia, a Sporting Chance Program academy operated by the Clontarf Foundation is using Australian Football to encourage 150 Indigenous boys to complete their schooling and continue into further training and employment. The program for boys in Year 8 to Year 12 operates from the Geraldton Senior College and John Wilcock College.

The Midwest Football Academy staff are hand-picked through connections within the community, and each staff member is a highly respected role model for the boys. In many cases, these relationships continue after the boys graduate from school. One of the current staff members is a graduate of the program.

Among the most successful programs are the Kicking Goals Education Program for Year 11 and 12 Academy members; the mentoring program; the junior member after school homework activity; and the rewards and camps which encourage attendance at school. In partnership with the local Technical and Further Education campus, the Academy also helps with literacy and numeracy support for the boys with outstanding results. In 2010, 88 per cent of Year 8 to Year 10 participants improved in literacy and 89 per cent in numeracy. Improvements in educational performance were evident in 97 per cent of the Year 11 and 12 participants. As well, the attendance rates were higher among Academy students. In 2010, 15 Year 12 students successfully completed school and achieved their Western Australian Certificate of Education.

Building Block: Health

Improving Indigenous health brings benefits extending well beyond the health of the individual. It has a flow-on effect on families and communities. The Australian Government has increased its annual Indigenous specific health expenditure by 87 per cent since 2007-08. This includes \$805.5 million over four years through the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package to train the Indigenous health workforce, tackle chronic disease risk factors and to better manage chronic conditions, follow-up care and expanding the workforce.

Indigenous health professionals are also playing an important role. According to recent data from the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, there were 153 Indigenous doctors working in Australia at the end of 2010, an increase from 90 in 2001. In addition to this, there are currently 161 Indigenous students studying medicine across Australia.

Key achievements

- Under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package:
 - › Over four years from 2009-10 the Government is investing \$100.6 million through the Tackling Smoking initiative to reduce Indigenous smoking rates. This includes rolling out the new dedicated Tackling Smoking workforce which will promote healthy behaviours and reduce lifestyle risks in Indigenous communities. The Government has also provided \$2.6 million to make anti-smoking services more accessible and appropriate for Indigenous Australians.
 - › More than 41 000 Indigenous patients living with or at risk of chronic disease have benefited from access to more affordable Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines since July 2010.
- › An extra 337 new positions have been funded in the Indigenous health workforce including 126 Indigenous Outreach Workers, 95 Indigenous health project officers, 20 regional tobacco coordinators, 21 tobacco action workers, 41 healthy lifestyle workers, 20 practice managers and 14 additional health professionals.
- › In the 12 months to June 2010, 3 564 follow-up services were provided by Indigenous health workers or practice nurses, an increase of 611 per cent from 2008-09.
- The Government has provided \$4.9 million to Flinders University for a health professional training program in self-management of chronic disease specifically designed for Indigenous Australians. This will build the capacity of the health workforce to improve Indigenous Australians' understanding of the lifestyle factors that contribute to the development and progression of chronic diseases.
- The Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program aims to increase access to a range of health services, including expanded primary health care provided to people in rural and remote Indigenous communities for the treatment and management of chronic disease. It builds on existing services and establishes new services with a focus on diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, chronic renal disease and cancer.
- A Better Future for Indigenous Australians - Establishing Quality Health Standards measure has seen 101 out of the 207 eligible Indigenous health organisations achieve accreditation. In addition, \$23.9 million has also been provided to 176 Indigenous health organisations to build best practice and quality standards.
- More than 250 visits to 82 remote Northern Territory communities were made in 2010 through the Mobile Outreach Service Plus program to address child abuse-related trauma to Indigenous children, families and

34 | their communities. There have now been more than 500 visits to 86 communities since April 2008 when services first began.

- In the 12 months to November 2010, over 4 000 dental services were provided to over 3 000 children and over 3 000 ear, nose and throat specialist consultations and surgeries were provided to over 1 900 children living in prescribed Northern Territory Emergency Response communities.
- A total of 422 health professionals were placed by the Remote Area Health Corps in remote Northern Territory communities, including 52 general practitioners, 203 registered nurses, 43 allied health professionals and 124 dental workers.
- To improve access to healthy and more affordable food in 18 remote Northern Territory communities, funding of \$50 million was allocated from the Aboriginal Benefits

Account for the Community Stores Infrastructure Project to build and upgrade community stores. The Account receives statutory royalties generated from mining on Indigenous land in the Northern Territory and are distributed for the benefit of Indigenous Australians living in the Northern Territory.

- The Government has provided \$2.6 million over four years to establish a national co-ordination unit at the Menzies School of Health Research to tackle Acute Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease across Australia.

Alcohol and Other Substance Use

To address the disproportionate rates of alcohol and other drug use and harm among Indigenous Australians, the Australian Government is providing an additional \$49.3 million from 2008-09 to expand and enhance treatment and rehabilitation services across Australia. This includes funding for Indigenous-

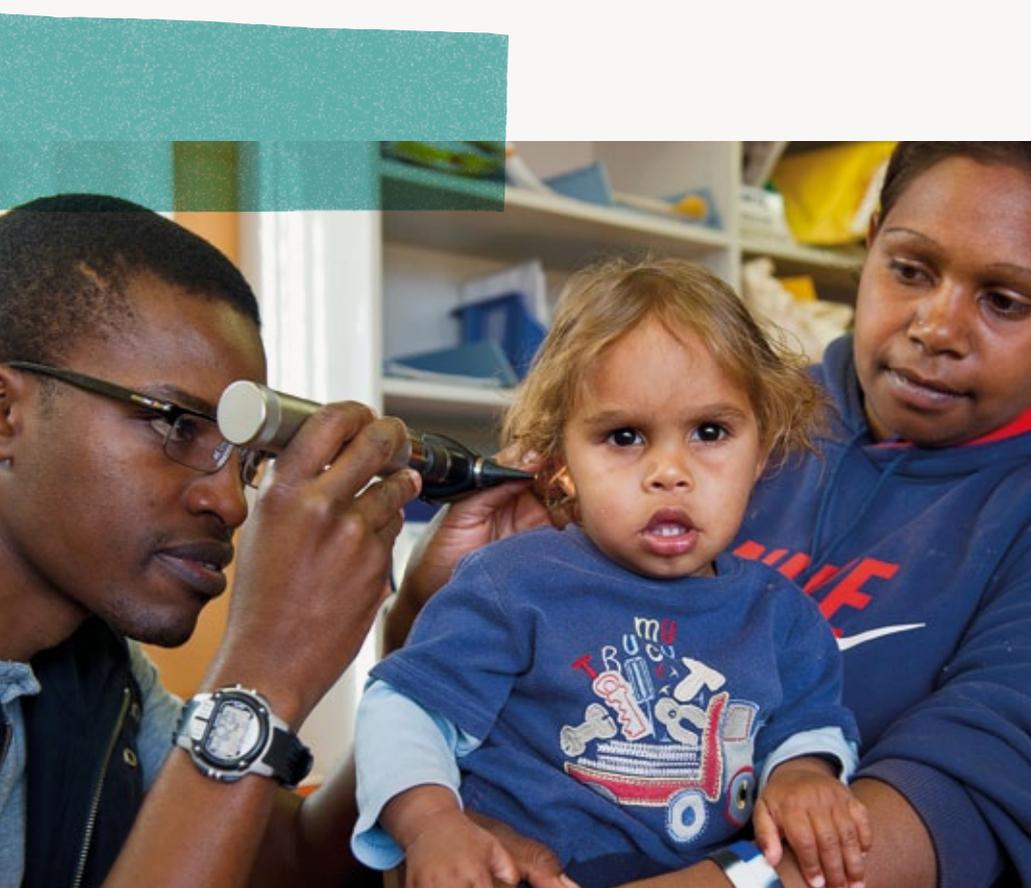
specific residential rehabilitation services and day centres, Aboriginal Medical Services, sobering up shelters, wellbeing centres and transitional after-care services. The additional investment means the Australian Government is funding a total of almost 100 Indigenous treatment and rehabilitation services in a range of locations and settings.

The Australian Government has provided \$1.5 million to the Northern Territory Government for the buy-back of three take-away liquor licences in Alice Springs.

Petrol sniffing

To tackle petrol sniffing, there are now 108 sites across regional and remote Australia supplying low aromatic Opal fuel. An additional \$38.5 million over four years will enable at least 39 new sites to supply the fuel in northern Australia.

The Petrol Sniffing Strategy aims to reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing and other forms of volatile substance misuse. Low aromatic fuel is now supplied in the tri-state Central Desert Region of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, the Eastern Central Desert region of the Northern Territory, the East Kimberley region of Western Australia and Gulf Region in Queensland. Mornington Island and Doomadgee in Queensland are both preparing to supply low aromatic fuel by mid 2011.



Photograph
Mimili, South Australia,
Lorrie Graham 2010

The supply of low aromatic fuel has been highly effective in reducing the incidence. An independent review of the impact of low aromatic Opal fuel found a 70 per cent reduction in petrol sniffing across communities sampled. More active and visible policing through the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks has also helped to reduce levels of sniffing and antisocial behaviour along with youth work programs.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation

Following the Apology in 2008, \$26.6 million was provided in the 2009-10 Budget to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation to address the profound legacy of pain and hurt in Indigenous people's lives from past government policies. The Foundation's initial priorities were determined by Indigenous community healing representatives throughout Australia at the first national healing gathering, Let's Talk Healing, in June 2010. The Healing Foundation's first funding round of \$2 million in 2010 attracted over 100 applications with 21 community-based projects being selected.

Stolen Generations Link Up Services

The Australian Government provides counselling and family tracing and reunion services to Indigenous Australians affected by past government removal policies and practices through the Link Up program. During 2010, funding to 10 organisations throughout Australia resulted in assistance being provided to 11 417 clients, of whom 189 were reunited with their families and communities.

Grief and loss counselling supported by the Australian Government is available to members of the Stolen Generations, their families and communities and is being offered by more than 120 Bringing them Home counsellors.



Photograph
Fitzroy Crossing,
Western Australia,
Lorrie Graham 2010

Building Block: Healthy Homes

The Australian Government, through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, is investing an unprecedented \$5.5 billion nationally over ten years to tackle the housing backlog across remote Australia and to help reduce overcrowding in Indigenous communities.

Through this Partnership with the state and territory governments, the Australian Government is making a major investment in social housing stock across urban, regional and remote areas. This investment in new and refurbished houses is being further supported by the implementation of robust and standardised property and tenancy management arrangements and a program of ongoing repairs and maintenance that will progressively increase the life cycle of remote Indigenous housing.

Under the National Partnership Agreement, the Nation Building and Jobs Plan, the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program and the Alice Springs Transformation Plan, many

new and improved houses have been provided for Indigenous Australians. They are changing lives - living in a safe, healthy home means families can function properly and take better responsibility for their wellbeing, including making sure their children are healthy, safe, and getting a good education.

The Australian Government is also committed to maximising opportunities for Indigenous Australians to own their homes. The Australian Government's Home Ownership Program provides affordable housing loans to Indigenous Australians who otherwise would not be able to obtain home loan finance because of limited savings and lower incomes.

Indigenous home ownership is on the rise with the home ownership gap between Indigenous Australians and other Australians closing, particularly in urban areas. However the gap remains significant, with Indigenous Australians half as likely to own their own homes as non-Indigenous Australians.

Key Achievements

- Under the Nation Building and Jobs Plan, funding has been provided for the construction of new social housing dwellings and the refurbishment of existing social housing which is benefitting Indigenous Australians across the country. At the end of 2010, construction had started on more than 18 200 new dwellings and around 6 900 had been completed and around 4 400 of those homes tenanted. This included almost 700 homes where Indigenous families have moved in.
- To date under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, more than 480 new houses and 1 750 rebuilds and refurbishments have been completed across the country. Many of these refurbished houses had previously unusable kitchens and bathrooms which are now functional.
- The investment in remote housing is also delivering employment outcomes for local Indigenous people with the States and the Northern Territory on track to

meet their employment targets of 20 per cent local Indigenous employment over the life of the program. In the Northern Territory, the employment outcomes are particularly strong with an average of 32 per cent local Indigenous employment.

- The Tiwi Islands package in Wurrumiyanga (formerly known as Nguuu) now has 27 Indigenous housing employees that are undertaking either a Certificate II or III in Construction.
- Under the Alice Springs Transformation Plan by the end of 2010, 18 new houses had been completed, 24 rebuilds and refurbishments were also complete, with a further eight underway.
- Under the Home Ownership Program, 479 new home loans were approved for Indigenous people, taking the number of active loans to 3 532.

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan was established in May 2009 as a joint initiative by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments to improve conditions and opportunities for residents of the Alice Springs town camps, homeless Indigenous Australians in Alice Springs and people visiting Alice Springs from remote communities. The initiative is reducing homelessness through housing and infrastructure upgrades, and is also expanding social support services.

The town camps were settled decades ago on the outskirts of Alice Springs by groups of marginalised Indigenous Australians. To overcome acute overcrowding and substandard housing, \$100 million has been allocated for 85 new houses and upgraded infrastructure in 18 Alice Springs town camps under

CASE STUDY

A new home for Caine and Roxanne

In July 2010 Caine Wurrumara and Roxanne Lalara moved into the first duplex house built in Angurugu, Northern Territory under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote and Indigenous Housing.

Previously, Caine and Roxanne had lived in temporary accommodation, or with family members. They had never owned their own home, despite working for many years.

Caine is employed by East Arnhem Shire Council and is also an interpreter for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service. Roxanne is employed at the Munkadinamanja Aged & Disability Service in Angurugu.

After the handover process and signing a tenancy agreement, Caine said, "We have never had a house before, it is great". For the first time Caine and Roxanne have somewhere to put their clothes and food.

"It is much easier to get to work when you have a house, and I mowed my lawn for the first time this week," Caine said.

CASE STUDY

A New Home for Helen

| 37

Residents at Trucking Yards in the Alice Springs Town Camps are seeing big improvements in housing under the Alice Springs Transformation Plan, and Helen Kantawara, a long time Trucking Yards resident, is happy with the work so far.

"This is something we have been waiting for, for a long time," said Ms Kantawara. "We absolutely welcome these new houses and the refurbishment of old houses – because our houses have been run down for too long."

"All the refurbished houses completed have had really huge improvements and the families are really happy with the work. The refurbished houses are so comfortable and easy to keep clean."

"My daughter has settled into her new house with her four children. This is her first real home because before that my whole family – up to eight members – were living in my two bedroom unit."

There are now six new houses under construction, including four, new two-bedroom units. "The new units will help stop overcrowding," Ms Kantawara said. "Kids can have a good night sleep ready for school."

CASE STUDY

Mr Peckham of Palmers Camp

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan has changed the lives of Palmers Camp resident Mr Peckham and his family. On 15 March 2010 refurbishment work began on the family's house. A full rebuild process was carried out, which included gutting the entire building, removing and replacing roofing, replacing windows, replacement of plumbing and electrical wiring and fittings, new air conditioning and re-painting.

Mr Peckham was delighted and excited when he saw the transformation of his family's house.

"This house is totally different. It looks really neat. Now, I got to make sure the kids start learning to keep it clean," he said.

the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program with 18 new houses already completed. It is anticipated that all refurbishments, rebuilds and new house constructions will be completed by the end of 2011.

Major infrastructure works will start soon at Trucking Yards camp, including work on new roads, curbs and gutters, new power and water infrastructure and street lights. Extensive upgrades like this will be carried out in larger camps such as Larapinta Valley, Hidden Valley and Ilpeye-Ilpeye. Upgrades will also occur in the smaller camps.

Recognising the threat to community safety posed by the lack of adequate dog control measures in the camps, the Alice Springs Town Council dog control program has been extended for a further two years.

Funding of \$25 million has been allocated to provide additional short-term and transitional accommodation for vulnerable people living in or visiting Alice Springs. This includes \$11 million for the construction and two years of operational costs for the Apmere Mwerre visitor park. The park, which opened on 2 February 2011, will help alleviate overcrowding in the town camps and provide a safe place that is drug and alcohol-free for visitors to stay while accessing services, visiting family and friends, or attending to other business in town. It will cater for up to 150 people, particularly families with children and older people who visit Alice Springs.

The refurbishment of The Lodge in the Alice Springs central business district has been completed, providing 35 new beds to increase accommodation for renal patients and people receiving other medical treatment. Eight additional

managed accommodation beds for homeless men have also been provided through an extension to the existing Salvation Army facility on the east side of Alice Springs. Other funding is going to the Percy Court facility, which will provide 28 units (49 beds) for transitional accommodation as well as delivering intensive life skills support for people on the public housing waitlist.

The Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program

This program provides on the ground help to Indigenous communities including housing, infrastructure, health and training initiatives through a partnership between the Australian Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Australian Army.

The program began in 1996 and annually focuses on one remote Indigenous community to value of approximately \$6 million.

The 2010 project in Pukatja, South Australia included a water bore and pipeline and the re-sheeting of a section of road. The project also incorporated a skills training program, certificate level training, a health promotion program and the provision of dental health services.

Over the last two years the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program has constructed six new, three bedroom houses, one health clinic and upgraded roads, sewerage and water reticulation systems. Around 500 people have received dental education and more than 200 people have received dental examinations.



Building Block: Safe Communities

For every Australian, being able to live in safety and security in their community is essential for their health and wellbeing. For too many Indigenous Australians, communities are not the safe places they should be.

To work towards ensuring communities are safer and children are protected, the Australian and State and Territory Governments have established the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children to support development of new family support services for vulnerable families. This includes practical measures such as improved information sharing between Centrelink, Medicare and child protection authorities, as well as national standards to ensure the safety, health and welfare of children who can no longer live safely with their families.

In response to the Growing Them Strong, Together Report in the Northern Territory, the Australian Government announced a commitment of more than \$34 million to help protect children from neglect and abuse. This funding will support the development of new family support services for vulnerable families, as well as increase the number of child protection workers, and help strengthen alcohol controls in the Northern Territory.

As part of the Australian Government's roll out of non-discriminatory income management across the Northern Territory, child protection income management was introduced in 2010. This means Territory Government child protection workers can now refer parents to Centrelink for compulsory income management when children are being neglected or are at risk of neglect.

The Child Protection Measure of Income Management in the whole of metropolitan Perth and Kimberley regions in Western Australia have been

Photograph
Beagle Bay, Western Australia,
Lorrie Graham 2010

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands – Policing

Law and order is improving and people are starting to feel safer in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands with the establishment of three permanent police stations. Following recommendations from the Mullighan Inquiry, the Australian Government has provided \$22.5 million to build a new police station in Mimili and upgrade police stations at Amata and Pukatja, and also provide housing for police and child protection workers.

The Mimili, Amata and Pukatja stations, which began operating in December 2009, January and March 2010 respectively, are each staffed by one sergeant and three police officers, giving the communities a permanent police presence for the first time. The new police stations have provided police with resources to engage with residents and have started to see positive changes in the communities, including reduced crime.

In Mimili, police are working with families to strengthen relationships between parents and children and are also working as mediators to allow community members to peacefully resolve issues before they escalate. To support the police in establishing a bike program, the South Australian Government donated 45 bikes and the Australian Government has provided \$6 000 for new bikes, helmets and accessories.

The program teaches road safety and bike maintenance.

The Mimili police are also working with the community to run information campaigns on how to get a driver's licence, the importance of wearing seatbelts and travelling safely with babies in vehicles.

At Pukatja Police Station a Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer has been employed to provide specialist cultural knowledge and bi-lingual skills to assist the three community constables. The police are working with the community to conduct truancy patrols in partnerships with the local school and they coach and participate in the Ernabella and Wintjalangu football teams. They volunteer as members of the new Ernabella CFS Brigade and conduct school-based programs such as film nights and sporting events.

There is a feeling among community members in Amata that they feel safer with the new police station. Women especially feel a lot safer in the community and there is a general feeling in the community that there is less fighting and violence because of the new police station and having police living and working permanently in the community.

in operation since November 2008. The independent evaluation of income management in Western Australia found that people participating in the Child Protection and Voluntary Income Management trials have equally reported positive outcomes for themselves, their children and their families.

The Australian Government is working with the state and territory governments to strengthen policing and improve the safety of Indigenous communities. In the Northern Territory, Community Engagement Police Officers and Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks target and disrupt the trafficking of illicit substances in Central Australia. They also work to deliver the National Petrol Sniffing Strategy and general policing.

To keep children and families safe, the Australian Government manages and funds the Indigenous Family Safety Program, is progressing the National Child Protection Framework, and is finalising National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children.

The Government is also working closely with communities on the development of community safety plans as part of the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership. These plans reflect safety priorities identified by the community and each community's preferred solutions.

Youth diversion services are being funded across 36 community locations in the Northern Territory. These services support young Indigenous Australians at risk of drug use, alcohol or other forms of substance misuse, suicide or intentional self harm, and entering or re-entering the criminal justice system. The high levels of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system are currently being considered by

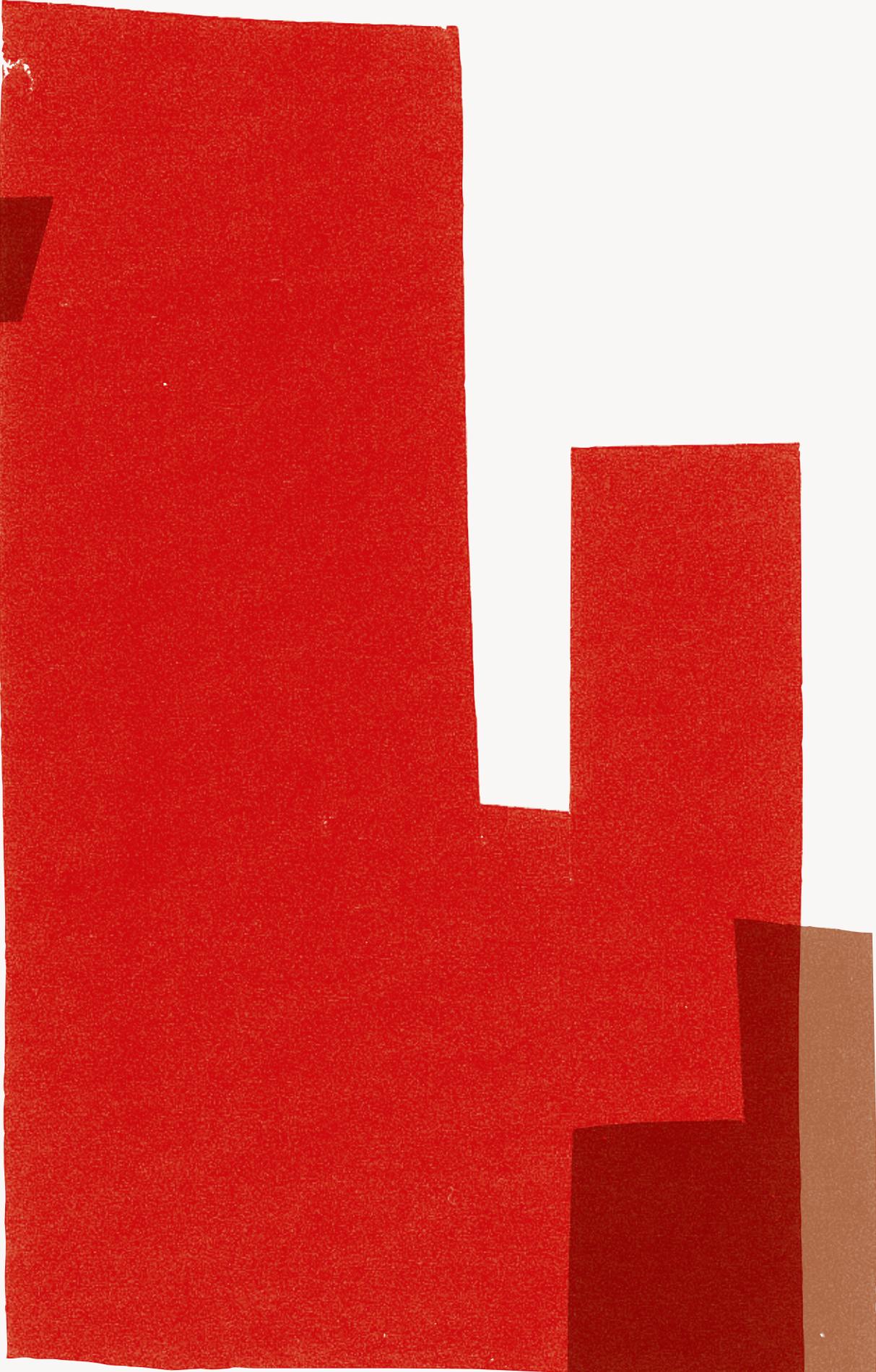


Photograph
Wadeye, Northern Territory,
Lorrie Graham 2010

the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, which is likely to make its recommendations in the first half of 2011.

Key Achievements

- To protect children from abuse and neglect, the Australian and State and Territory Governments have established the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20. The National Standards for Out of Home Care, which apply to formal care arrangements including residential care, foster care and kinship care, are a key component of the Framework and will ensure children in need of out of home care are given consistent, best-practice care, no matter where they live.
- In partnership with the Northern Territory Government, the Australian Government is providing \$1.5 million to expand identity card technology to help enforce alcohol restrictions across the Northern Territory.
- The Australian Government has provided \$1.5 million to the Northern Territory Government for the buy-back of three take-away liquor licences in Alice Springs.
- The Indigenous Family Safety program in 2010-11 provided over \$12.5 million to non-government organisations and state and territory governments to deliver 42 Indigenous family safety programs in remote, regional and urban locations across Australia. These projects include safe houses, counselling, prevention and early intervention programs, education and behaviour change programs.



- Under the Northern Territory Emergency Response, there are now 22 safe places in 17 communities across the Northern Territory. Safe places provided shelter for 491 women, 399 children and 40 men between January 2009 and November 2010.
- An investment of \$3.4 million is being made over two years to support Community Engagement Police and Officers in eight remote communities with high levels of crime and violence
- Three permanent police stations, as well as additional housing for extra police and child protection workers have been established at Mimili, Amata and Pukatja in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in South Australia with \$22.5 million in Australian Government funding. Local police say this has led to increased law and order in these communities.
- Sixty-six Australian Federal Police officers, including sworn officers, have been deployed to the Northern Territory since June 2007.
- Forty-five additional Northern Territory Police recruits have completed training and graduated since 2009. The graduates have commenced their duties within the NT Police Force. As these recruits graduate, the increase in NT Police's establishment has enabled the staged replacement of AFP officers at the following locations: Alpururulam, Gapuwiak, Minjilang, Minyerri, Numbulwar, Ramingining, Santa Theresa, Warruwi, Arlparra, Bulman, Finke, Pepperminati, Yarralin, Ali Curung, Gumbalanya, Maningrida and Yuendumu. A further 15 recruits are expected to graduate in April 2011.

- Currently, 17 Remote Aboriginal Family Community Workers are employed in 13 Northern Territory communities as a part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. These workers provide a culturally appropriate liaison and linkage point between the child-protection system, support services, Indigenous families and communities. The workers help link families with local family safety or safe house programs, night patrols, mental health workers and child health workers.
- There are currently six child protection workers employed as part of the Mobile Child Protection Team in the Northern Territory. Between July 2008 and November 2010, the team investigated 2 455 cases in over 55 remote and regional communities.
- As part of the Indigenous Family Safety Program, more than \$12.5 million was provided in 2010-11 to non-government organisations and State and Territory Governments to deliver 42 Indigenous family safety programs in remote, regional and urban locations across Australia. These projects include: safe houses, counselling, prevention and early intervention programs, education and behaviour change programs.

Youth Diversion Activities

Under the Youth in Communities program which has funding of \$28.4 million over three years from 2009-12, young Indigenous people are being involved in diversionary activities such as discos, movie nights, sporting programs and youth leadership programs. This funding will deliver improvements to youth services infrastructure, such as at Angurugu where almost \$445 000 was provided for the upgrading of sport and recreation outside activity area including fencing, shade, new computers and air-conditioning.

A total of 21 projects have been funded to provide youth worker services, youth diversion activities and infrastructure projects across 36 community locations in the Northern Territory.

The Youth in Communities program is already making a difference to the lives of Indigenous young people. For example, the majority of the 12 to 17 year old young people regularly attending the Young Men's Christian Association Katherine's alternative education program 'PROUD' - Participation, Respect, Opportunity, Understanding and Determination - have successfully re-integrated back into the education system as a result of their participation in this program.

The Youth in Communities program provides for the employment of approximately 30 full time youth workers and



44 | for a similar number of Indigenous trainees, with professional development and mentoring support provided for all the program's workers. Indigenous trainees are being supported to attain Certificate III level training and, on 24 February 2011, Roper Gulf Shire will have ten Indigenous trainees graduating from their Certificate III in Community Services.

Policing and intelligence

In addition to providing 66 Australian Federal police officers, the Australian Government will provide \$50 million for five permanent police complexes consisting of police stations, police housing, custodial and justice facilities. The first of the five new remote Northern Territory permanent police stations is expected to open in March 2011 in Yarralin. Progress is underway for new stations in Ramingining and Gapuwiyak and suitable sites are being identified at Imanpa and Arlparra.

The first Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk was set up in 2006 to support the National Petrol Sniffing Strategy and to target drug and alcohol trafficking in Central Australia. These units gather information and coordinate policing operations which, among other things, target traffickers of drugs, alcohol and illicit substances.

Between 2005 and 2012, the Australian Government has provided \$12.6 million in funding to support the Dog Operation Units located in Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin in the Northern Territory. Since January 2010, the units have been involved in searches which have seen the seizure of illegal drugs such as amphetamines and cannabis. These searches were prompted by information provided by the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks.

Established in mid-2006, the National Indigenous Intelligence Task Force is led by the Australian Crime Commission and involves the Commonwealth and State and Territory law enforcement agencies. Together they are working to develop processes for sharing and using criminal intelligence so that police forces and community service providers can continue to address Indigenous violence and child abuse. Task force intelligence has uncovered two systemic issues that contribute to criminality within remote Indigenous communities: poor information sharing and reporting on violence and child abuse; and abuse of power that facilitates violence, child abuse and other crime.



Building Block: Economic Participation

The Australian Government wants Indigenous Australians to have every opportunity to contribute to and be part of the Australian economy and with this, achieve greater economic independence and security for themselves, their families and their communities. Each sector of the community has a role in helping close the gap in economic participation and a growing number of corporations are realising the benefits of employing Indigenous Australians.

The Government is helping Indigenous Australians transition from welfare to properly paid jobs so they benefit from participating in the national economy. Job Services Australia is the largest employment program for Indigenous Australians, providing services to over 95 000 Indigenous people.

Recent reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects are helping Indigenous job seekers gain the skills, training and capabilities they need to find sustainable employment at the same time strengthening the economic and social wellbeing of their communities. The Indigenous Employment Program is also assisting Indigenous Australians by providing employment and training placements.

Key Achievements

- During the 2010 calendar year, the Indigenous Employment Program resulted in over 16 000 Indigenous Australians starting employment, around 12 500 Indigenous Australians started training and more than 700 Indigenous Employment Program projects were established.
- Over the last 12 months, the Community Development Employment Projects program has assisted 1 993 Indigenous people into employment;
- Over 200 Reconciliation Action Plans are supporting training, employment and other actions benefitting Indigenous Australians. Through these plans, organisations have

committed to recruit over 8 300 Indigenous Australians and have already placed an estimated 5 300. In addition, close to \$800 million in supply contracts have been awarded to Indigenous businesses.

- As at 31 December 2010, the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council had generated \$4.4 million in contracts and \$2.9 million in transactions between its members and certified suppliers. Since commencing the Council has certified 67 Indigenous suppliers, 72 per cent of whose workforce is Indigenous and attracted 54 members.
- The Australian Government contributed \$6 million for the first two settlements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Victoria)* to support sustainable economic development and the innovative Victorian approach to native title settlements. The first of those settlements was made on 22 October 2010.
- The Australian Government's Indigenous Communication's Program has provided \$30 million to deliver 91 fixed satellite community phones and 52 mobile satellite handsets between August 2009 and January 2011 with more than 66 000 calls made. Internet access has also been provided in 37 remote Indigenous communities across Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, since July 2009.
- Indigenous Business Australia's Business Development and Assistance Program and Equity and Investment Program created and supported over 1 000 jobs, of which over 250 were filled by Indigenous Australians.
- In 2010-11, \$10.7 million is being provided to Indigenous art centres and allied industry organisations across the country to support the Indigenous visual arts industry. The Government has also supported the introduction of an Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct that sets the standard for ethical and transparent commercial dealings with Indigenous artists.

Indigenous Economic Development Strategy

The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy will set the future direction of Government policy. There has been an extensive process of public consultation and a final strategy is expected to be released in mid 2011.

Between 2010-2018, the Government is supporting the establishment of a Business Advisory Group to provide expert advice on policies needed to support growth in the Indigenous business sector. The Government is also supporting Indigenous business chambers to increase their membership and enhance corporate partnerships. These chambers play a key role in matching their Indigenous Australian business members with the growing demand for products and services in their region.

The Indigenous Opportunities Policy strengthens the Government's procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment and business opportunities, and will be fully operational from 1 July 2011. It will be applied to contracts over \$5 million, with tenderers for Australian Government contracts required to implement plans to provide training and employment for local Indigenous Australians and to use Indigenous businesses.

The Government has provided \$3 million over three years to support the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council, which provides an opportunity for certified majority owned, controlled and managed Indigenous businesses to contract directly with corporate and government buyers of goods and services. In the first year of operation, the Council has achieved over \$4 million in contracts between members and certified suppliers.

Transitioning from Welfare to Employment

Job Services Australia is the largest employment program for Indigenous Australians and is providing services to over 95 000 Indigenous people. Indigenous job seekers are able to access specialist services from over 181 sites and a total of 18 Indigenous organisations have been contracted to provide Jobs Services Australia services.

The Indigenous Employment Program supports a broad range of activities. This includes Indigenous apprenticeships and traineeships, transitioning students from school to employment or further education, mentoring participants through training into employment, and work readiness training.

The Australian Government is committed to creating up to 2 000 real and sustainable jobs in areas of Government service delivery that have previously relied on subsidisation through Community Development Employment Projects. Employees benefit from mainstream employment conditions and skills development opportunities. The types of jobs being funded through Australian Government agencies include municipal services workers, night patrol workers, community care positions, education support and child care workers, rangers, and management and pastoral workers, sport and recreation positions and arts, culture and broadcasting positions.

The Working on Country Indigenous land and sea ranger program also helps people move from support through Community Development Employment Projects into full-time sustainable employment. There are currently over 630 Indigenous rangers employed nationally under this project.

Through the Tailored Assistance element of the Indigenous Employment Program, about 460 projects have focussed on providing assistance to employers to employ and retain Indigenous Australians. This assistance may include aspiration building, training, employer support and workforce development.

The Australian Employment Covenant was launched in October 2008 as a private sector-led, multi-industry initiative with an ambitious target of securing 50 000 jobs for Indigenous Australians. The Australian Government committed support to the Covenant, including \$4 million in startup funding. To date, the Covenant has received commitments from

nearly 200 Australian companies to employ over 26 000 Indigenous Australian job seekers with work continuing to convert these commitments into sustainable job outcomes.

Land and Native Title

Another way to participate in the economy is through the ownership of land. Accessing land and native title, and the benefits that flow from that are aspirations for all Indigenous communities. The Australian Government is supporting reforms to resolve native title claims more effectively and efficiently, and to optimise outcomes for native title groups from agreement-making.

The Australian Government is contributing \$6 million in funding for the first two innovative native title settlements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Victoria)*. The first of those settlements was made with the Gurnaikurnai people on 22 October 2010. This settlement is important in not only securing and recognising traditional rights but also in providing for native title to be lead to enduring social and economic opportunities for the Gurnaikurnai people.

The passage of legislation amending the *Native Title Act 1993* means that it is now easier for public housing and infrastructure to be built on land where native title may exist. This new process strikes the right balance between the

CASE STUDY

Linfox Australia Pty Ltd

Linfox's Indigenous Employment Program focuses on providing the opportunity, framework, and support to create career paths for 500 Indigenous Australians.

Since the Program commenced, 102 Indigenous employees joined Linfox, and more importantly over 90 per cent have been retained.

The Program has the strong support of Linfox founders, Lindsay and Paula Fox, Mr Peter Fox (Chairman), Mr Michael Byrne (Chief Executive Officer) and all senior management and site managers. Once an Indigenous Australian accepts a position, Samantha Baring, the National

Manager of the Indigenous Employment Program is there to provide support to assist employees through the first few days and weeks of training and employment.

With the assistance of the Australian Government's Indigenous Employment Program, Linfox offers a three week paid warehouse operators course with a guaranteed placement upon graduation. To date, 40 trainees have graduated from training and Indigenous employees now hold positions in administration, warehouse and driver roles.

Linfox holds introductory sessions to fully inform Indigenous Australians about career opportunities at Linfox –

from entry-level positions through to more senior management positions over time. Most days involve speaking with candidates and ensuring that they are suitable for Linfox and that a career at Linfox is suitable for them, arranging pre-employment assessment, training, and induction.

Linfox's program provides an excellent model to provide employment opportunities for Indigenous Australian job seekers, within Linfox and in the wider corporate community.

48 | urgent provision of these critical services and the protection of native title rights. If requested by registered native title holders or claimants, States are required to hold consultations about proposed developments and submit reports to the Commonwealth Attorney-General on each consultation process. This will help promote transparency and good faith discussions.

The handover of deeds of grant in relation to Gregory National Park in June 2010 represented the largest grant of Indigenous land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* in almost 20 years. The handover involved an area of 1 285 200 hectares and effectively disposed of three longstanding land claims. Significant Indigenous enterprise and employment opportunities

will become available within the framework of a formal joint management arrangement for the park between Indigenous traditional owners and the Northern Territory Government.

Communications

The Indigenous Communications program is providing \$30 million to assist remote Indigenous communities to take advantage of the economic, educational, social and cultural opportunities offered by the digital economy. Effective communication services are a fundamental enabling factor for economic development.

Between August 2009 and January 2011, 91 fixed satellite community phones and 52 mobile satellite handsets have been installed and maintained in communities across the north of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Cape York Peninsula and South

Australia. Access to the internet is integral to improving Indigenous outcomes through the Indigenous Communications Program, the Australian Government provides funding for public internet access facilities and basic training in computer and internet use in selected remote Indigenous communities.

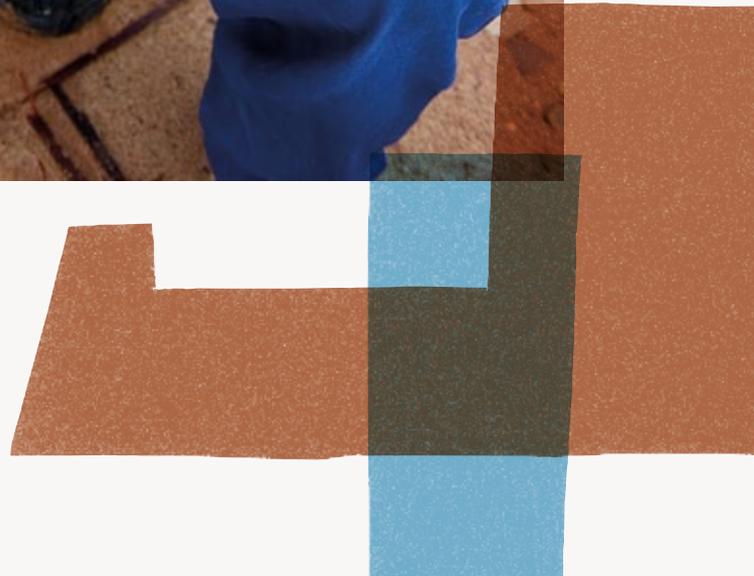
This element of the program is delivered in collaboration with participating state and territory governments through the Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access National Partnership Agreement. Since its commencement in July 2009, internet access facilities have been installed in 37 remote Indigenous communities across Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Many of these communities previously had no public internet access facilities.



Photograph
Ntaria, Northern Territory,
Lorrie Graham 2010



Photograph
Ntaria, Northern Territory,
Lorrie Graham 2010



50 | This is a vital service for communities with early reports indicating that internet banking, social networking, online shopping and access to online government services are now indispensable to community residents. It is anticipated that access to these and other online services, particularly in the areas of education and health, will provide significant benefits to up to 120 remote Indigenous communities that will receive internet access facilities over the four year life of this program.

Working Together

Reconciliation Australia was established to provide national focus and leadership in working towards reconciliation and to sustain the reconciliation process. The Australian Government provided funding for Reconciliation Australia of \$10.8 million over three years from 1 July 2010, to continue this important work with Reconciliation Australia having made significant progress in engaging the private sector in closing the gap.

Over the past year, Reconciliation Australia has made significant progress in engaging new sectors, particularly leisure and tourism, retail, engineering and construction, legal services and the media, in the development of Reconciliation Action Plan. Reconciliation Australia work with organisations and businesses to develop Plans that include actions to support training, employment and reconciliation activities with the organisation. Over 200 Plans are currently in operation with another 200 under development.

Through these plans, organisations have committed to recruit over 8 300 Indigenous Australians and have placed an estimated 5 300. In addition, close to \$800 million in supply contracts have been awarded to Indigenous businesses.

Some examples of Reconciliation Action Plans include:

- The Blacktown City Council governs the largest urban Indigenous Australian population in New South Wales. Reconciliation commitments include the development of protocols and consulting with appropriate Indigenous organisations to protect heritage, culture and special places.
- The Westpac Group operates the Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme to support small businesses owned and/or operated by Indigenous Australians.
- Telstra aims to offer ongoing employment to at least 85 per cent of its Indigenous trainees.

Businesses and community organisations play an important role by providing training and recruitment for Indigenous people to strengthen their employment options. A 2010 survey conducted by the Business Council of Australia shows more businesses are increasing Indigenous employment:

- BHP Billiton has ten contracts with Indigenous businesses worth over \$350 million, and employs 255 Indigenous workers through its Western Australian Iron Ore subsidiary. Another 465 Indigenous Australians are currently employed by contractors.
- The Inter Continental Hotels Group commitments include a two per cent Indigenous Australian workforce, and increased use of Indigenous suppliers.

- Since late 2009 Woodside has had a 62 per cent increase in Indigenous employment and a 54 per cent increase in Indigenous participation in training, and are on schedule for meeting the aspiration to triple their Indigenous workforce by 2012.

Indigenous Land Corporation

The Indigenous Land Corporation plays a crucial role in Indigenous economic participation through assisting the acquisition and management of Indigenous-held land, to establish enterprises, build capacity, bring land into production and create sustainable Indigenous employment. Highlights include the acquisition of Ayers Rock Resort at Yulara in the Northern Territory which will provide 340 Indigenous jobs by end 2018, the construction of Mossman Gorge Tourism Centre in Queensland with 70 jobs by mid-2012 and the establishment of the Gunbalanya Pastoral and Meat Supplies with 28 new Indigenous jobs currently in place.

Indigenous Business Australia

Indigenous Business Australia's Business Development and Assistance Program assists eligible Indigenous entrepreneurs with small business loans, and expert business guidance. At the end of financial year 2009-2010, the business loan portfolio comprises 309 loans valued at \$58.7 million. These two programs combined created and supported over 1 000 jobs, of which over 250 were filled by Indigenous Australians.

CASE STUDY

National Centre of Indigenous Excellence

Eric Lesa is one of more than 47 Indigenous people employed at the Centre built by the Indigenous Land Corporation on the former Redfern Public School site in Sydney. The Centre aims to change the lives of young Indigenous people through sport, learning and innovation, culture and arts, and health and wellbeing.

Eric left school and spent the next ten years of his life moving from job to job. He worked on demolition sites and as a toll collector, but also spent periods unemployed.

When the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence opened in Redfern in February 2010, Eric jumped at the chance to work in sport and recreation and has never looked back. He is now the Young Men's Christian Association Fitness Team Leader at the Eora Sports, Art and Recreation Centre complex. Eric said, "I have learnt so much about looking after customers, drawing up rosters, running a gym and working with staff and I am a lot more confident now. Working at the Centre has helped me become financially independent. I have new goals in life and would now like to go on and get more management qualifications," Eric said.

The Centre also has a 120-bed residential facility to cater for Indigenous students visiting from regional and remote Australia, tutorial rooms, an indoor gymnasium, swimming pool, playing fields, training and performance studios and office space for several Indigenous organisations.

The Centre has already been a resounding success with the target of more than 5 000 Indigenous young people attending activities exceeded in the first seven months.

Indigenous participation has averaged 70 per cent across all YMCA programs offered, including fitness and gymnasium memberships, school camps and sports programs.

Through the centre, organisations deliver the following programs:

- The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience – over 750 volunteer university students work as mentors with more than 500 Indigenous high school students in 43 schools.
- The Exodus Foundation Literacy Tutorial Centre – provides 23 places for primary school students, with an average reading accuracy three years behind their chronological age, and nine places for junior primary school students.
- After 19 weeks tuition in 2010, the Centre's students made substantial gains (on average 13 months) in reading accuracy, comprehension and words read per minute were achieved.

The Australian Government, through the Indigenous Land Corporation, provided \$50 million for the purchase of the site and design and construction of the Centre. In 2009-10, the Australian Government provided \$195 000 to support various programs provided by the YMCA.

Building Block: Governance And Leadership

Improving governance and leadership is not just a result of government action but requires strong engagement and commitment from Indigenous communities and individuals.

At the national level the Government is supporting the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples to give Indigenous Australians a strong voice and input into policy development. On the ground in Indigenous communities, targeted leadership programs are encouraging Indigenous Australians to develop and drive their own solutions.

To strengthen community governance the Australian Government is investing \$45.1 million over six years from 2008-09 to June 2013 under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement. The funding will be directed to various community capacity building and leadership initiatives such as engagement workshops, leadership development workshops and community development training.

The Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations is continuing to support Indigenous corporations with significant improvements in their compliance with the legislation, increasing from 46 per cent in 2004-05 to 92 per cent in 2008-09.

Key Achievements

- Since July 2010 more than 400 Indigenous Australians have participated in the Indigenous Leadership Program to strengthen leadership skills.
- During 2010 around 703 people received corporate governance training provided by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations.
- To preserve Indigenous language, \$9.4 million was allocated to support 63 community based language maintenance and revival projects, with six applicants granted triennial funding.
- Work has continued in Remote Service Delivery locations working with community leaders on leadership and governance through workshops in locations such as Amata, Mimili and Hermannsburg. The work with other Remote Service Delivery communities will continue into 2011.

Strengthening Indigenous leadership and governance

Around 900 Indigenous Australians are expected to participate in the Indigenous Leadership Program between July 2010 and June 2011, with at least 400 having participated to date. Since July 2010, more than 210 participants have also completed targeted leadership workshops in regions throughout Australia.

As well, the Indigenous Leadership Program has supported over 112 participants through workshops to develop leadership skills in community governance.

In 2010, 92 Indigenous Australians from Remote Service Delivery communities participated in leadership and community governance workshops held in six communities. Participants of the program report that this leadership experience is making a real and lasting difference in their lives and the lives of their families.

Building Indigenous corporate governance

The Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations is an independent statutory office holder who administers the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI Act)*. The Registrar's Office support and regulates corporations by advising them on how to incorporate, by training directors, members and key staff in good corporate governance, and by making sure they comply with the law.

During 2010 the Registrar provided corporate governance training to around 703 people from Indigenous corporations across Australia and conducted a total of 77 examinations which check for operational, procedural or corporate governance problems within corporations. The information gathered is the basis for continuing work with Indigenous corporations to build their corporate governance to a high standard.

Currently there are more than 2 250 Indigenous corporations registered under the *CATSI Act*. The active engagement of these corporations by the Registrar has seen a significant improvement in their compliance with the legislation, increasing from 46 per cent in 2004-05 to 92 per cent in 2008-09. The Registrar also provides a wide range of services including mediation and dispute resolution services, access to pro-bono legal assistance and recruitment assistance.

During 2008-09 the 500 highest earning Indigenous corporations demonstrated the significant value

that these corporations add to the Australian economy. In total these corporations generated approximately \$1.2 billion in income, held \$1.2 billion in assets, employed over 9 150 people and provided a wide range of services to their communities including health, housing, land management, and employment and training.

Promoting strong Indigenous cultures, heritage and languages

In 2009, the Australian Government announced its National Indigenous Languages Policy. The Policy confirmed the Government's commitment to keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages alive and helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians connect with their language and culture. In 2010-11, \$9.4 million was allocated to support over 60 community based language maintenance and revival projects, incorporating around 200 languages across Australia.

In 2010-11, the Australian Government is providing \$10.7 million to support Indigenous art centres and allied industry organisations across the country in recognition of their major contribution to Indigenous employment, education, and cultural and social wellbeing, particularly in remote communities.

Government funding of \$7.2 million also supports a range of traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultural events, visual and performing arts, including music and dance to showcase Indigenous cultures and encourage young Indigenous Australians to stay connected to their cultures.

The Remote Service Delivery Flexible Funding Pool

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery, the Australian and relevant state and Northern Territory governments are changing the way they work with Indigenous Australians in priority communities to improve access to Government services, raise service standards, improve governance and leadership, increase economic and social participation and promote personal responsibility and positive behaviours.

Since 1 July 2010 over \$1.5 million has been committed through the Remote Service Delivery Flexible Funding Pool to a wide variety of projects identified in Local Implementation Plans. These projects include sporting and recreation equipment and facilities, upgrading community facilities, promoting safer communities, arts and community activities, support for children and families, and infrastructure upgrades and repairs.



CASE STUDY

Amata and Mimili Local Implementation Plans

In developing the Local Implementation Plans in the two Remote Service Delivery priority communities of Amata and Mimili, the Australian and South Australian Governments recognised the importance of a comprehensive community engagement process.

This process was undertaken by the Government Business Managers and Anangu Engagement Officers in each community, staff from the Adelaide Regional Operations Centre and consultants via meetings with individual community members, community groups, agencies and relevant stakeholders.

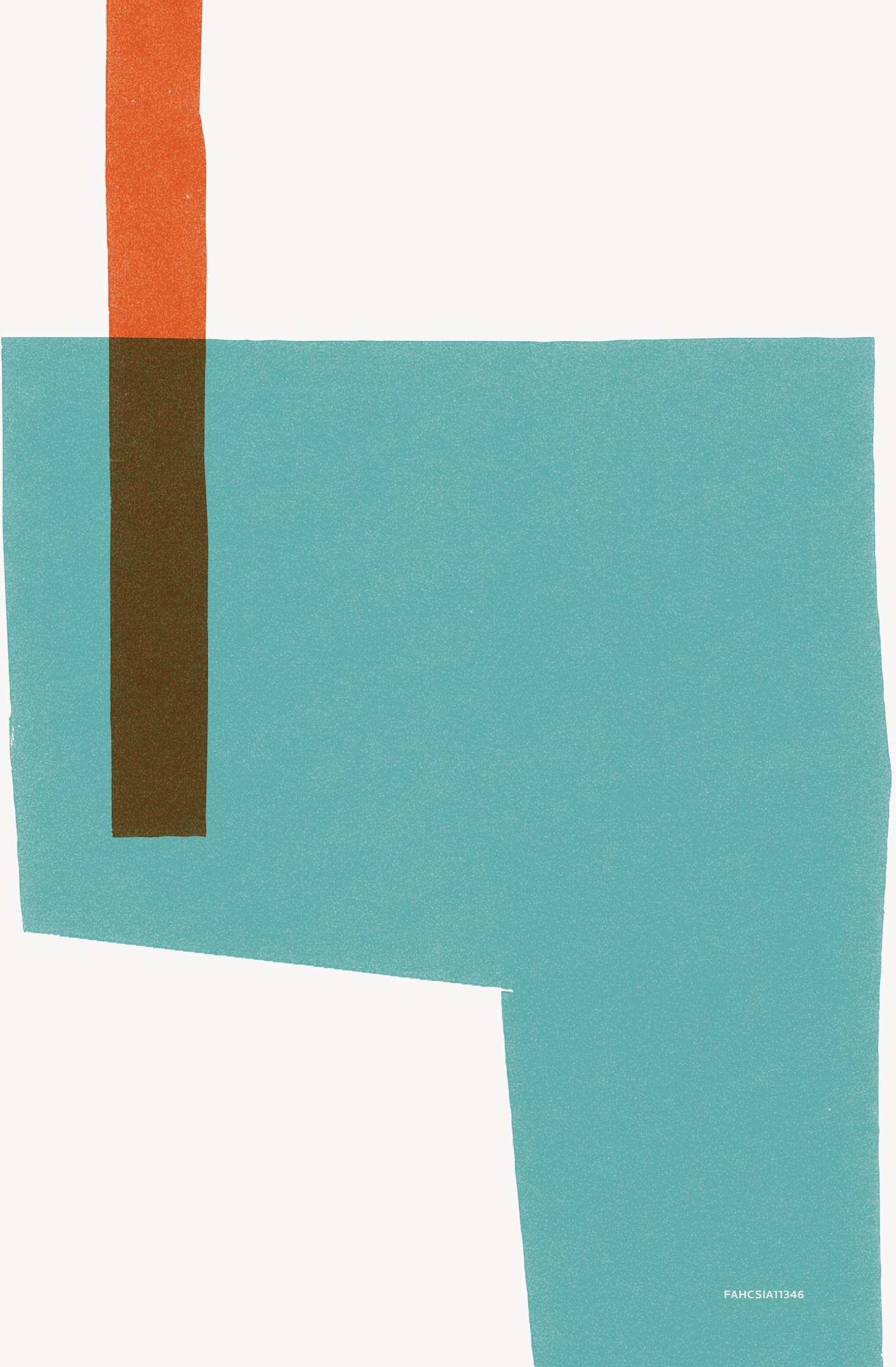
Through the development of communication material in both English and Pitjantjatjara, developed with the local Anangu Engagement Officers, government worked closely with communities to progress the development of these plans and identify shared priorities.

Two of the most active stakeholders in the development of the Local Implementation Plans were the Community Councils in each of the communities. The Local Implementation Plans are a regular agenda item at Community Council meetings, providing council members with the opportunity to discuss the progress of implementation and identify solutions to assist in resolving any implementation barriers.

The Local Implementation Plans were formally agreed during signing ceremonies on 30 June 2010 in Amata and 1 July 2010 in Mimili, and provide the basis for government action in the communities through to mid-2014.

Agencies are now working with the communities on a case by case basis to progress their commitments, as outlined in the Local Implementation Plans.

The Adelaide Regional Operations Centre is also working in partnership with Amata and Mimili communities to identify projects for funding through the Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Special Account. These projects will address community priorities as identified in the Local Implementation Plans and will be planned and implemented with community input.



Front cover photography

(Top) Ntaria, Northern Territory, Lorrie Graham 2010

(Bottom) Halls Creek, Western Australia, Lorrie Graham 2010

Back cover photograph

Milingimbi, Northern Territory, Lorrie Graham 2010

