Framework for reporting on Indigenous disadvantage

Report on Consultations 2006

Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision

Foreword

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage is an 'evolving' report. Each edition is shaped and informed by feedback received, and updated as new evidence and data emerges. This Consultation Report provides a summary of suggestions and comments on the 2005 report, received during consultations conducted between February and August 2006.

Those consultations again endorsed the priority outcomes in the reporting framework; namely, safe, healthy and supportive family and community environments with strong cultural identity, that foster positive child development and improved economic sustainability.

Indigenous organisations and communities made an important contribution to the feedback received. The consultation team, led by Productivity Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald, visited Indigenous communities throughout Australia — from Cape York to Tasmania; from Murdi Paaki in New South Wales, to Warburton in the Great Western Desert. The insights gained from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be reflected in the next report, to be published in June 2007.

The consultation team also met with government agencies and senior officials from each State and Territory and the Commonwealth. In addition, meetings were held with the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and, in many jurisdictions, with the relevant minister. In the process, we learned how each jurisdiction is embedding the reporting framework into policy development, implementation and evaluation. Consultations were also held with a number of academics and non-government organisations involved in Indigenous research or service delivery. Their expert advice will further inform the selection and presentation of information in the 2007 report.

I would like to thank all those who organised or participated in the consultations, some of whom travelled long distances to do so. The next report will be the better for their contribution, which is documented in this summary report.

Gary Banks

Chairman

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AFL	Australian Football League
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
BEL	Bamaga Enterprises Ltd
ANU	Australian National University
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHINS	Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CWP	Community working party
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
HICC	Hobart Indigenous Coordination Centre
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
MCATSIA	Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
NAGATSIHID	National Advisory Group Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
OATSIH	Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Department of Health and Ageing (Aust Govt)
OIPC	Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
ORAC	Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations
RAE	Remote Area Exemption

SCRGSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
TAEC	Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders Council
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TALS	Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service
TILG	Tiwi Islands Local Government
VACCA	Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
VALS	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
WA DET	Western Australia Department of Education and Training

Summary

The Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision consulted widely in 2006, seeking feedback on *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*. Requests for comment and a questionnaire were prepared (appendix B) and widely disseminated. Many written submissions were received. A consultation team visited Indigenous communities and met with Indigenous organisations across the country in a range of remote and regional centres and major cities. The team also met with representatives of all State and Territory governments and the Australian Government, and many expert bodies. A list of consultation participants is at appendix A.

A wide range of suggestions were made. However, there were some common themes:

- Most importantly, there was broad support for the existing framework — generally Indigenous people recognised the validity of the indicators in terms of the issues that were affecting their communities and causing disadvantage.
- It was often stated that wider distribution of the Report was required to Indigenous organisations and communities and within all governments.
- It was agreed that revisions to the framework should be pursued, but there was strong support for maintaining its strategic approach, and focusing on a limited number of key indicators.
- There was support for more linkages in the Report, to illustrate the connections between key outcomes.
- There was a desire for greater disaggregation of data between urban, regional and remote areas and if possible specific information on Torres Strait Islanders.
- The 'things that work' boxes were seen as being very useful. Many felt there should be more, including for headline indicators — and some suggested inclusion of 'things that don't work'.
- There was strong support for identifying the 'success factors' behind the 'things that work' — particularly where they highlighted government's interaction with Indigenous organisations and communities.

- Cultural issues were regarded as significant to the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians but there was generally an acceptance that it is difficult to find robust and specific indicators relevant to a report on overcoming disadvantage.
- There were acknowledged difficulties regarding language as a purely cultural indicator. The diversity of views and circumstances mean that further work is required before an appropriate indicator can be developed.
- There was a general view that improving governance remains critically important at organisational, community and governmental levels and should continue to be targeted in the Report. Participants suggested additional key determinants including a bottom-up approach, resourcing and government engagement.

Participants' views are presented in more detail in the body of this report. Drawing on these views and additional research, the Steering Committee agreed to some enhancements for the next Report. The changes to the framework involve clarification, renaming or rearrangement of some existing indicators, and the addition of two new strategic change indicators. The changes are set out towards the end of this report.

The 2007 Report will also include greater linkages, a further drawing out of the success factors behind the 'things that work', and enhanced treatment of governance issues and cultural context.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In April 2002, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) commissioned the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision[1] to:

> … produce a regular report against key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. This report will help to measure the impact of changes to policy settings and service delivery and provide a concrete way to measure the effect of the Council's commitment to reconciliation through a jointly agreed set of indicators. (COAG 2002)

A working group consisting of representatives from all governments and from the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) and the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission developed a draft framework.

Before collecting data and producing the first Report, consultations were conducted across Australia with Indigenous organisations, communities and leaders. Governments and other organisations were also consulted. Mainly as a result of feedback from many Indigenous people during those consultations, some changes were made to the framework. In November 2003, the first report was published (SCRGSP 2003).

Following release of the 2003 Report, consultations continued, in order to gain feedback on the Report. The main focus of consultations with Indigenous people was on whether they felt the Report reflected the issues and circumstances relevant to their organisations and communities. Consultations with governments mainly focused on the extent to which the framework in the Report was being used as a tool for policy developments and interventions.

Early on, the Steering Committee agreed that two editions of the Report should be published before the framework was revisited. With the release of the second report

[1] The Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service provision (SCRGSP) comprises senior representatives from all nine Australian governments and is chaired by the Chairman of the Productivity, which provides the secretariat.

in July 2005 (SCRGSP 2005), preparations were made for a further round of comprehensive consultations on the framework.

The consultations were led by Robert Fitzgerald, a Commissioner with the Productivity Commission and Convenor of the Indigenous Working Group, which reports to the Steering Committee. Members of the secretariat accompanied Mr Fitzgerald on the consultations. A list of the organisations and people consulted can be found at appendix A.

1.2 The approach to consultations

There was considerable variation in the types of consultations that took place. Generally, the approach was determined on the basis of advice from the agency, organisation or community concerned. Those consulted also decided who should be invited to the consultations and where they should take place.

One constant in consultations was the consultation questionnaire (see appendix B). The questionnaire provided a structured basis for examining whether changes should be made to the framework and whether there were aspects of the report which could be built on or improved. The questionnaire incorporated issues raised by government agencies and Indigenous people in previous consultations, as well as ongoing secretariat research. As well as being used in consultations, the questionnaire was distributed to all governments, and they were asked to provide coordinated (whole-of-government) responses. The general public were also able to access the questionnaire online and provide feedback to the secretariat.

Many of the comments received during consultation meetings and in the responses to the questionnaire were very detailed. While comments have been summarised in this consultation report, all comments received were considered in the revision of the framework and preparation of the next Report (scheduled for release in June 2007). In addition, many comments were received relating to very specific data issues. Although data issues are not discussed at length in this report on consultations, comments on data were considered in the preparation of the next Report.

Generally, it has been assumed that where written feedback gave no response to a question, the government or organisation providing the feedback supported the current framework.

1.3 Consultations with governments

Meetings were held in each State and Territory with senior government officials and agency groups. In all jurisdictions, a separate meeting was held with senior management with responsibility for Indigenous policy, and when possible, the Minister responsible for Indigenous affairs.

The approach to each consultation was discussed with agency representatives beforehand, to ensure the consultations would be of benefit to individual governments and their agencies, as well as providing feedback on the 2005 Report and the framework. Consequently, there was some variation in the sessions that were held. Some jurisdictions favoured a workshop approach, with a focus on improving policy development and implementation; other jurisdictions preferred a seminar presentation with question and answer sessions.

A variety of views were expressed during these meetings, seminars and workshops, although size constraints do not permit their full documentation in this consultation report. The summary in this report is based upon written comments received from most Australian governments on the questionnaire. Where there was general consensus, the comments have not been attributed to a specific jurisdiction.

1.4 Consultations with Indigenous organisations and communities

As far as possible, consultations with Indigenous people were held in communities not previously consulted. Meetings were held across the country, from very remote locations (for example, Bamaga at the top of Cape York, and Warburton in Western Australia's Great Western Desert) to regional centres (such as Murdi Paaki in New South Wales) and metropolitan areas. Not surprisingly, the range of issues raised during these meetings reflected the diversity of the Indigenous population.

As a general rule, there was no pre-determined structure to the discussions with Indigenous organisations and communities. In some consultations there was little or no prior awareness of the Report, and so the meeting began with an introduction to the purpose of the Report. One notable exception was the Tiwi Islands Local Government (TILG). The TILG had effectively incorporated elements of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage indicator framework into their strategic plan, entitled *Building a strong future for all Tiwi people.*

In most meetings, the consultation team would briefly explain the framework and indicators; seek feedback on whether the issues in the Report were relevant to the

particular organisation or community; and ask how the Report might be improved from their perspectives.

Usually, the Indigenous participants then took the lead on what was discussed, determined largely by the issues relevant to their particular constituency. Although there were significant differences in the circumstances and experiences of each community, the issues of each community were generally relevant to some aspect of the Report framework, although general discussions often went beyond the formal ambit of the Report.

Many of the indicators in the framework (such as child sexual abuse and neglect, and domestic violence) deal with sensitive matters and were difficult for Indigenous people to discuss. For that reason, comments made during the consultations have not been individually attributed. The comments presented in this consultation report are as told by the Indigenous person providing feedback.

2 Consultation feedback

2.1 Introduction

In considering the consultation feedback, it is worth bearing in mind the key task of the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators* report: to publish indicators that are relevant to both governments and Indigenous stakeholders, and that can demonstrate the impact of programme and policy interventions. Whilst there are potentially dozens of indicators, the Report is deliberately limited to a few significant indicators that best tell the story of what is happening across Australia.

This chapter follows the structure of the consultation questionnaire (appendix B). Section 2.2 summarises comments on the usefulness of the report. Section 2.3 addresses the 'things that work'. Section 2.4 summarises feedback on current cultural indicators in the report, while section 2.5 summarises suggestions for possible new cultural indicators. Section 2.6 summarises comments on the health related indicator, while sections 2.7 and 2.8 summarise comments on the child protection and crime victimisation indicators, respectively. Section 2.9 contains comments on the accredited training in leadership, finance or management indicator. Section 2.10 summarises comments on other areas and indicators in the framework, grouped by 'headline indicators' and the seven strategic areas for action.

2.2 Usefulness of the Report

While there was some scepticism amongst those consulted about the strength of government commitment, there was general support for governments reporting progress in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage according to the framework.

Many Indigenous organisations recognised the value of the Report as an information source and advocacy tool. Some also suggested ways to improve the Report's usefulness.

- The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) regarded the development of the framework as an extremely important initiative, and has used the information in the reports as a resource for policy and program development.

- The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) said the report, particularly the Overview, presents inherently complex material in a way which is visually engaging, relatively accessible and readable. VACCA suggested that comparative tables between Australia and other nations be included.
- The Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders Council (TAEC) suggested that more prominence should be given in the Overview to the fact that the framework was based on a 'prevention' approach.
- The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) suggested the Report more clearly differentiate the differences and similarities in urban, regional and remote areas as 'a tool for urban Aborigines who often feel there is no need to go to a remote area to see disadvantage, as it exists in urban areas too'.

All responding governments found the Overview, the main Report and attachment tables useful. Typical comments about the usefulness of the main Report were that:

- it generally provides a comprehensive view of Indigenous disadvantage and wellbeing across Australia from a variety of sources that would otherwise be difficult to access
- it is a critical tool for measuring Indigenous outcomes
- the multi-level indicator framework is a sensible and useful approach; the Report's emphasis on causal factors, quantifiable measures and national data are appropriate.

Typical comments about the usefulness of the Overview were that:

- it provides a succinct summary of the status of Indigenous health and wellbeing and provides a good resource for gaining insight into issues
- the inclusion of brief descriptions of factors influencing outcomes is useful.

Typical comments about the usefulness of the supporting tables were that:

- they are a valuable resource, particularly for jurisdictional information and policy development
- they provide a comprehensive package of data for the use of key agencies.

Comments on the clarity and overall readability of the Report (Overview and main Report) included:

- the advantage of the framework is its relative simplicity
- the key messages are prominent and well summarised
- the Report is enhanced by the variety of inclusions (text, tables, graphs, 'key messages' and 'things that work')

- the tables and bar graphs are clear, comprehensive, accurate and well explained.

Comments on the analysis in the Report included:

- in most cases the analysis is appropriate and makes clear the constraints on interpretation.

Some suggestions for how the Report's usefulness could be improved included:

- incorporate information on established programs that represent integral parts of existing service systems
- establish more causal links or relationships between outcomes and outputs
- increase emphasis on variations between jurisdictions, regions and areas of remoteness with use of geolocational descriptors
- improve the communications and distribution strategy to encourage greater take-up of the Report.

2.3 'Things that work'

There was very strong support from Indigenous organisations and communities for the 'things that work' boxes. Faced with a negative public perception about Indigenous issues, Indigenous people welcomed the inclusion of examples of positive outcomes being achieved. Many of those consulted also recognised the potential for successful initiatives to be adopted in other organisations and communities.

Indigenous people also acknowledged the potential for these case studies to illustrate the success factors in program delivery. There was strong endorsement of the success factors that had been identified to date:

- cooperative approaches between Indigenous people and government and/or the private sector
- community involvement in program design and decision-making — a 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down' approach
- good governance
- on-going government support (including human, financial and physical resources).

Many of those consulted felt that the success factors may inform governments about the characteristics that lead to effective program development and delivery — and by implication, why failures occur when they are missing. As noted during one

consultation, 'Indigenous communities feel they have little involvement in the decision-making processes … it is difficult for staff working at local levels to put ideas or to get messages through to policy makers'. Many of those consulted made similar comments.

Some specific comments on 'things that work' included:

- VACCA would like to see more analysis in the Report about why things that work are successful and suggested that a more systematic approach be adopted. 'Often successful programs are ad hoc and/or pilots and only funded for a limited period of time and therefore their 'learnings' may not be strategically integrated into the Indigenous service system or government policy'.
- VALS argued that 'things that work' boxes should be provided for every headline and strategic change indicator. VALS regarded the boxes as positive examples that 'go some way to shedding light on what makes a policy program or intervention successful'. VALS would also like to see analysis of the case studies and indications of government best practice such as: culturally inclusive approaches; and Indigenous involvement in, and ownership of, programs and interventions.

Government respondents were also positive about the 'things that work' boxes. Typical comments were:

- they are particularly valuable for agencies operating on the edge of mainstream Indigenous issues that are seeking to explore actions and initiatives that contribute to high level outcomes
- they are useful for relating strategic areas for action back to policy practice, and offer Indigenous stakeholders and policymakers suggestions for creating beneficial change in their communities
- they bridge the gaps between broad indicators applicable to the national scale and local or regional shifts which are often the earliest and most direct expression of change, including responses to policy initiatives
- they would be a more useful companion to the statistics if presented on a time series basis; future Reports should follow-up changes and implementation strategies.

Along with such positive comments, some Indigenous organisations and governments suggested that 'things that *aren't* working' (and why) should also be included in the Report, although it was noted that negative stories may be sensitive for communities and governments.

The following suggestions were made for case studies that could be included in the 'things that work' boxes for the next Report:

- The Jawoyn Association suggested the partnership between Woolworths, the Fred Hollows Foundation and the Barunga community to set up a community-owned store. This has resulted in some positive outcomes, including: improved health in the community; increased attendance rates at school; employment creation; and stability in the store (which is owned by the Jawoyn people).
- The ILC saw the case study approach as a more effective means of capturing whether Indigenous people are deriving benefits from their land holdings (than simply reporting area of land owned). A case study approach has scope to capture benefits whether they are social, cultural or economic in character. The ILC suggested that case studies could include geographically derived indicators of actual outcomes. The ILC suggested that Indigenous land holders' participation in the Indigenous Pastoral Program could form the basis of a case study.
- The Victorian Government suggested that its increase in funding for child, family and support services represents a new 'early intervention' approach to tackling child abuse. There already appear to have been some positive (short-term) results.
- The South Australian Government suggested a number of potential case studies, including: the Nunga Court; the Panyappi program; cooperative management agreements on land management with Aboriginal groups for the Vulkathanha-Gammon Ranges National Park, the Unnamed Conservation Park and the Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park; the Kuka Kanyini pilot project at Watarru in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands; and in the education sphere — the Minya Bunhii child care centre at Ceduna, Kaurna Plains School, and the Kura Yerlo and Kalaya child care centres in Adelaide; the Whyalla Basketball Program; the Ceduna-based 'Bush Break Away' diversion program; and the day respite and positive behaviour programs in Ernabella and APY lands.
- The Queensland Government suggested the following case studies: the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership; the Mums and Babies Program (Townsville); Regional Health Forums; the Wide Bay Youth Program; the Jabba Jabba immunisation program; and the Queensland Ambulance Service Pre-hospital Care Model.

2.4 Cultural indicators

The cultural indicators in the Report have been the subject of considerable discussion since the beginning of the project. For that reason, the questionnaire

sought responses to the existing indicators in the Report, as well as raising for discussion potential new cultural indicators that had been suggested, mainly by Indigenous people, since the framework was finalised in 2003 (section 2.5).

Some general comments (without reference to specific indicators) were:

- VALS argued that the objectives should be amended to reflect the factors that make a program or intervention improve outcomes, such as: a culturally inclusive approach; incorporation of cultural dimensions of Indigenous wellbeing; and adoption of best practice, particularly in regard to consultation, development and implementation. VALS also suggested that the Foreword needed to stay true to the progressive vision of the Report and should recognise culture in the context of improving economic and social standards.
- VACCA suggested the Report could look at ways of measuring culturally related issues of self-esteem, community engagement and reduced racism; and that more work was required on the analysis of cultural indicators, the relationship between statistical details and cultural context, and the extent to which statistical measurements may by culturally biased.
- TAEC noted that the framework does not include 'loss of culture — that it needs to reflect a set of values that Indigenous children hold dear'.
- the Bamaga community noted its strong sense of pride and ownership, and cultural identity as traditional Torres Strait Islanders. Strong reservations were expressed about the 'one size fits all' approach taken by government in respect of a number of issues.

Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in development and delivery of Indigenous studies

The questionnaire asked — "Could this indicator be expressed as an outcome? For example, self-esteem, community engagement, reduced racism, improved learning outcomes, and school retention?". Responses from governments and agencies were varied.

- Staff from the Hobart Indigenous Coordination Centre (HICC) said that it was important to distinguish between a 'culturally appropriate curriculum, and one that incorporates Indigenous cultural studies for all students'.
- The Disability Services Commission suggested that more appropriate measures may be 'the percentage of cultural study programs included in schools' and 'the percentage of Indigenous people involved in the delivery of Indigenous studies'.

- The Victorian Government noted that, although the indicator is not the easiest to measure and it is difficult to interpret any changes in data, the policy focus is very important.
- The Northern Territory Government questioned the assumptions underpinning the indicator. They suggested that Indigenous studies should be delivered in an inclusive manner. Indigenous perspectives and practices should be incorporated into core studies, and Indigenous people should be involved in their development and delivery.

The Australian Government proposed a review of this indicator to determine whether there was quantitative research which supports the contention that the inclusion of Indigenous cultural studies in curricula, in isolation from other strategies, significantly improves student outcomes.

Differing views on this indicator were expressed by Indigenous organisations and communities. These comments are also relevant to the question about a new 'language' indicator later in this report.

- In the Tiwi Islands, literacy and numeracy are a problem for Tiwi children and the TILG wants the focus of school studies to be on building of basic (English) language skills. They are not in favour of Tiwi language or culture being taught at school, believing that these are the responsibility of parents and should be taught at home.
- The Jawoyn Association supported the teaching of Indigenous language in school, believing that this is important for cultural reasons and is a way of preserving language amongst the people.
- The Port Augusta communities believed that culture needs to be incorporated in education from early childhood onwards; and that education should address racism.
- The Warburton Regional Council emphasised the importance of English language teaching so that the community's children can become community leaders in the future and be employable in the wider (non-Indigenous) community in their chosen occupations.

In response to the second question — "Are you aware of any case studies that could be used to report against this indicator?" — the Northern Territory Government mentioned that the Tropical Savannas Management Cooperative Research Centre and the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training are collaborating on the development of school curricula that provide a northern Australian perspective. This project was not yet at the point where an informative case study could be developed.

Proportion of people with access to their traditional lands

The following responses were received to the question – "Are there other aspects of access to traditional land that could be covered?":

- Staff from the HICC noted that Tasmania has unique legislation in this area.
- The Victorian Government suggested including information on access agreements outside the native title context, for example, between freehold land owners and traditional owners. These occur on farming properties and commercial properties.
- The Victorian Government also suggested an additional indicator relating 'to use of traditional lands'.
- The Northern Territory Government argued that a measure of the mainstream or customary economic activity arising from access would be more informative than simple measures of a formal right to access land.
- The New South Wales Government suggested that access to traditional lands does not provide a measure of the economic benefits associated with land ownership and that the indicator on Indigenous owned or controlled land provided a more robust and tangible indicator of the (economic) benefits of land.

In response to the request for potential case studies:

- the Tasmanian Government suggested a case study about the return of land through State Government legislation and the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (which is independent of native title)
- the Victorian Government suggested the Wimmera Native Title Agreement, which includes access to traditional lands through a combination of native title, group fishing licenses and access and land management agreements.

The Australian Government argued that this indicator should be dropped, as it is not a valid indicator of functional and resilient families. It was argued that if the indicator were valid, Indigenous people who have access to their traditional lands should have more functional and resilient families than urban Indigenous people who do not have such access).

Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities

Every Indigenous community strongly affirmed the role that these activities can play in achieving positive outcomes, particularly amongst young people. For example, sport and recreation are included in the Bamaga Council's strategic plan and the council has a recreation officer who runs all of the activities in the

community. The activities are regarded as important for keeping the young people out of trouble — 'they use up their energy'.

In response to the request for potential case studies:

- the Tasmanian Government suggested that policies that focus on increasing physical activities within identified groups with special needs might be included
- the Victorian Government suggested the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club, the 'Common Ground' public art project on the banks of the Yarra River; and the reasons why Indigenous people are increasingly successful in the Australian Football League (AFL)
- the Northern Territory Government noted that an assessment of growth in participation in visual and performance arts could provide a case study which linked into economic, cultural and land access indicators. It also suggested case studies on Blue Light Discos and the AFL Kickstart Program.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) cautioned about the need to identify clearly the scope of relevant activities; for example, whether the emphasis is on participation in cultural or mainstream activities.

Case studies in governance arrangements

The 2005 *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report identified five key determinants of good governance:

- governing institutions
- leadership
- self determination
- capacity building
- cultural match.

These were used as the framework for case studies on the Koorie Heritage Trust in Victoria and the Thamarrurr Regional Council in the remote Northern Territory community of Wadeye. The questionnaire asked — "Do you agree that these are the key determinants?" and — "Are there others that are well established and could replace or add to these to improve the analysis and presentation?". The following comments were received:

- Staff from the HICC expressed concern that some of the key determinants may be ambiguous, and suggested clarifying the meaning of 'governing institutions'. HICC further argued that 'capacity building' was not a determinant of

governance but an element in or outcome of the development of good governance.

- The Tasmanian Government considered that, while the majority of determinants are important, some underlying concepts could be more explicitly stated — in particular, 'governing institutions' could be replaced with 'accountability, evaluation and responsiveness'. Additional indicators of 'community controlled health services' were suggested as proxy measures of governance capacity.
- Disability Services Queensland agreed with the determinants but sought a clearer definition of 'cultural match'.
- The Northern Territory Government stated that the determinants are sufficiently broad to accommodate most processes for community participation in addressing issues, exercising power and decision making (although it noted that the determinants are difficult to measure and therefore suited to the case study approach). It suggested the following important subset of the key determinants:
  - representation of all community groups/families — too often one family group will dominate all resources to the exclusion of all others
  - accountability — councils determine outcomes and so should measure those outcomes to assess success or otherwise.

Indigenous people were asked whether these determinants reflected the key aspects of governance in their organisations and communities.

- The TAEC and the Jawoyn Association argued that 'resources' should be added to the five determinants (separate to capacity building) and should encompass financial, physical and human resources, as these are major factors in successful governance arrangements. This idea was supported by other communities and organisations during consultations.
- Leadership and 'taking responsibility' were cited by some organisations as particular areas where there are currently some 'gaps on the ground'.

A common theme in the discussions on governance was the ability of the Australian, State/Territory and local governments to engage with communities.

- The Bamaga Council cited problems in their relationship with governments caused by officials' lack of understanding of Torres Strait Islander culture (and how it is different to that of mainland Aboriginal people). The Council also mentioned decisions being made without consultation, resulting in negative impacts on the community.
- The Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly comprises a number of community working parties (CWPs), whose membership is drawn from 16 local Indigenous communities. The Assembly was critical of the lack of recognition by

governments of the CWPs' legitimacy, and provision of funding to undertake advocacy, planning, and policy and strategic development. The Assembly would like to see the governance capacity of local governments built up, and the participation of Indigenous people encouraged.

- Another concern in Murdi Paaki was the lack of built-in processes to collect information for evaluation of programs and services being delivered to communities. There was no engagement or coordination between governments and agencies and the communities, and a lack of knowledge about Indigenous services.
- Many Indigenous people felt they were not listened to by non-Indigenous government workers. 'Solutions' to problems were imposed upon communities without listening to the local community. Indigenous people were critical of government 'one-size fits all' approaches, which ignored workable solutions suggested by local Indigenous people.

In response to the request for potential case studies:

- the Tasmanian Government suggested updating information on the progress of the COAG trials and providing clarification on the progress of evaluations, as well as any clear recommendations developed as a result of the trials
- the Victorian Government considered that the Governance Training Program piloted during 2005-06 may have potential as a case study. Winda Mara was also suggested along with partnerships between Aboriginal and mainstream organisations
- the Northern Territory Government suggested successful organisations such as Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation at Maningrida, and Dhimurru Aboriginal Land Management Corporation, which can provide different organisational models and spans of activity
- the South Australian Government suggested that the Nepabunna Community Council may be a potential case study.

2.5 Possible new cultural indicators

At each consultation meeting, Indigenous people were asked whether they thought additional cultural indicators relating to heritage, language, and law and culture should be included in the Report. While all Indigenous people agreed that heritage, language and law and culture were important, discussions tended to focus on the importance of that particular community's culture to its own sense of identity and wellbeing. There was no general view about whether particular indicators belonged in the framework. Written comments from Indigenous organisations tended to be

more supportive of including these indicators (and others) in the framework, but there were few suggestions of specific measures or sources of data.

Heritage

The following responses were received to the question — "Do you think heritage should be an indicator in the Report?"

- Staff from the HICC suggested that indicators of heritage be incorporated where appropriate into other indicators.
- The Tasmanian Government supported its inclusion, and argued that heritage could reveal the effort made by State governments to maintain Indigenous culture through application of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.
- The Victorian Government suggested 'the number of Indigenous people undertaking cultural heritage training', or 'the number of Aboriginal heritage assessments and plans prepared' or 'breaches of cultural heritage legislation'.
- The Queensland Government, while recognising the importance of heritage collections, was doubtful about the availability of objective data about the various collections. The inclusion of text on the importance of cultural heritage and its dimensions was supported.
- The Northern Territory Government saw heritage as fundamental for inclusion as a separate indicator.
- The South Australian Government saw this indicator as a 'work in progress' and suggested that data need to be reported from an identity context that describes an individual's access to: participation in native title processes; access to country; language; history; cultural knowledge; connectivity to other individuals, family and community; and spirituality.
- The TAEC supported the inclusion of 'heritage' as an additional cultural indicator, although it noted that there was an issue about whether government would provide the required funding. (This was a concern related to all of the proposed new cultural indicators.).
- VACCA supported the inclusion of a 'heritage' indicator.

The questionnaire also asked — "some aspects of heritage that have been proposed include heritage sites, collections and education. Are these the most meaningful components of heritage for Indigenous people?" A supplementary question asked — "Are there sufficient data available?"

- The Northern Territory Government identified the following aspects of heritage as relevant to Indigenous communities: significant sites; collections of oral

histories, songs, stories, photographs, film; recorded history including contemporary history; art and artefacts both traditional and contemporary; and critically, the provision of access to heritage. It noted that there are a number of State, Territory and Australian Government databases that can be readily interrogated to retrieve data on the proportion of sites that are recognised wholly or in part for their Indigenous heritage values.

A further question asked was — "If a heritage indicator is included, is there an existing indicator that it could replace?".

- The Tasmanian Government suggested it could replace 'victim rates of crime' which is a close corollary of 'imprisonment' and 'juvenile detention rates'. Alternatively, if no indicator is to be included, some case studies could be used to reveal how heritage can help in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.
- The Northern Territory Government suggested a heritage indicator would be well placed under the 'functional and resilient families and communities' strategic area for action. Suggestions for a potential indicator were: 'access to the nearest library service', 'proportion of Indigenous people with access to their historical and contemporary heritage', or 'number of library services offering collections and services tailored to the Indigenous community'.

Language

The questionnaire asked — "Is language an appropriate indicator of Indigenous disadvantage?" A supplementary question asked whether a language indicator should reflect:

- Indigenous language spoken as a first language, and second language
- by school children or all people
- taught in schools by an Indigenous person
- school lessons taught in an Indigenous language
- the capacity of children for whom English is a second language to achieve at school?

The inclusion of a language indicator was supported by VACCA, VALS, TAEC, staff from the HICC and the South Australian and Victorian Governments. Other respondents, however, had some reservations.

- The Disability Services Commission suggested that 'lack of proficiency in standard English' would be a more appropriate indicator.

- The ABS pointed to the sensitivity of Indigenous language as an indicator, and suggested that rather than infer a link between Indigenous and English languages, a more measurable and potentially reliable indicator may be to capture the incidence and degree of difficulty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have in communicating in various settings.
- The Northern Territory and Victorian Governments argued that Indigenous language is not an indicator of disadvantage but of cultural strength. The Northern Territory Government stressed that, unless there is a strong research base to support a causal link, the proposed language indicators are not appropriate measures.
- The Australian Capital Territory Government focused on language as an issue for school readiness, and the need for a language indicator that related to disadvantage and how it affects educational attainment.

See also earlier comments on 'Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum'.

The second question relating to a language indicator was — "Should this indicator reflect practical aspects of communication between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous service providers, such as Indigenous people's use of English and the extent to which service providers and government agencies take steps to ensure effective communication with speakers of Indigenous languages?"

- The Victorian Government, the Northern Territory Government and staff from the HICC endorsed communication as a key practical aspect of the capacity for Indigenous people to engage with government. Victoria provided the example of language barriers reinforcing disadvantage when diagnosis and treatment by health professionals is restricted where Indigenous patients are unable to communicate their case histories.
- The Disability Services Commission dismissed the examples given due to their relation to service quality and lack of breadth.

The questionnaire also asked whether there are any data that could be reported against a language indicator.

- The ABS cited the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, and the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey.
- The Northern Territory Government suggested information from the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service and affiliates, and available information about Indigenous languages taught in school, along with staff who have language skills and materials.

Indigenous culture and law

In response to the question — "Do you think recognition of Indigenous culture and law should be an indicator in the Report?"— the VACCA, and the Northern Territory and Tasmanian Governments were supportive. Other comments received were that:

- staff from the HICC said that, while official recognition is vital, the elements are varied and there is too much disparity across states and territories
- the Victorian government said that law and culture is not considered a key indicator of disadvantage in Victoria, but that it may provide some indication of cultural strength and could be covered in case studies
- the Tasmanian and Northern Territory Governments said that recognition of Aboriginal customary law has a significant impact on restorative justice services, criminal justice issues and the policing provided to communities.

The questionnaire also asked whether there are any data that could be reported.

- The Tasmanian Government noted that data are collected on the number of young people accessing Lungatalanana, which is a culturally appropriate site for Indigenous juvenile detention (although due to small numbers, these data are not suitable for reporting).
- The Northern Territory Government cited research that is underway utilising longitudinal studies of groups engaged in land management (but no results are available as yet).

Other possible cultural indicators

- VALS suggested additional cultural indicators:
  - the practice of culture by Indigenous people';
  - 'formal recognition of Indigenous culture'; and
  - 'appreciation of Indigenous people by non-Indigenous people'.
- TAEC suggested that a set of indicators should be developed which reflect how Indigenous people are socially and politically organised; the capacity for development of the next generation; and the extent to which the Indigenous community is resourced to support its culture.
- The Queensland Government suggested that the Report should include a measure of benefit dependence, to reflect the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples who are dependent on government benefits such as Newstart Allowance or means-tested pensions.

2.6 Health related indicator

Access to the nearest health professional

There has been considerable debate since the earliest consultations about whether this indicator was adequate in representing the health needs of Indigenous people. The scope of the indicator was broadened in the 2005 report with the inclusion of data on use of health services and the incidence of potentially preventable health conditions (in addition to the significant body of health data included elsewhere in the Report).

There was a variety of responses to the question — "Do you think that reporting against this indicator with the greater linking of related data … will adequately deal with this issue?".

- Staff from the HICC stated that the indicator needs re-wording, and suggested that co-morbidity between mental health and substance abuse issues needs to be taken into account.
- The Tasmanian Government argued that additional aspects to reporting should include:
  - time taken to receive medical attention
  - frequency of access to medical services
  - cultural issues which may restrict access to medical services, for example, language barriers.
- The Disability Services Commission and the Victorian Government supported reporting against this indicator with greater linking of related data which is comprehensive and distributed throughout the Report.
- The Northern Territory Government identified barriers preventing access to primary health care services, including cost, attitude of the professional, collective memory, shame, fear and cultural mismatch.
- The National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data (NAGATSIHID) the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) referred to Tier 3 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, and specifically: chronic disease management, interventions — preventative screening and immunisation, health workforce, and health expenditure.
- The Victorian Government noted that the data presented from the Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey are not relevant to Victoria, and that

information in the 2005 Report relating to preventable health conditions is important and possibly a better indicator.

- The Queensland Government suggested that comparative Indigenous and non-Indigenous data on people who have been discharged from hospital at their own risk should be included in the report.
- The Northern Territory Government suggested that a measure of the utilisation of services (primary, secondary and tertiary) may be a more sensitive measure, and also suggested 'medical evacuation by emergency services' (by air in remote areas) as an alternative indicator.
- The South Australian Government suggested that availability of bulk billing and uptake of Practice Incentive Payments by general practitioners, and the uptake of the child and adult Indigenous health checks, would be useful for reporting against this indicator.
- VACCA proposed that access to an Indigenous health worker or health services for both mental and physical health should be included.

The questionnaire also asked — "What other factors are important in Indigenous health and should they be reported on? For example: mental health (or mental wellbeing; mental illness/disorder)". There was broad consensus about the need for a mental health indicator, along with suggestions about other health issues (such as preventative infant health services, oral diseases, renal diseases, and injuries). Other related issues included transport, wellbeing, carer arrangements and relationships, and living arrangements.

Health was a concern in every Indigenous community. Although the issues varied from one community to another, it appeared that some health problems were endemic. Typical comments made were:

- Hearing, eyesight and diabetes are very significant health problems in the Tiwi Islands. It is not possible to obtain glasses on the islands and there are many children with perforated eardrums in early childhood.
- There are three Aboriginal health boards operating in Katherine. The Jawoyn Association stressed that having their own health care is regarded as critical to Jawoyn people. With the delivery of health services regarded as 'women's business' getting male health workers is the biggest problem. To address the reluctance of Aboriginal men to be seen by female health workers, a separate male clinic has been set up which has resulted in an increase in access to primary health care by local men.
- The Warburton community has its own health service and clinics, although more Aboriginal health workers are needed. The cost of sustaining a general

practitioner is very high ($500 000) and has to be traded-off against providing other services, such as a full-time nurse in each community. The Warburton Regional Council is considering using 'telehealth' for consultations and, in partnership with Telstra, has invested in getting broadband into the six largest communities.

- Other issues affecting the Warburton communities are: nutrition (vegetables are delivered once a fortnight and only to the largest community); the collapse of the regional airline has made it difficult to travel for less urgent treatment; many of the younger men are on dialysis; and there are mental health problems in all of the communities.

2.7 Substantiated child protection notifications

While nobody disputed the importance of sexual abuse as an indicator of disadvantage, there has been considerable debate about whether the specific indicator in the Report is appropriate. In recognition of earlier feedback, the questionnaire asked — "Should the indicator's name be changed to 'child abuse and neglect'?" While a change in name was only supported by NAGATSIHID, AIHW, OATSIH and the South Australian Government, there was general agreement that the indicator should report on all types of abuse.

The questionnaire also asked whether there was support for "changing this indicator to report on 'child victims of sexual assault (based on police statistics)' or 'sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases in children'". There was no support for either of these measures, although the Australian Government argued that the indicator should be replaced with one that provides a better proxy for family/community violence or for child abuse and neglect. Suggested potential indicators were: hospital admissions, or paediatric hospital admissions resulting from interpersonal violence/abuse.

A theme that emerged from consultations with Indigenous people was that Indigenous people themselves must play a significant part in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of their communities. It was noted that governments had a key role in dealing with the disadvantage that created the environment for bad behaviour, but that Indigenous leadership, role models and mentoring were also essential. In keeping with the firmly held belief that self-determination was critical to Indigenous culture and well-being, many Indigenous people commented on the need to encourage 'personal responsibility', particularly among parents.

Overall, there seemed to be a consensus that while the indicator was not perfect, it was the most appropriate given the present availability of data to report in this sensitive area.

2.8 Victim rates for crime

Most responding governments supported the retention of this indicator. The Victorian and South Australian Governments suggested a replacement indicator addressing the prevalence of family and community violence.

In response to the question — "Are you aware of any additional data for this indicator?":

- The Australian Government would like to see reporting extended to illuminate the nature and extent of violence in the family (including the extended family), and argued for an additional indicator to report morbidity/mortality outcomes.
- Staff from the HICC suggested that reported incidents of racial vilification or racially motivated violence could be included.
- The Victorian Government proposed the judiciary and magistracy in individual jurisdictions as possible sources of information.
- The Queensland Government suggested that caution be exercised in the use of data on assault and sexual assault offences due to the non-comparability of police statistics.
- The Tasmanian Government referred to the Victims Register System maintained by the Tasmanian Department of Justice.
- The South Australian Government suggested moving the 'hospitalisations for assault' data to this indicator, noting that there are many victim-based cases that do not get reported to police.

2.9 Accredited training in leadership, finance or management

This proxy indicator is intended to provide information about capacity building in governance. In response to the question — "Do you think that data on finance and management courses, and Indigenous courses on leadership and governance reflect capacity building?", staff from the HICC responded in the affirmative, while:

- The Victorian Government argued that finance and management courses are not accurate reflections of Indigenous capacity building, and study in these areas

may not translate into skills for leadership and governance in Indigenous settings; They also supported changing the name of the indicator to 'training in governance and leadership'

- The Northern Territory Government suggested that a more relevant indicator would be one that recorded any training options (including non-accredited) for engagement with formal governance processes, including land and resource management.

The questionnaire also asked — "Are you aware of any data that could be reported in relation to governance (not just capacity building)?" While many of those consulted acknowledged that governance was important, no concrete suggestions were received.

2.10 Comments on other areas/indicators in the framework

Comments are reported in this section against indicators in the rest of the framework. Reporting is by exception — where no comments were received, there is no discussion of a specific indicator. There was broad agreement amongst governments and Indigenous people that most indicators were relevant and important. For example, there was unanimous agreement amongst those consulted about the need to improve literacy and numeracy, and retention rates for Indigenous children.

Headline indicators

Life expectancy at birth

- NAGATSIHID, AIHW and OATSIH would like to see this changed to a broader measure that encompassed life expectancy and mortality from the leading causes of death among Indigenous people.
- The South Australian Government suggested the name of the indicator be changed to 'healthy life expectancy' as a measure of the expected number of years to be lived in what might be termed the equivalent of 'full health', to capture the impact of chronic disease and the burden of disease on quality of life and longevity.

Rates of disability and/or core disability restriction

- NAGATSIHID, AIHW and OATSIH suggested this indicator should be changed to a broader measure of morbidity, health outcomes and conditions, and include rates of disability plus a range of other key chronic diseases and conditions.
- The Queensland Government suggested that a 'quality of life' indicator be considered for people with a disability. Such an indicator should aim to reflect the level of support that enables Indigenous people with a disability to participate in the community.

Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

- The Queensland Government suggested that 'real' (as opposed to apparent) retention rates should be reported by tracking individual students from year 8 to year 12.
- The Bamaga Council considered that school reforms are needed, and that Technical and Further Education (TAFE) needs to work with the school and put more effort into trades education and year 12 scores. The community's young people need to be at school or work, and need bridging courses to get them into work.
- In Warburton, most children are unlikely to progress past year 7. This means that, not only do they not progress to year 10, but their future training and employment prospects are severely limited.

Post secondary education, participation and attainment

- The Bamaga Council stated that the Bamaga TAFE is inadequate, and that people have to leave the community and go to Cairns or Brisbane. The TAFE has only one teacher/manager and is in need of relevant training courses that ensure young people in the community can receive training locally in skills that will equip them for employment and leadership.
- The South Australian Government noted that apparent retention rates do not take into account young people studying part time, repeating a year or moving interstate; nor those who have left school to enter employment or structured training.

Labour force participation and unemployment

- The South Australian Government suggested the addition of the number/age/gender of carers (that is people receiving the Carer's Pension) be considered.

Household and individual income

- The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs pointed out that the actual level of assistance through the Family Assistance Program may not be accurately represented in current reporting.

Home ownership

- In the Murdi Paaki region, there is low demand for housing properties and housing estates. Indigenous owned housing is likely to be low in value and potentially a liability for the owners.
- The ABS questioned whether 'home ownership' was the most appropriate measure of Indigenous wellbeing, noting that, although the Indigenous population is significantly disadvantaged in this regard, the Report's findings discount considerations of cultural relevance. Furthermore, due to the lack of an effective market for private dwellings in many non-urban Indigenous communities, there is reduced scope for increasing private home ownership.
- The South Australian Government suggested that the indicator be changed to 'housing tenure by type' in line with the 2006 Census, and that in the longer term data needs to be improved to capture the transience and mobility of the population.

Suicide and self harm

- One Indigenous community raised the relationship between alcohol and 'gunja' use and suicides.
- NAGATSIHID, AIHW and OATSIH suggested this indicator be changed to a broader measure that better captured overall social and emotional wellbeing.

Substantiated child protection notifications

See section earlier in this report.

Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault

- The South Australian Government suggested that 'hospitalisations for assault' should be reported against 'victim rates of crime'.

Victim rates for crime

See section earlier in this Report.

Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

- The imprisonment rates for Warburton are mainly due to driving while under suspension and for non-payment of fines. A perceived emphasis on traffic offences by police has affected the community's support for police services (which previously were considered very important by the community).
- The New South Wales Government advised that imprisonment data used in the report are based on a snapshot of the prison population on a particular date, which emphasises long-term rather than short-term prisoners. Indigenous prisoners are more likely to receive short sentences, therefore, the data collection method under-estimates Indigenous imprisonment. Future reports could included data on sentencing patterns for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
- The South Australian Government would like data included on:
  - alternative approaches to responding to crime, for example, family violence courts, circle sentencing, and restorative justice processes
  - community service orders/imprisonments (including suspended sentences) with more categories and a greater breakdown of offences/bail refusals/remand rates.
- VALS proposed 'rates of Indigenous Australian deaths in custody' as an additional headline indicator.

Early child development and growth (prenatal to age 3)

- The Victorian Government suggested the following indicators be added to this area:
  - breastfeeding at 3 and 6 months
  - immunisation
  - overweight and obesity
  - births to teenage mothers.

Rates of hospital admissions for infectious diseases

- The Victorian Government suggested that asthma hospitalisations and injury hospitalisations be included.
- The South Australian Government supported changing the indicator to 'injury and preventable diseases'.

Infant mortality

- The Victorian Government suggested SIDS be included, as well as perinatal data.

Birthweight

- The Victorian Government suggested adding smoking in pregnancy and in the home after birth, and that birth-related data should include infants with an Indigenous father and non-Indigenous mother.
- The South Australian Government suggested changing the indicator to 'low birthweight', and recognising the cultural differences in desirable birthweight, for example by considering reporting 'small for gestational age'.

Hearing impediments

- The high incidence of perforated eardrums was highlighted in one Indigenous community.
- The Queensland Government was critical of current reporting for this indicator and suggested it should reflect the incidence and prevalence of ear infections amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Early school engagement and performance (preschool to year 3)

Preschool and school attendance

- The Northern Territory Government questioned why the indicator is in the framework given there are no reliable data.
- The New South Wales Government advised that Indigenous participation rates, which have been used as a proxy for school attendance, are not an accurate reflection of attendance and are not nationally comparable because of State and Territory differences in the structure of schooling.
- The South Australian Government suggested separating this into two indicators — 'preschool and early learning' and 'school attendance', and reporting on part-time and on-going attendance.
- VACCA proposed adding access to culturally appropriate or culturally competent early childhood preschool or playgroup programs, and including comparative data on Indigenous and non-Indigenous attendance.

- An Early Years Program in Warburton has set up a playgroup run by local Indigenous (Ngaanyatjarra) women, which is producing some positive results.

Year 3 literacy and numeracy

- The Western Australian Department of Education and Training (WA DET) was concerned that the data may be misleading because, as students move from school to school, the complete picture is not presented.

Primary school children with dental caries

- The Australian Government suggested this indicator would be more appropriately placed under the 'early child development' strategic area for action.
- The South Australian Government proposed including data on regular attendance at school dental units, the number of day surgeries; and geographical areas where fluoride treated water is available through domestic and/or mains supply.

Positive childhood and transition to adulthood

- According to the Warburton Regional Council, there are major barriers to the achievement of good education for children in the community. These include:
  - a lack of performance measures and accountability for teachers. It was argued that teachers had reduced expectations about the ability of Aboriginal children and did not communicate with the community
  - the high turnover amongst teachers — it is not unusual for them to leave after only three months. At the time of the consultation meeting, Warburton's current relieving headmaster was the fourth for that year.
- The Indigenous people of Port Augusta expressed concern about the lack of support for Indigenous students and the practice of automatic promotion of students through the school system.

Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in development and delivery of Indigenous studies

- The Northern Territory Government questioned whether this indicator might be better placed in the area of 'early school engagement and performance'.

See section earlier in this Report.

Juvenile diversions

- Recidivism rates drop dramatically when young people on remand are diverted to the TALS and taken to an island for a period of time. There are problems with the program, however, which assumes that a non-Indigenous magistrate knows what is best for Aboriginal children. In addition, TALS is over-stretched, dealing with a range of demands, particularly from mothers.
- In the Tiwi Islands, the Youth Diversions Office runs a formal program with referrals from the police. The office also runs a number of proactive programs, including: after school care; night patrols; counselling; school transport; domestic violence; and the school attendance program. There has been an increase in the level of school attendance since the school attendance program started. Parents who drink and whose children don't attend school are banned from the local club and reported to Centrelink. 'Problem kid' counselling and intervention encourages family involvement and is producing positive outcomes.

Substance use and misuse

- NAGATSIHID, AIHW and OATSIH would like to see this area cover broader measures of health risk factors and health behaviours, including nutrition, physical activity and obesity.
- The South Australian Government suggested the inclusion of hospital separations co-morbidity data (such as alcohol/drugs/mental health).
- The Bamaga Council and the Bamaga Enterprises Ltd (BEL) were both critical of the Queensland Government's process for looking at alcohol usage in communities and the resulting legislation. The result has been an increase in 'binge drinking' in the community. Data are available which demonstrate that the alcohol management plans have tripled their problems since they were instigated.
- Alcohol and 'gunja' were identified by one community as the main causes of suicides.
- Although drugs and alcohol were not considered major problems in Warburton (which is a totally dry community), alcohol and petrol sniffing were factors in 90 per cent of serious crimes that occurred.

Alcohol and tobacco consumption

- The Victorian Government suggested reporting smoker status in relation to the presence of pregnant women and young children at home; and pointed to data on courses of treatment in community-based alcohol and drug agencies.

Functional and resilient families and communities

See sections on ‘Access to the nearest health professional’, ‘proportion of people with access to their traditional lands’ and participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities’ earlier in this Report.

Children on care and protection orders

- The South Australian Government suggested that data be included on family support programs and family reunification programs.

Repeat offending

- The South Australian Government suggested that data be included on participation in juvenile and adult reintegration programs; and, because of the early onset offending patterns and progression to repeat offending, data be included for 10–13 year olds who are included in intensive family support intervention programs.

Effective environmental health systems

Overcrowding in housing

- The Australian Government suggested that monitoring the rate of Indigenous homelessness could indicate progress towards increasing the housing stability of Indigenous families.

Overcrowding in housing was an endemic issue for Indigenous communities. The following comments are typical of those received in Indigenous consultations.

- In Bamaga, are up to 40 families are on the waiting list for houses. The Council builds four houses a year using local builders. Maintenance is also done by local labour (although there is a need for training in maintenance).
- In the Murdi Paaki region, overcrowding in housing and the high cost of housing maintenance are both problems. There is a lack of local trades people, such as plumbers and carpenters, to undertake maintenance work. High insurance costs (for example, $200 000 excess fees on housing insurance) cannot be recovered by rents.
- There are problems with housing overcrowding and lack of maintenance in the Tiwi Islands. Staff housing is also a problem.

Economic participation and development

Employment

- Training is a key issue in the Tiwi Islands. Although many people currently undertake training, there are rarely any jobs once the training is completed. The TILG would like to see Tiwi people skilled in those jobs which are currently held by non-Tiwi people.
- In Katherine, the employment of Aboriginal people is quite low. Major employers are Aboriginal (for example, the Nitmiluk National Park in Katherine Gorge) rather than mainstream.

Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) participation

- The Australian Government suggested that this indicator could be removed because, taken in isolation from the other employment statistics presented, it is not necessarily a measure of economic development.
- Most of the workers in the Bamaga community are on CDEP, which is run by the Council. These are regarded as 'real jobs' subsidised by CDEP, although there is some under-employment. Childcare is reliant on CDEP, and Bamaga Enterprises Limited (BEL) is trying to become a CDEP provider and get local people trained in childcare. They would need to fill one position with 2-3 people.
- TEAC stated that the new arrangements for CDEP will be detrimental to the operation of land management arrangements. 'After six months on CDEP, people who have been skilled-up will have to move off the land. These arrangements don't focus on the positive and they don't help'.
- At the time the consultation took place in the Tiwi Islands, there were 50 people on the CDEP books and 50 on the waiting list. The TILG was holding skin group meetings to work out how the new arrangements (whereby 400 people currently eligible for the Remote Area Exemption [RAE]) would have to be transitioned to CDEP).
- The new CDEP arrangements represent a serious problem for the Warburton communities. It will be difficult to comply with the new requirements, under which between 50 and 60 mainstream jobs will have to be found under the transition to work requirements. In the absence of resource development, there is nothing that can be done to develop enterprises in the communities.
- According to one Indigenous manager, there are now 14 forms to fill out to apply for CDEP where there used to be only one.

Self employment

- The Australian Capital Territory Government noted that the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has produced two reports about success stories, and that while unemployment is considered a serious issue, self employment is ignored.

Indigenous owned or controlled land

- The Australian Government argued that this indicator should be dropped because it is not a necessary or sufficient condition for economic participation and development, even though it may be important to Indigenous people.
- In Murdi Paaki, apart from the economic value, native title has the capacity to increase the social, cultural and environmental benefits that flow from accessing traditional lands.
- The ILC argued that Indigenous owned or controlled land is a problematic indicator of economic development and participation. Land ownership does not always deliver benefits to groups, and a number of conditions must be met before land delivers economic benefits. The ILC thought it would be preferable to measure the social and cultural (as well as economic) benefits Indigenous people obtain through ownership. Current reporting could be made more meaningful by examining Indigenous held land against land-use zones and other geographically derived indicators (such as proximity to service centres).

Case studies in governance arrangements

- The Australian Government considered this indicator to be rather vague and one that should be dropped in favour of an approach with a sharper focus, such as the number of Aboriginal organisations registered through the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations which have been put into receivership and/or administration over a specified period of time.

See the section earlier in this Report.

3 Changes to the framework

3.1 Introduction

The consultations with Indigenous people and governments resulted in a number of suggestions for improving the framework. There was general agreement that the framework needed to continue to be contained in size if its strategic objectives were to be achieved. Not surprisingly, however, there was a diversity of views about what should be changed in, or added to the framework, as outlined in the previous chapter.

Consultations with governments and Indigenous organisations and communities were generally focussed on the issues in the questionnaire, particularly in respect to potential changes to the framework. Since the original framework was finalised, for the most part, criticism about the remaining indicators had been about data issues. As such, while they have not been part of the discussions around potential changes to the framework, comments were invited on how they might be improved.

After considering the suggestions from the consultations and with the benefit of additional research by the Secretariat and working group, the Steering Committee has made changes to various indicators for the next edition of the report. However, the general logic and structure of the framework and the six strategic areas for action have not been altered. The changes involved clarification, renaming or rearrangement of some existing indicators and the addition of two new strategic change indicators.

The changes are set out below and the revised indicators are presented in figure 1 at the end of this chapter (changes are shown in *italics*).

3.2 Cultural indicators

One of the aims of the consultations was to elicit responses to the existing cultural indicators in the framework. Most of those who took part in the consultations strongly supported the existing indicators:

- Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in development and delivery of Indigenous studies
- Proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands
- Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities
- Indigenous owned or controlled land
- Case studies in governance arrangements.

The consultation documents also proposed three areas for possible new cultural indicators: language; heritage; and Indigenous culture and law.

Consultation participants recognised each of these as important for the well being of Indigenous people but there was no consensus on specific indicators. As mentioned earlier in this report, there has been a diversity of views about the inclusion of an indicator reporting on the use of Indigenous languages. A separate indicator of engagement with service delivery will, in part, address communication between service providers and Indigenous people but is not proposed as a cultural indicator. Heritage, and Indigenous culture and law were supported in broad terms but no specific indicators were identified.

Consequently, the Steering Committee will include additional contextual cultural information in the report where appropriate, and give greater prominence to the existing indicators in the Report Overview. However, no additional cultural indicators will be added to the 2007 Report pending further work. Continuing research will be undertaken on the appropriateness of a language indicator, and possibly other cultural indicators, for future reports.

3.3 Headline indicators

Disability and chronic diseases

Change to indicator name:

The 'Rates of disability and/or core activity restriction' indicator has been renamed 'Disability and chronic disease'.

As part of the consultations, the National Advisory Group Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data (NAGATSIHID) (supported by the Australian Government Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) recommended changing the 'Rates of disability and/or core activity restriction' indicator to a broader measure of

morbidity, health outcomes and disability. The 2005 Report included data on overall health outcomes (measured using hospital separation ratios) as part of the indicator. Broadening the name of the indicator will reflect the importance of chronic disease in overall health outcomes for Indigenous people.

Substantiated child abuse and neglect

Change to indicator name:

The 'Substantiated child protection notifications' indicator has been renamed 'Substantiated child abuse and neglect'.

The 'Substantiated child protection notifications' indicator will be renamed to make it more understandable to a non-specialist audience. There are currently no reliable data on the incidence of child abuse. Therefore, substantiated child protection notifications will remain the primary source of data for the indicator. However, the new name will allow the report to point more strongly to the need to collect data on the incidence of abuse and neglect.

Family and community violence

Change to indicator name:

The 'Victim rates of crime' indicator has been renamed 'Family and community violence'.

The 'Victim rates for crime' indicator had been seen as a proxy for domestic (or family) violence, although it also allowed reporting of data on crime victimisation more generally. Changing the name of this indicator will draw greater attention to the domestic and community violence aspects of this indicator, which are of particular concern in some Indigenous communities.

3.4 Early child development and growth

Injury and preventable diseases

Change to indicator name:

The 'Rates of hospital admission for infectious diseases' indicator has been renamed 'Injury and preventable diseases'.

Hospital separations and deaths will remain the primary data sources for the indicator, however, removing the reference to hospital admissions will simplify the name of the indicator for general readers and may help to focus efforts on obtaining data on the underlying incidence of disease and injury. A broader range of data, including separations for preventable non-infectious diseases, accidents and injuries, will provide a more comprehensive picture of health outcomes for Indigenous children.

3.5 Early school engagement and performance

Preschool and early learning/School attendance

Two parts of indicator separated:

The 'Preschool and school attendance' indicator has been split into two indicators, 'Preschool and early learning', and 'School attendance'.

The 'Preschool and school attendance' indicator has been divided into two separate indicators, both of which fall under the 'Early school engagement and performance' strategic area for action. The change will better distinguish between distinct aspects of early school engagement and allow expanded coverage of early learning.

Children with tooth decay

Change to indicator name and placement:

The 'Primary school children with dental caries' indicator has been renamed 'Children with tooth decay'.

The indicator has been moved from 'Early school engagement and performance' strategic area for action to 'Early child development and growth'.

The words 'dental caries' will be changed to 'tooth decay' to make the indicator more understandable to a general audience. Furthermore, the consultations indicated that tooth decay is more an indicator of childhood development than school engagement and performance and, therefore, is more appropriately located in the 'Early child development and growth' strategic area for action.

3.6 Substance use and misuse

Changes to indicator names:

The three indicators under the 'Substance use and misuse' strategic area for action have been renamed from:

- **Alcohol and tobacco consumption**
- **Alcohol related crime and hospital statistics**
- **Drug and other substance use**

to:

- **Alcohol consumption and harm**
- **Tobacco consumption and harm**
- **Drug and other substance use and harm.**

This strategic area covers the patterns in use of a range of substances, including alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. It also covers, where possible, the harms related to the use of these substances (such as crime, illness and death).

During the consultation process, feedback on this strategic area indicated that the structure of this strategic area appeared ambiguous. While patterns of alcohol and tobacco consumption and related harms (including crimes) were covered separately in two indicators, patterns in use and related harms of other substances were reported as one indicator.

Renaming the three indicators will clarify reporting and bring together data for each of the three main substance types. The current range of data used in reporting against the strategic area for action will be retained across the three renamed indicators.

3.7 Functional and resilient families and communities

Access to primary health care

Change to indicator name:

The indicator 'Access to the nearest health professional' has been renamed 'Access to primary health care'.

The indicator 'Access to the nearest health professional' was criticised in consultations as inadequate in representing the importance of comprehensive health care to Indigenous people. In the 2005 Report, reporting against 'Access to the nearest health professional' was expanded to include use of health care services more broadly, such as immunization and hospitalisation for potentially preventable conditions. The Steering Committee has agreed with suggestions that this indicator be replaced with a broader measure of access to health services.

Mental health

New indicator:

'Mental health' has been included as a strategic change indicator as part of the 'Functional and resilient families and communities' strategic area for action.

Consultation responses suggested that mental health and wellbeing and the prevalence of mental disorders were important factors in Indigenous health. A mental health indicator will assist in presenting a comprehensive picture of Indigenous disadvantage.

Engagement with service delivery

New indicator:

A new strategic change indicator 'Engagement with service delivery' will be included in the 'Functional and resilient families and communities' strategic area for action.

The indicator is intended to focus attention on service accessibility for Indigenous people, particularly barriers to service access, for both mainstream and Indigenous specific services. Removing barriers to access is seen as critical to reducing disadvantage for families and communities.

3.8 Economic participation and development

CDEP participation

Indicator combined with headline indicator:

The indicator 'CDEP participation' has been removed as a separate strategic change indicator and data on CDEP participation will be included in the headline indicator 'Labour force participation and unemployment'.

'CDEP participation' will become a component of the headline indicator, 'Labour force participation and unemployment' rather than remaining as a separate indicator in 'Economic participation and development'.

No other indicator in the framework focuses on a single government program. Nevertheless, it is important for data on CDEP participation to be included in the Report.

CDEP is classified as employment under ABS labour force definitions, however, it is important to identify CDEP separately in Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators reports because it has elements of both unemployment and employment. Some CDEP activities are akin to work for the dole, while other activities are essential roles in municipal services, health care, community services, education and other sectors that would be considered employment in mainstream communities and organisations.

CDEP participation has a large impact on ABS measures of labour force characteristics of Indigenous people, especially in remote areas. Data on CDEP participation helps readers interpret ABS data on Indigenous labour force participation and unemployment.

Long term unemployment

Indicator combined with headline indicator:

The indicator 'Long term unemployment' has been removed as a separate strategic change indicator and data on long term unemployment will be included in the headline indicator 'Labour force participation and unemployment'.

Long term unemployment is less amenable to policy and program intervention than unemployment more generally, which brings into question its usefulness as a

strategic change indicator. The data are more appropriately included under the headline indicator 'Labour force participation and unemployment'.

Self employment and Indigenous business

Change to indicator name:

The indicator, 'Self employment', has been renamed 'Self employment and Indigenous business'.

'Self employment' has been renamed as a broader Indigenous business indicator that will allow data and case studies on Indigenous business more generally to be reported, including self employment.

Governance capacity and skills

Change to indicator name:

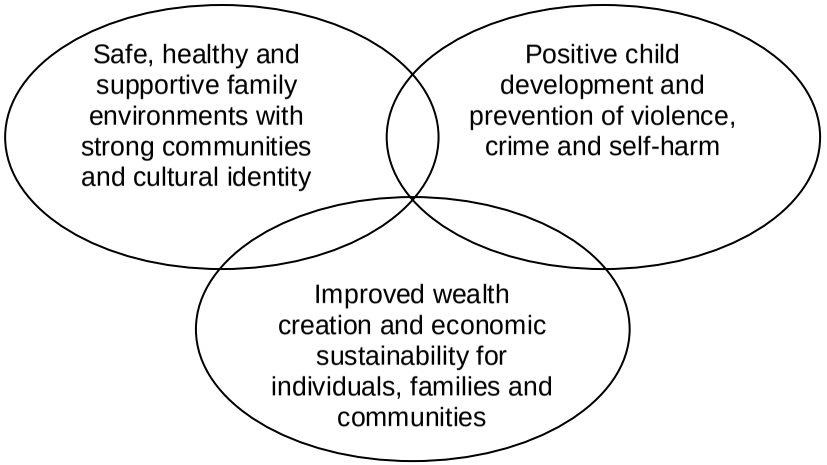
The indicator, 'Accredited training in leadership, finance or management' has been renamed 'Governance capacity and skills'.

The previous 'Accredited training in leadership, finance or management' indicator was a proxy for capacity building in governance. Renaming of this indicator will allow reporting of a broader range of information and better reflect the true intent of this indicator.

Figure 1: Multi-level indicator framework *(changes to indicators are marked in italic)*

1. Priority outcomes

Indigenous people and governments have agreed the following outcomes. These outcomes are closely linked to each other —progress in one area can assist progress in the others



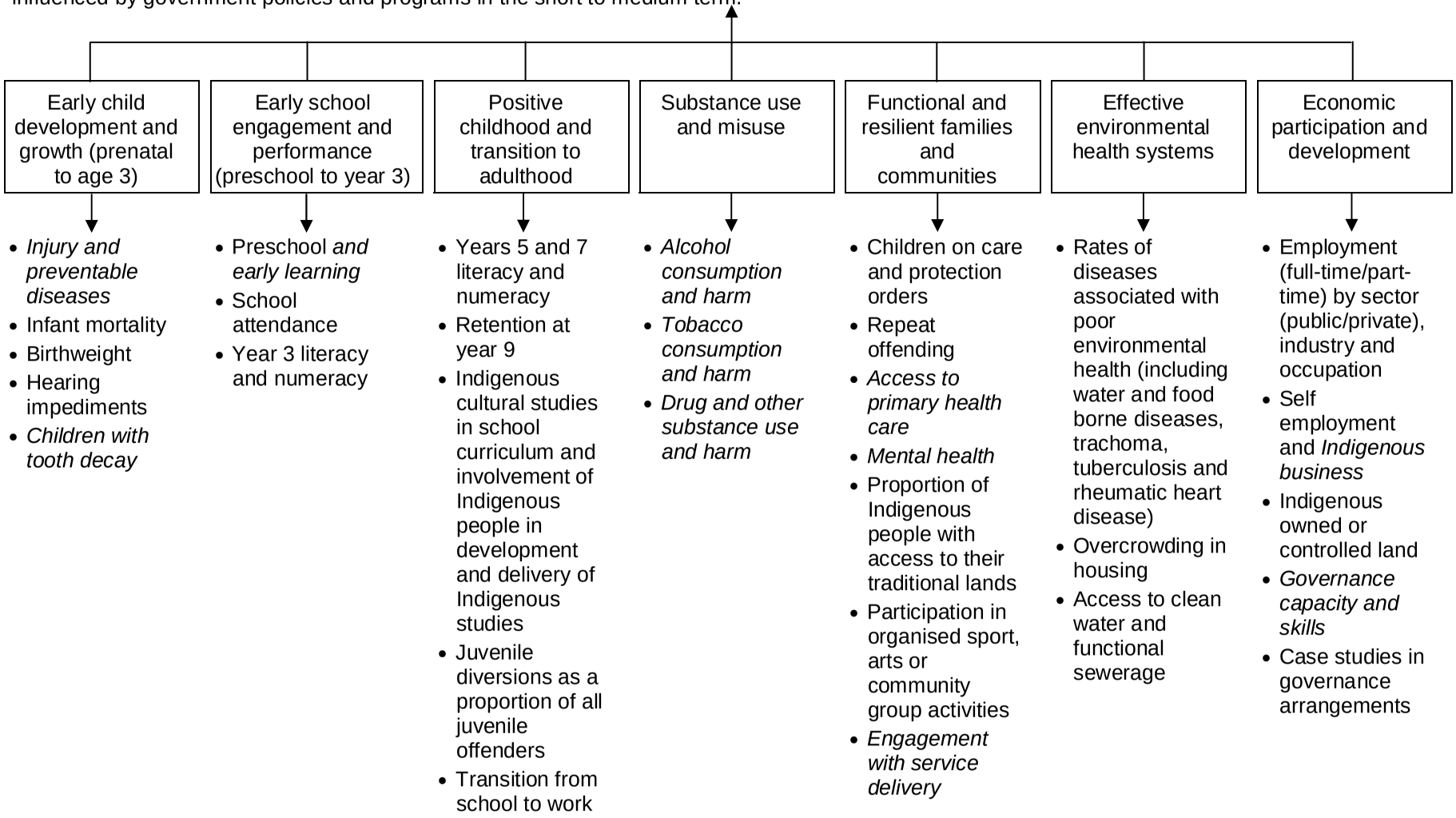
2. Headline indicators

The headline indicators measure progress in achieving the priority outcomes. They are a small set of high level indicators, which usually take some time to respond to changes in government policies.

- Life expectancy
- *Disability and chronic diseases*
- Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment
- Post secondary education – participation and attainment
- Labour force participation and unemployment *(CDEP and long term unemployment data to be included here)*
- Household and individual income
- Home ownership
- Suicide and self-harm
- *Substantiated child abuse and neglect*
- Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault
- *Family and community violence*
- Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

3. Strategic areas for action

Governments have agreed to focus policy attention on the following seven strategic areas. Over time progress in these areas is expected to lead to improvement in the headline indicators and priority outcomes. Progress is measured by a series of strategic change indicators, which can be influenced by government policies and programs in the short to medium term.



A Consultation participants

A.1 Meetings

South Australia (14 to 17 February)

- Meetings with government officials and with representatives of Indigenous organisations (Adelaide)
- Workshops with government staff and with representatives from Indigenous communities and organisations (Port Augusta)

Northern Territory (27 to 31 March)

- Workshops with government agencies (Darwin)
- Meetings with Council officials and with representatives of Indigenous community (Tiwi Islands)
- Workshop with government agencies and meeting with Jawoyn Association (Katherine)

Queensland (3 to 6 April)

- Workshops with government agencies (Brisbane)
- Meeting with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (Brisbane)
- Meetings with Bamaga council and community organisations (Cape York)

New South Wales (19 to 21 April)

- Meetings with Indigenous organisations (Dubbo)
- Workshop with government agencies (Sydney)

ACT (30 – 31 May)

- Workshop with ACT Government officials
- Meeting with Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
- Meeting with Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

- Meetings with Reconciliation Australia and with the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations (ORAC).

Tasmania (1 – 2 June)

- Meetings with government officials and with representatives of Indigenous organisations (Hobart and Launceston)

Australian Government (14 June)

- Meetings with Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) and with representatives of Australian Government agencies (Canberra)

Victoria (22 June)

- Meetings with Victorian Government officials and with representatives of Indigenous organisations (Melbourne)

Sydney (29 June)

- Meeting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and staff, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Canberra (20 July)

- Presentation on the framework and report to the Canberra Evaluation Forum

WA (28 July)

- Meeting with Department of Premier and Cabinet (Perth)

Canberra (15 August)

- Meeting with the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Mal Brough MP

Canberra (22 August)

- Meeting with Indigenous Business Australia

WA (28 – 29 August)

- Meeting with Western Australian Government officials and with representatives of Indigenous organisations (Perth)
- Meeting with Warburton Council and with community organisations (Warburton)

Canberra (8 November)

- Meeting with the Australian Government's Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs

A.2 Written comments received

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Courts Administration Authority (SA)

Department of Child Safety (Queensland)

Department of Correctional Services (SA)

Department of Community Development (WA)

Department of Education and Training (NSW)

Department of Education and Training (Victoria)

Department of Education and Training (WA)

Department of Families and Community Services (SA)

Department of Health and Community Services (NT)

Disability Services Commission (WA)

Disability Services Queensland

Families Group, Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Aust Govt)

Indigenous Coordination Centre, Hobart (Aust Govt)

Indigenous Land Corporation

National Advisory Group Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data (NAGATSIHID)

Northern Territory Government

Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Department of Health and Ageing (Aust Govt)

Office of Training and Adult Education (ACT)

Queensland Government

South Australian Government

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Limited

Victorian Government

B Consultation documents

Request for comment — March 2006

Introduction

During 2006, the Review of Government Service Provision, which represents all State and Territory Governments and the Australian Government, will be consulting with Indigenous people, government agencies and researchers. The Review is seeking comments on the report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*.

In May 2002 the Council of Australian Government (COAG) requested a regular report against key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. Two editions of Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators have now been released — the first in November 2003, and the second in July 2005. Since 2002, consultations have taken place in all states and territories. Consultations are continuing in 2006 and comments and suggestions received will feed into the next Report due to come out in 2007. The Productivity Commission is the Secretariat for this project.

Consultation aims

The aims of consultations are:

- to identify potential changes to the indicator framework
- to seek better ways of reporting within the framework
- to identify data, case studies and insights for inclusion in the 2007 Report.

While there has been considerable support for the Report from all sectors, Indigenous and non Indigenous alike, various issues have been raised about the indicators in the framework and the way some aspects of Indigenous disadvantage are presented. Undertakings were given during previous consultations to revisit the framework and some of those issues after the release of the 2005 Report.

In considering suggestions for change, the Review will seek, as much as possible, to remain consistent with the broad structure of the framework, as endorsed previously by COAG, and, therefore, build on that framework. Furthermore, the Review believes that it is important to be able to trace changes over time, which requires some consistency in key indicators.

Key questions for consultation

The Report's framework has been reproduced on the following pages. We want to know what you think about the framework and how you think it is working. In thinking about the framework and report it would be useful to refer to the Overview from the 2005 Report.

The main Report and Overview can be found on the Review website at: http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Secretariat on (03) 9653 2100 or email gsp@pc.gov.au

Key questions to consider

- Are all the indicators meaningful and appropriate? Can you suggest any improvements?
- Are there alternative indicators that would more clearly reflect outcomes for Indigenous people?
- Can you suggest better ways of reporting against the indicators, including better sources of data?
- Do you know of any good case studies or examples of successful programs, activities or policies that could be included in the next report?
- How can the report's presentation be improved to make it more user friendly?

As well as these broad questions, we are also seeking feedback on specific issues and indicators, particularly, those relating to culture and health. A separate questionnaire sets out these issues in a series of questions. You may wish to provide verbal feedback on the issues raised in the questionnaire if you are attending a consultation meeting or provide written feedback at a later date.

There will almost certainly be other issues that will come up during consultations. We would be happy to receive your feedback on any aspect of the Report.

Comments and responses can be forwarded by 21 June 2006 to:

Secretariat
Review of Government Service Provision
Locked Bag 2 Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Phone: 03 9653 2100 Fax: 03 9653 2359 Email: gsp@pc.gov.au

Questionnaire — March 2006

Contents

- What is this questionnaire about?
- Some points to keep in mind
- Usefulness of the Report
- 'Things that work'
- Cultural indicators
- Health related indicator
- Other indicators

Attachments

- Framework for reporting on Indigenous disadvantage

What is this questionnaire about?

This questionnaire seeks your response to specific issues where suggestions for changes to the indicator framework have been made in previous consultations.

This questionnaire supplements the more general Request for Comment document, which you should also have a copy of.

We are also happy to receive your comments on other indicators.

You may find it useful to refer to the Overview of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005 while answering these questions. The main Report and Overview can be found on the Review website at: http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Secretariat on (03) 9653 2100 or email gsp@pc.gov.au

Some points to keep in mind

The key task of the Report is to publish indicators that are relevant to both governments and Indigenous stakeholders, and that can demonstrate the impact of programme and policy interventions. Whilst there are potentially dozens of indicators, the Report is deliberately limited to a few significant indicators that best tell the story of what is happening across Australia.

When first selected, the strategic change indicators in the framework had to satisfy a set of criteria. Any proposed changes would still need to substantially satisfy these criteria.

Selection criteria for strategic change indicators

- Relevance to priority outcomes (see the circles at the top of the framework)
- Actions in the strategic areas for action should result in positive outcomes
- Meaningful to stakeholders and principally to the Indigenous community
- Sensitive to policy interventions and changes in policy settings
- Supported by strong logic or empirical evidence
- Unambiguous and clear in meaning and interpretation
- The existence of, or ease of developing, supporting data sets

The strategic change indicators were chosen to target those areas where actions were likely to have the most impact in the short and long term on reducing Indigenous disadvantage. In considering changes to indicators, or potential new indicators, it is important to keep this goal in mind.

Usefulness of the Report

For the Report to remain relevant to both governments and Indigenous stakeholders it needs to be easily understood by both audiences. The Report should clearly identify the issues and key messages.

Questions

1. How useful do you find the three main parts of the Report:
   - the Overview
   - the main Report
   - the supporting tables (available electronically on the Review website www.pc.gov.au/gsp)?
2. How would you rate the clarity and overall readability of the Overview and the main Report and how could it be improved?
3. Is the analysis sufficiently thorough and comprehensive?
4. How could the Report's usefulness be improved?

‘Things that work’

Data are not available for all areas of the framework, and individual success stories don’t always show up in aggregate data. Case studies, often under the heading, ‘things that work’, were included in the 2005 Report to promote positive outcomes and let others learn from successful initiatives. They illustrate how things can change for the better.

Some common themes in ‘things that work’ include:

- cooperative approaches between Indigenous people and government and/or private sector
- community involvement in program design and decision-making
- good governance
- on-going government support.

Questions

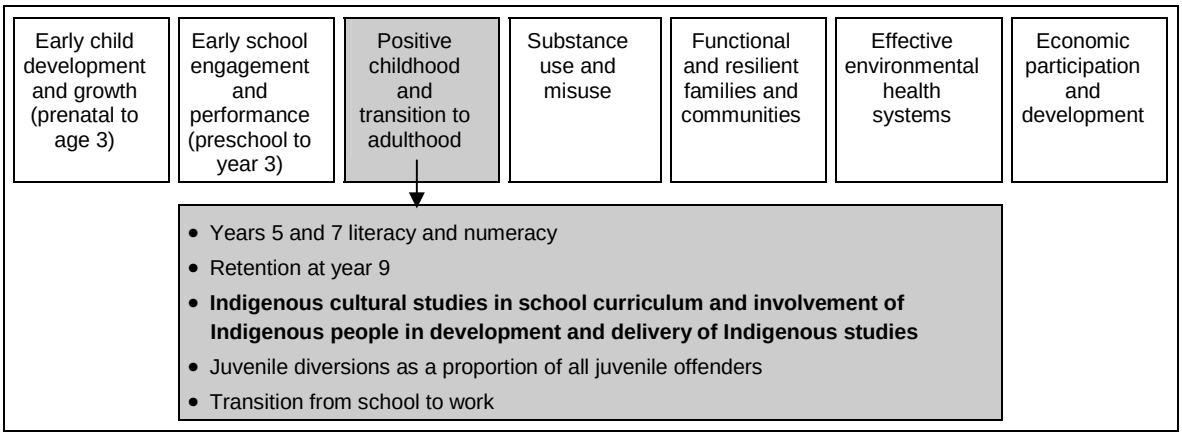
1. Are case studies and ‘things that work’ a useful part of the report?
2. If you are aware of potential case studies relevant to indicators in the Report please let us know. Consistent with the outcomes focus of the Report, case studies and examples should have achieved some measurable success or positive outcomes for Indigenous people.

Cultural indicators

Several indicators that relate to Indigenous culture are spread across the framework. During the course of previous consultations, Indigenous people expressed many ideas about how the cultural indicators could be improved. Listed below are the cultural indicators in the Report with questions that arose out of the consultations.

Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in development and delivery of Indigenous studies.

This indicator is in the 'Positive childhood and transition to adulthood' strategic area for action (see diagram).



The absence of a culturally appropriate curriculum which is relevant to Indigenous people has been identified as one of the reasons some Indigenous children lack self esteem, and are not motivated to attend or remain at school. Indigenous cultural studies also produce social benefits that extend beyond the Indigenous school population by increasing awareness and understanding about Indigenous history and culture in the wider population. This indicator reports some limited data which are available on school curricula, and Indigenous employment in government and Catholic schools as well as selected case studies.

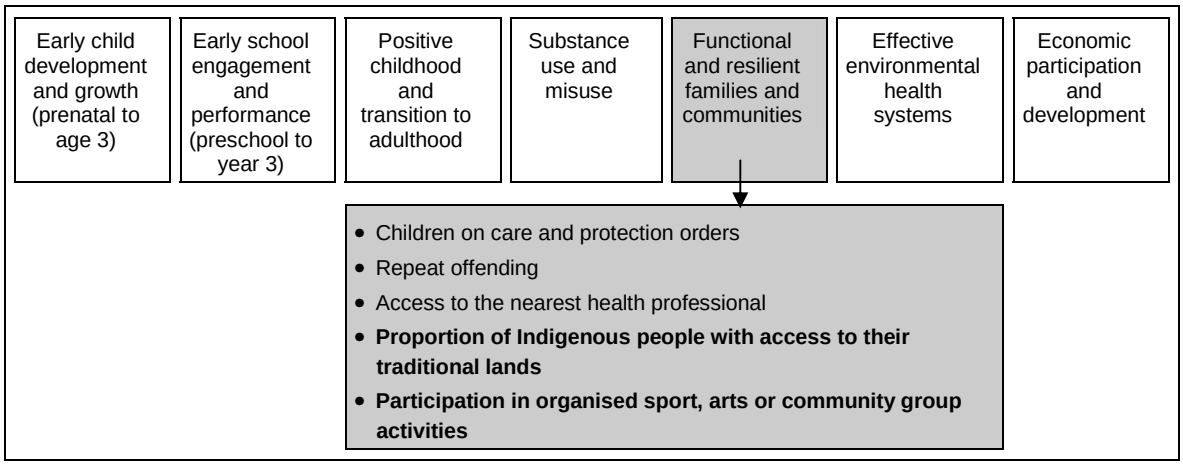
Questions

1. Could this indicator be expressed as an outcome? For example, self-esteem, community engagement, reduced racism, improved learning outcomes, and school retention are some of the potential outcomes. However, apart from the last two these are not currently measurable.
2. Are you aware of any case studies that could be used to report against this indicator?

Proportion of people with access to their traditional lands

Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities

These indicators are in the 'Functional and resilient families and communities' strategic area for action (see diagram).



Proportion of people with access to their traditional lands

This indicator complements another indicator in the economic development and participation chapter of the Report (Indigenous owned or controlled land). Land is important to Indigenous people both culturally and economically. While no data were available for the 2003 Report, the 2005 Report included data on:

- Recognition of homelands/traditional country
- Whether currently living on homelands
- Whether allowed to visit homelands.

Questions

1. Are there other aspects of access to traditional lands that could be covered? If so, are there data or case studies available?

Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities

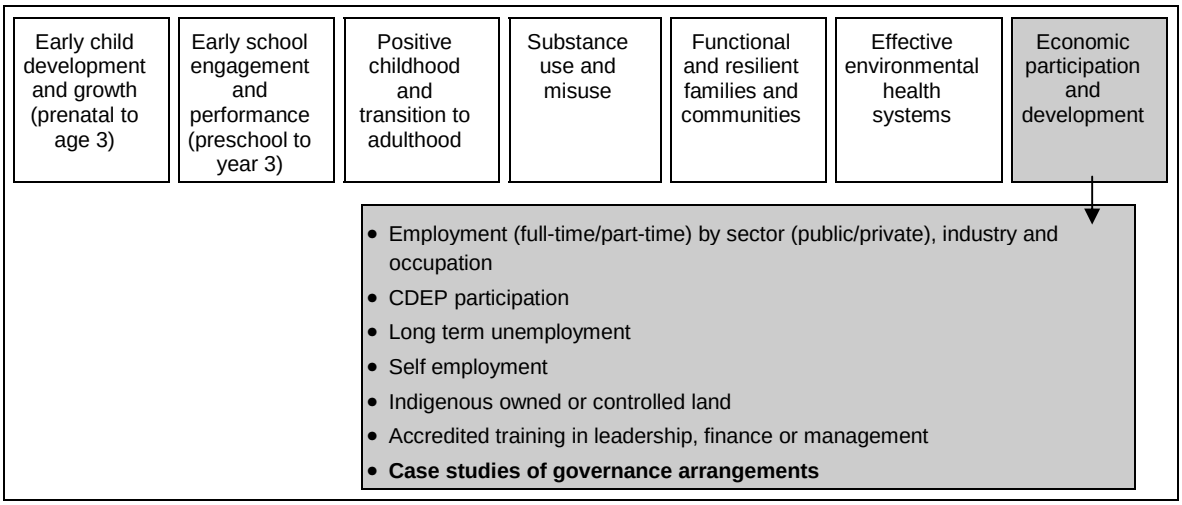
Taking part in organised sport, arts or community group activities can foster self-reliance, social interaction, and the development of skills and teamwork. There are very few data to report against this indicator, and none at all for Indigenous people under the age of 15 years. Consequently, the Report has relied heavily on case studies.

Questions

1. Are you aware of any data or case studies that could be used to report against this indicator?

Case studies in governance arrangements

This indicator is in the 'Economic participation and development' strategic area for action (see diagram). The indicator relates to governance in Indigenous communities and organisations. Governance has been closely linked with economic development and disadvantage, because it is a key determinant of the ability of Indigenous organisations and communities to make and implement decisions that achieve outcomes in a sustainable way. Some key determinants of governance have emerged as having universal application. These form the structure for presentation of case studies in the Report.



The key determinants of successful governance highlighted in the Report are:

- governing institutions
- leadership
- self determination
- capacity building
- cultural match

Questions

1. Do you agree that these are key determinants? Are there others that are well established and could replace or add to these to improve the analysis and presentation?

2. Are you aware of any case studies that could be used to report against this indicator? If so, would the organisation or community be willing to assist in developing the case study for publication and who is an appropriate person to approach?

Possible new cultural indicators

Other suggestions about possible new cultural indicators made during consultations were heritage, language and recognition of Indigenous culture and law.

Heritage

Many Indigenous people place great importance on the recognition and protection of their cultural heritage. While reporting data on heritage was beyond the scope of the first two reports, in recognition of its importance, one of the two case studies on governance in the 2005 Report was the Koorie Heritage Trust.

1. Do you think that heritage should be an indicator in the Report?
2. Some aspects of heritage that have been proposed include heritage sites, collections and education. Are these the most meaningful components of heritage for Indigenous people? Are there sufficient data available?
3. If a heritage indicator is included, is there an existing indicator that it could replace?
4. Would it be sufficient to ensure that the various dimensions of heritage are mentioned in the body of the Report, without including a specific indicator?

Language

There has been widespread support during previous consultations for an indicator related to language. This was the case whether the consultations were in a remote community or the middle of a large city. However, there were many different views about language that extended beyond culture and into the education and employment areas of the Report. The comments reflected a diversity of views.

Questions

1. Is language an appropriate indicator of Indigenous disadvantage? If so, should it reflect:
   - Indigenous language spoken as a first language, and second language?
   - by school children or all people?
   - taught in schools by an Indigenous person?

- school lessons taught in Indigenous language?
- capacity of children for whom English is a second language to achieve at school?
- are there other aspects of language that are culturally relevant that could be included?

2. Or should this indicator reflect practical aspects of communication between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous services providers, such as Indigenous people's use of English and the extent to which service providers and government agencies take steps to ensure effective communication with speakers of Indigenous languages. Example could include:
   - availability of interpreters or staff with Indigenous language skills
   - training of staff in Indigenous languages and culture
   - availability of suitable materials for communicating with speakers of Indigenous languages
3. Are you aware of any data that could be reported against a language indicator?

Indigenous culture and law

Official recognition of Indigenous culture and law covers a broad range of issues, including: observance of Indigenous protocols in ceremonies, recognition of Indigenous law and governance, local governments with cultural advisory mechanisms, and partnerships and memorandums of understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Some aspects of these are picked up in the governance case studies section of the Report.

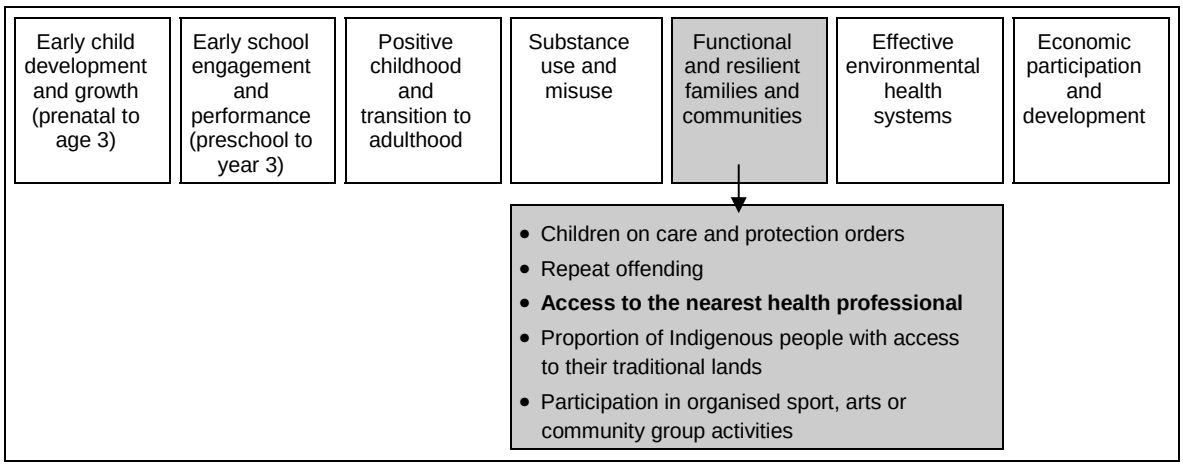
Questions

1. Do you think that recognition of Indigenous culture and law should be an indicator in the Report? If so, is there an existing indicator it could replace?
2. Are you aware of any data that could be reported against these issues?
3. Are there any other cultural indicators which you believe would better reflect Indigenous culture than those mentioned above?

Health related indicator

Access to the nearest health professional

This indicator is in the 'Functional and resilient families and communities' strategic area for action.



This indicator has received some criticism on the basis that it is not seen to adequately represent the health needs of Indigenous people. In the 2005 Report, reporting against this indicator was expanded to include hospital admissions for potentially preventable chronic conditions, type 2 diabetes mellitus, and vaccine preventable diseases.

A great deal of other health data are included elsewhere in the Report. One option may be to cross reference and draw links between those parts to produce a more complete picture. These links could also draw on other aspects of the Report such as substance misuse, domestic violence, and premature death data. Their effect on life expectancy could also be made more explicit.

Questions

1. Do you think that reporting against this indicator with the greater linking of related data as suggested will adequately deal with this issue?
2. Can you suggest an **alternative** indicator?
   - if yes, can you explain why it would be better?
   - are there data that can be reported against it on a national level?
   - does it have relevance in all locations — urban, regional and remote?
3. What other factors are important in Indigenous health and should they be reported on, for example:
   - mental health (or mental well being)
   - mental illness/disorder.

Other indicators

Substantiated child protection notifications

Victim rates for crime

These two indicators are headline indicators. All the headline indicators are listed in the box below.

Headline indicators

- Life expectancy at birth
- Rates of disability and/or core activity restriction
- Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment
- Post secondary education — participation and attainment
- Labour force participation and unemployment
- Household and individual income
- Home ownership
- Suicide and self-harm
- Substantiated child protection notifications
- Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault
- Victim rates for crime
- Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

Substantiated child protection notifications

This indicator only reports abuse and neglect notified to child protection services and subsequently substantiated, and does not reflect the actual level of abuse. Furthermore, it could be ambiguous. An increase in notifications and substantiations might only reflect an increase in reporting of abuse and neglect not necessarily an increase in the underlying rate.

Questions:

1. Should the indicator's name be changed to 'Child abuse and neglect'?
2. Should the indicator report on all types of abuse and neglect or should it report only specific types of abuse?
3. Would you support changing this indicator to report on 'Child victims of sexual assault' (based on police statistics) or 'Sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases in children'?
4. Are you aware of any data that could be reported against this issue?

Victim rates for crime

The 2005 Report included data on victims of physical or threatened violence. Another indicator included data on numbers of homicides and hospitalisations for assault. No separate data are available on victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse or other types of crime.

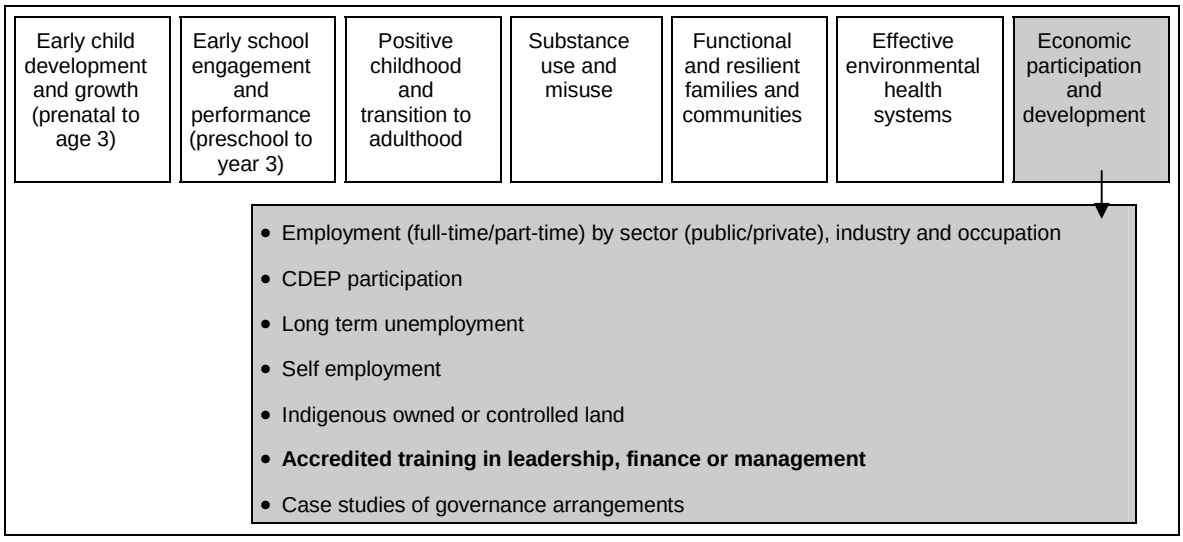
Questions

1. Should the indicator remain?
2. Should its name be changed to 'Victims of domestic and community violence'?
3. Are you aware of any additional data for this indicator?

Accredited training in leadership, finance or management

This indicator is included in the framework with the purpose of reporting capacity building in governance. The data presented show the number of Indigenous students undertaking courses at TAFE and university in finance and management related subjects. In future reports, data on Indigenous governance and leadership courses may also be available for inclusion. While capacity building is dealt with in the section of the Report on governance case studies, no national data are available.

This indicator is in the 'Economic participation and development' strategic area for action (see diagram below).

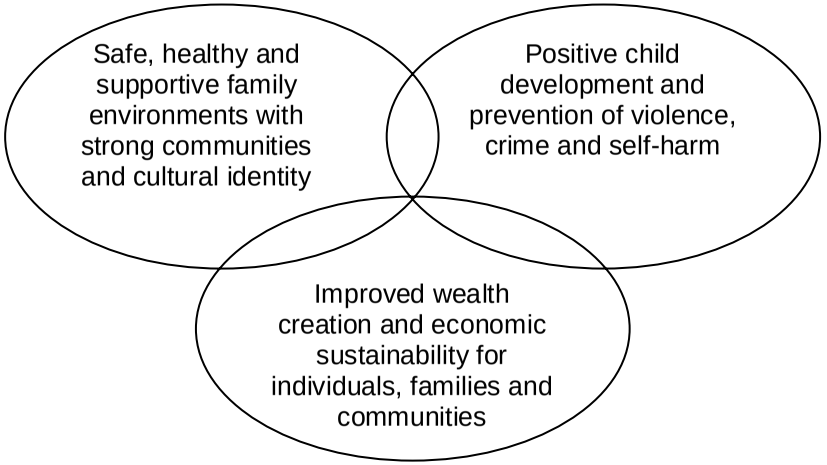


Questions

1. Are you aware of any data that could be reported in relation to governance (not just capacity building)?
2. Do you think that data on finance and management courses, and Indigenous courses on leadership and governance reflect capacity building?
3. Should the indicator's name be changed to 'Training in governance and leadership'?

Multi-level indicator framework: priority outcomes *(from 2005 Report, see figure 1 of changes to framework section for revised diagram for 2007)*

Indigenous people and governments have agreed the following outcomes. These outcomes are closely linked to each other —progress in one area can assist progress in the others



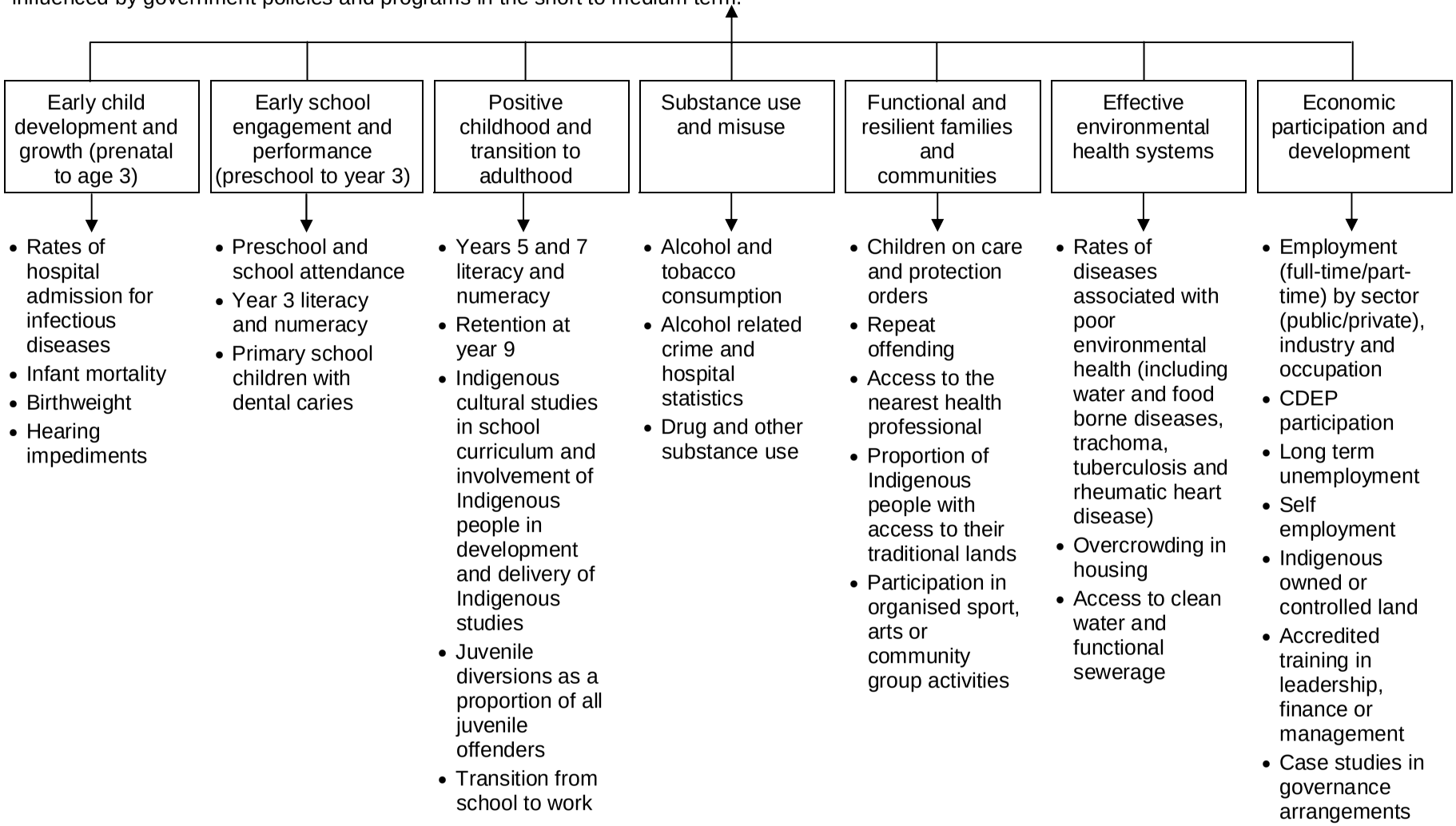
Multi-level indicator framework: headline indicators

The headline indicators measure progress in achieving the priority outcomes. They are a small set of high level indicators, which usually take some time to respond to changes in government policies.

- Life expectancy
- Rates of disability and/or core activity restriction
- Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment
- Post secondary education – participation and attainment
- Labour force participation and unemployment
- Household and individual income
- Home ownership
- Suicide and self-harm
- Substantiated child protection notifications
- Deaths from homicide and hospitalisations for assault
- Victim rates for crime
- Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates

Multi-level indicator framework: strategic areas for action

Governments have agreed to focus policy attention on the following seven strategic areas. Over time progress in these areas is expected to lead to improvement in the headline indicators and priority outcomes. Progress is measured by a series of strategic change indicators, which can be influenced by government policies and programs in the short to medium term.



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