
Appendix 2 Implementation of the framework

Jurisdictions' comments

This appendix provides comments by the Australian Government and State and Territory governments, summarising the implementation of the framework in each jurisdiction:

- Australian Government
- New South Wales
- Victoria
- Queensland
- Western Australia
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory.

Australian Government comments

The Australian Government is committed to improving life outcomes for Indigenous Australians. The Government is focusing on the critical areas of education, employment and community safety. Improvements in these areas will lead to progress against the Closing the Gap targets agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Six Closing the Gap targets in health, employment and education were agreed by COAG in 2008. In addition to this, COAG agreed on 2 May 2014 to the Prime Minister's proposal for a new five-year target to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance.

A key focus of the Government is on school attendance. The Government's *Remote Schools Attendance Strategy* will get children back to school in 69 remote communities. Funding of \$46.5 million over two years will employ School Attendance Officers and Supervisors to support children to attend school.

The Commonwealth and the States and Territories, in partnership with communities, are developing specific strategies to improve school attendance where the attendance rate for Indigenous children is below 80 per cent.

On employment, the Forrest review of Indigenous employment and training programmes has been completed. The review aims to ensure these programmes are targeted to better connect unemployed Indigenous people with real and sustainable employment.

On community safety, the Government will continue to engage with stakeholders on ways to make a practical difference on the ground that will ensure communities are safe.

Three new initiatives were announced in the 2014-15 Budget with the specific aim of ensuring that Indigenous Australians can live in communities where crime rates are low and people can go about the ordinary business of making a living and raising a family.

The Australian Government is also committed to the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's Constitution.

The Government's *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* streamlines over 150 programmes and activities into five simplified streams with total funding of \$4.8 billion over four years.

| <i>Indigenous Advancement Strategy</i> | <i>Purpose</i> | <i>Funding (over 4 years)</i> |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Jobs, Land and Economy | Supporting adults into work, Indigenous business and assisting Indigenous people generate economic and social benefits from effective use of land | \$2.5 billion |
| 2. Children and Schooling | Getting children into school, improving education outcomes and supporting families to give children a good start in life | \$917 million |
| 3. Safety and Wellbeing | Ensuring that the ordinary rule of law applies in Indigenous communities and also supporting Indigenous health and emotional and social wellbeing | \$993 million |
| 4. Culture and Capability | Supporting Indigenous culture, participation in the life of the nation and ensuring organisations are capable of delivering services | \$140 million |
| 5. Remote Australia Strategies | Strategic investment in local solutions including home ownership, remote housing and infrastructure | \$258 million |

The Government has also established the Indigenous Australian's Health Programme. This Programme consolidated four existing funding streams into one and will provide greater flexibility to ensure funding is allocated to where the need is greatest.

The Government has established a new engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to help achieve these goals. The Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council and the Empowered Communities Initiative are examples of Indigenous Australians being involved in decisions that affect them.

New South Wales Government comments

The NSW Government remains committed to supporting Aboriginal people to reach their potential and tap the social and economic opportunities that exist in their communities and across the State. A number of broad strategies have been established to guide the achievement of improved social outcomes.

NSW 2021

NSW 2021 is the NSW Government's 10-year plan to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen our local environment and communities. Goal 26 of the plan aims to foster greater opportunity and partnership with Aboriginal people across the State.

Aboriginal Health Plan

Commitment to improving the health of Aboriginal people in NSW is reaffirmed through the NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013–2023, a plan developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC) of NSW. The Plan sets out a long term approach through six Strategic Directions, which will be achieved by building trust through partnerships; developing the evidence and implementing what works; integrating planning and service delivery; strengthening the Aboriginal workforce; providing culturally safe working environments and health services; and strengthening management, accountability and performance monitoring throughout the NSW health system.

Family and Community Services

The Department of Family and Community Services' new Strategic Directions seeks to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal people, families and communities and improve how we work with Aboriginal people to deliver responsive, culturally appropriate services tailored to community needs. FACS is developing an Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework which will improve accountability and monitoring to Government and back to communities on significant areas such as the safety of Aboriginal children, supports and services provided to vulnerable Aboriginal clients in need of housing, ageing and disability care.

OCHRE Plan for Aboriginal affairs

OCHRE – Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment is the NSW Government plan for Aboriginal affairs and is the product of extensive consultations involving more than 2600 individuals, 14 Aboriginal community forums, more than 200 submissions and 400 electronic survey responses from across NSW. The plan is deliberately limited in its focus to ensure resources are targeted in those areas which will generate broader benefits.

The OCHRE plan consists of a number of initiatives, including:

- the establishment of a Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs to monitor and assess government service delivery to Aboriginal people, and reflecting an overall focus of OCHRE on greatly improved accountability and transparency in government services
- Connected Communities changes the way educational services are delivered in 15 Aboriginal communities across NSW
- Opportunity Hubs provide improved pathways for young Aboriginal people in the transition from school into tertiary education, training and/or employment. Four are now operating
- Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests associated with five Aboriginal languages to greatly improve the ability of Aboriginal people to learn their own language; to revitalise and maintain languages and preserve them into the future
- Local Decision Making seeks to ensure that services in selected communities (currently three) are responsive to local needs and aspirations through building decision making capability and strengthened governance arrangements for service delivery at the community level
- Economic participation seeks to access the untapped potential in Aboriginal communities for wealth creation and economic independence through the development of a broad Aboriginal Economic Development Framework. Additional activities include Industry-Based Agreements with key industry groups (two have thus far been signed: with the Minerals Council of NSW and the Master Builders Association), and an Aboriginal Employment Strategy to improve Aboriginal public sector employment.

The NSW Government has undertaken a review of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA). Proposed legislation will better reflect and support the economic, social and cultural development aspirations of Aboriginal people across the State.

Victorian Government comments

In Victoria, successive governments have shared a longstanding commitment to improving the quality of life of Aboriginal Victorians and closing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Closing the gaps in Victoria requires sustained effort from all levels of government, Aboriginal communities and their organisations as well as the private sector and the broader Victorian community.

Victoria continues to apply effort in areas such as maternal health, primary care, early childhood development, education and economic participation to improve outcomes. Actions in these areas by both the State and the Commonwealth Governments in partnership with Aboriginal communities are central to helping individuals and families and to close the gaps in outcomes.

There are areas highlighted in this and other national reports and Victoria's own reports which clearly indicate there is still a long way to go to reduce disadvantage among Aboriginal people.

Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

The Victorian Government actively engages with Victorian Aboriginal communities and their organisations.

Consistent with the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013–2018* statewide, regional and/or localised engagement processes are in place at the program or issue based level in key areas such as justice, human services, health and family violence prevention. In addition, Ministerial Roundtables also provide strategic engagement on particular key issues.

Partnerships are vital in both identifying priorities and in implementing measures on the ground.

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013–2018

The Framework commits Victoria to four major priorities – economic participation, protecting vulnerable Aboriginal children and families, achieving better access to and outcomes from universal service platforms and encouraging improved national action. The Framework identifies six Strategic Action Areas that, consistent with the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), adopt a lifecourse approach to closing the gaps.

An Aboriginal Affairs Report on progress achieved against the priorities and action areas is produced and tabled in Parliament each year.

Within the Framework, Victoria is implementing major measures to secure improved outcomes. This includes a number of key medium to long-term strategies, particularly Koolin Balit: the Victorian Government's strategic directions for Aboriginal health, the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy, the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 3 and measures to support improved outcomes in education as well as for vulnerable children and families.

Progress in Victoria

There are welcome improvements in some key outcomes. More Aboriginal Victorian children are accessing kindergarten and students are being retained in the school system longer. Aboriginal student performance in NAPLAN continues to improve. Better outcomes in these areas are expected to have positive 'downstream' effects for individuals including their future participation in the economy. More Aboriginal Victorians are also accessing preventative as well as tertiary health services. Significant service effort is delivered through Aboriginal community organisations.

The Census 2011 showed that over 75 per cent of Aboriginal people live in metropolitan, rural and regional parts of Australia. It is important that government effort recognise the gaps experienced by Aboriginal people in these parts of Australia (including Victoria) as well as the gaps experienced by people living in remote communities.

The Census 2011 also showed that more than 47 000 Victorians identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This marked a significant increase over the previous Census. The Census also showed the rate of population increase in Victoria was the highest of all States.

One marker of progress is the preparedness and confidence of Aboriginal Victorians to identify in the Census and when accessing services.

Progress in Victoria is contingent on efforts from the Commonwealth as well as the Victorian Government. Victoria's efforts are on track and it looks forward to the Commonwealth delivering on its roles and responsibilities particularly in economic development, employment and health.

Queensland Government comments

The Queensland Government works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to empower, conserve the cultural heritage of, and improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.

Promoting economic participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Queensland economy is a priority of the Queensland Government. The *Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Framework* provides a basis for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, all levels of government, industry and business, and the non-government sector to work together to a clear goal — the economic independence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government is working with all stakeholders to pursue initiatives under the framework that are grouped in three priority areas: individual responsibility and opportunity; unlocking economic potential; and contributing to the economy. Actions under the framework give effect to the Queensland Government's commitment to match the workforce participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those of non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Actions highlight the importance of education, health and regional development in promoting economic participation.

The Queensland Government is committed to education and training as a means of improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through a Strategic Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Partnership. Commencing in 2014, the partnership invests an additional \$1 million each year for four years to fund training projects that will lead to jobs. The Government is working with Indigenous organisations, local employers, and industry to identify skills and employment needs and the geographic areas where they are needed.

The Queensland Government has been working to increase opportunities for home ownership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland, passing laws which remove barriers to home ownership and freehold in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These reforms provide recognition of the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to own their own home on traditional lands, and provide greater opportunities to pursue social and economic development.

The laws do not force freehold title on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but rather, provide a pathway for communities to pursue freehold title if they choose to do so. Where a community decides that the freehold option is not appropriate for them, home ownership can be achieved under a 99 year (renewable) lease, which ensures ongoing Indigenous ownership. To complement these legislative changes and tenure resolution programs currently occurring in remote Indigenous communities, the Queensland Government is negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements to obtain relevant native title consents to allow for home ownership, future government infrastructure and commercial leasing.

The Queensland Government has implemented strategies that respond to specific issues and high levels of need in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Queensland Government has continued the Cape York Welfare Reform trial — a collaboration between the Australian and Queensland Governments and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. Cape York Welfare Reform commenced in 2008, and aims to reduce reliance on passive welfare, re-establish positive social norms, restore local Indigenous authority, and create incentives for four Cape communities to engage in the real economy.

The Family Responsibilities Commission has been a key component of the Cape York Welfare Reform model and appoints respected Elders to Local Commissioner positions, thereby rebuilding local authority. The Family Responsibilities Commission sends a consistent message about the expected behaviour of individuals and families and, where appropriate, refers individuals to support services. Welfare reform has contributed to positive changes in school attendance and increased commitment to education by parents. The Queensland Government has also worked with the Australian Government to implement initiatives under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement which targets the four Cape York welfare reform communities as well as the communities of Mornington Island and Doomadgee.

In addition to the strategies identified above, the Queensland Government is taking action to improve attendance and outcomes for Indigenous students in all Queensland state schools. The Government's *Great Teachers=Great Results* initiative will lift the quality of teaching and student engagement across the State. Individualised case management approaches for Indigenous students are being implemented, with state school principals in Queensland acting on their responsibility to monitor and improve the attendance, engagement and performance of each Indigenous student in their school.

Western Australian Government comments

The Western Australian Government is committed to achieving substantial change in the lives of Aboriginal people by addressing high levels of disadvantage across the OID priority outcomes areas.

Analysis of Western Australia's progress towards Closing the Gap targets highlights the delivery of a number of outputs across the seven building blocks, and indicates that some progress has been made to improve outcomes. This includes in the areas of early childhood education, where enrolments have improved, and year 12 attainment, where levels have also increased. These results indicate that the State's ongoing investment in positive performing areas will assist in sustaining progress against outcomes.

While investment in programs targeting Aboriginal disadvantage is having an impact across Western Australia, there is an opportunity to drive more positive outcomes and better address significant challenges. The State's performance recorded against the indicators of detention and incarceration, and also suicide, reveals that these issues are currently critical areas of disadvantage impacting the lives of Aboriginal Western Australians. These issues will require a targeted and strategic approach to prevent further deterioration and will be addressed as part of current efforts to improve State outcomes through policy and structural reform.

The State Government is committed to meeting the demand for services that is occurring due to a young Aboriginal population (53 per cent are under the age of 25 years) and a high proportion of Aboriginal Western Australians living in very remote towns and communities. There is significant opportunity attached to this expansion and considerable changes have occurred at a State and national policy, and economic level to support this growth.

Closing the gap objectives are no longer being funded through specific national partnerships (with the exception of the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing) and the majority of federally funded Aboriginal specific programs have been consolidated and rationalised under the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C). The State's priorities will be driven through joint investment and cooperation with PM&C.

The WA Government is exploring ways to work more closely with the community, through the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy, and with other governments to maximise effort and target action towards outcomes that will drive change across the OID framework.

Way Forward

On 17 April 2013, Western Australia established the Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub-Committee (AACSC) to drive better coordination across Government and improve collaboration with Aboriginal leaders and the non-government sector. The AACSC, chaired by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and other senior Ministers, is promoting changes to drive government accountability, reduce duplication, improve access to services and maximize effective expenditure for Aboriginal Western Australians. Identified priorities for improvement include: education, health and mental health, family support and children, regional and remote investment and economic development.

The Western Australian Government, with the Australian Government, has continued its commitment to improve education and training outcomes for Aboriginal children and students and seeks to improve school attendance by developing community-specific strategies to lift attendance rates above 90 per cent by 2019.

In addition, the Government is continuing to focus on delivering better pathways to employment through increased take up of Aboriginal school based traineeships, stronger engagement with the vocational education and training system, connecting Aboriginal jobseekers to employers through the Aboriginal Workforce Development Centres and increasing the level of Aboriginal employment within the public sector. Procurement processes have also been altered to provide increased opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to secure contracts with State public authorities.

Targeted remote investment and creating sustainable economic opportunities is a critical issue for remotely and regionally located Aboriginal people. A key initiative being trialled in Western Australia, through mechanisms such as the East Kimberley Transitional Housing Development Program, is the provision of employment and training opportunities linked to wraparound services. Targeted in remote areas, these programs support sustained transition to economic independence linked with housing, training and employment incentives.

In conjunction with the Commonwealth's *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* and reform driven by the AACSC, Western Australia will continue to utilize the OID priority outcome areas to drive substantial change and to overcome disadvantage in the lives of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

South Australian Government comments

The South Australian Government is committed to closing the gap in Aboriginal disadvantage by working collaboratively with Aboriginal South Australians to build capacity and future opportunities.

Strategic Policy Framework

South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP) is Government's peak strategy document. There are nine Aboriginal specific targets and twenty one indicators tracking Aboriginal wellbeing that align to the OID and COAG frameworks. The Chief Executive Group Aboriginal Affairs (CEGAA) leads and monitors activities in relation to Aboriginal targets and indicators.

The South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council (SAAAC) is the peak advisory body to Government on Aboriginal Affairs; appointments are made following a public nomination process. The SAAAC is represented on CEGAA and members are also available to provide strategic advice to individual Government departments. On the recommendation of the SAAAC, the South Australian Government established the Office of the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement as an independent voice for the Aboriginal community.

Governance, Leadership and Culture

The South Australian Government has a strong focus on strengthening governance and recognising Aboriginal culture and identity. In 2013 Aboriginal people were recognised as our first peoples in the South Australian Constitution and the State Government will ensure it plays an active role in the campaign to achieve similar recognition in the national Constitution.

In early 2014 the State Government also committed to draft legislation that will recognise the unique cultural identity and self-determining governance structures of Aboriginal communities in South Australia. The new legislation will provide guiding principles for consultation and cooperation between government and communities. To support implementation of the legislation the government has committed funding for the development and delivery of nation-building training and leadership programmes. This new curriculum will be specifically developed to support Aboriginal South Australians and the Public Sector to have the tools to better engage with one another and work together to build a sustainable future.

The South Australian Government is also working with Aboriginal communities to co-design an Aboriginal Regional Authority model as a mechanism for effective engagement between government and community.

Reconciliation

The State Government has committed to a Reconciliation framework to guide its effort in Aboriginal Affairs. In support of this, the development of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) by individual agencies has been a key priority of the Chief Executive Group Aboriginal Affairs (CEGAA) in 2013–2014. As a result of this effort, the State Government held an across-government RAP launch in February 2014, reportedly the largest launch of its kind since Reconciliation Australia’s RAP programme commenced.

Economic Participation

The South Australian Government is committed to building the capacity of and opportunities for Aboriginal employees, businesses and communities. Government will partner with stakeholders in the corporate sector to support and mentor Aboriginal owned businesses and increase opportunities for businesses to win tenders. The South Australian Government has also developed the South Australian Aboriginal Business Procurement Policy which enables government agencies to streamline the procurement process for Aboriginal businesses where minimum criteria have been met.

As part of its broader economic participation agenda, the Government is also continuing to support Aboriginal people and communities to maximise the potential economic benefits of land, including through the pursuit of home ownership opportunities and through support of the three Aboriginal land-holding authorities in South Australia.

Importantly within this context and the broader context of the State Government’s support for its three Aboriginal statutory landholdings, the *Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 2013* will commence on 1 July 2014 as a result of the review of the *Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1966* that began in 2008. The new Act will support the creation of a modern, skill based Aboriginal Lands Trust Board with more focused functions and powers that will enable the Trust to maximise the value of its landholdings for the benefit of Aboriginal people.

Tasmanian Government comments

The Tasmanian Government continues to address Aboriginal disadvantage through Aboriginal specific programs and services, and services addressing disadvantage through the wider community.

Governance, Leadership and Culture

The Tasmanian Government facilitates the issuing of cultural permits to Aboriginal people to undertake cultural activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering without risk of prosecution. This includes cultural mutton birding permits.

The *Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy* is a statewide policy providing clear direction for the Nomenclature Board, State Government agencies and Local Government authorities on the use of *palawa kani* language for naming geographic features and places. The Policy also recognises the ongoing relationship between Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the land and sea.

Early Child Development

Tasmania's Child Health and Parent Service utilises creative strategies to strengthen engagement with Aboriginal families and provide them with opportunities to access universal child health services and programs. One of these strategies is the placement of Child and Family Health Nurses (CFHNs) within local Aboriginal organisations and Child and Family Centres. Basing CFHNs within these centres enables nurses to build relationships and trust with Aboriginal families, facilitate their access to and use of universal child health assessments and programs, and provide opportunistic advice and information in an informal setting. The onsite location of the CFHNs also enhances collaborative practice with other service providers in the centres and enables Aboriginal children and their families to access a continuum of services, from pre-conception to school age, from the one location.

Education and Training

Tasmania's *Aboriginal Education Framework 2012–2015* provides comprehensive support to schools to address the challenges of readiness for school, engagement and connections, attendance, literacy and numeracy, leadership, quality teaching, workforce development and pathways to post-school options. The Aboriginal Education Services Unit plays a key role in the development of the Department's policies and initiatives.

The Aboriginal Education Services Unit also administers the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) program involving Aboriginal community members.

Healthy Lives

The Aboriginal Sport and Recreation program focuses on building links between Aboriginal community organisations and sport, active recreation and physical activity providers to provide opportunities for participation. The program provides financial and/or administrative support to these opportunities.

Home Environment

The Tasmanian Government is resourcing a community based project which aims to support Aboriginal children and young people in identifying what family violence is, as well as providing direction and assistance in seeking help if experiencing family violence in the home.

Safe and Supportive Communities

Tasmania Police supports the appointment and training of Aboriginal Liaison Officers who contribute on a statewide basis to the development of local strategies to reduce the number of Aboriginal people entering the criminal justice system, as either victims or offenders. A State Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator also performs an advisory role to the Aboriginal community.

The *Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2014–2022*, continues a focus on ensuring Aboriginal persons involved with Tasmania Police are provided support which recognises their cultural heritage.

The Tasmania Prison Service has been working with a community based Aboriginal organisation to support Aboriginal prisoners' pre and post release. Support includes assistance with housing, education, employment, transport, Centrelink applications and budgeting. Referrals to other organisations to address issues including mental health and drug and alcohol problems are also provided.

Australian Capital Territory Government comments

The ACT is moving to close the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and has committed to work towards equitable outcomes for Indigenous Canberrans. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in the ACT is projected to increase from 0.9 per cent to 1 per cent of the National population with an average growth rate of between 2.8 per cent and 3.1 per cent per year; the fastest growing of the states and territories.

The ACT performs quite well in comparison to all jurisdictions on most measures. However, there are a few areas where ACT performance is below the national performance. Areas that are of concern are:

- Rates of children and young people in out-of-home care
- Low birthweight babies
- Annual health care assessments/checks
- Overweight/obesity

Whole of Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement

On 27 February 2014, the ACT Government announced the development of an agreement between government, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The Agreement will articulate how the ACT Government is working towards equitable outcomes for members of the local ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and through its partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body is creating better linkages that have improved the capacity of services delivery by ACT Government agencies.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body has advocated for the ACT Government's development of such an agreement in consultation with them and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The consultation process for the Agreement has included online surveying, targeted roundtables and community forums. Facilitated conversations with community service providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and government stakeholders have been fruitful in the shaping of the agreement.

The Agreement commits the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to pursuing equitable outcomes for individuals and members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT.

The Agreement is a commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations with the opportunities, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity to build an empowered, resilient and sustainable future.

Education

The ACT is on track to close the gap in reading and writing in all years, with the exception of Year 9. The Government has introduced a number of targeted programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at all levels of schooling, progressing to higher education, training and employment options.

There was a significant improvement of 30.2 percentage points in Year 12 or equivalent attainment for 20–24 years old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the ACT between 2008 and 2012-13 to 86.8 per cent.

Employment

On 31 March 2014, the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services handed over their report from the Inquiry into ACT Public Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment. The Standing Committee made 31 recommendations which are under consideration by the ACT Government.

The Inquiry has renewed focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the ACT Public Service. Proposed changes to the legislation that manage the Public Service will assist in the attraction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the ACT Public Service, their development and ensure employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Northern Territory Government comments

The Northern Territory Government continues with its commitment to improve the lives of Indigenous Territorians and close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Territorians.

Framing the Future

The Northern Territory's blueprint for the future is *Framing the Future*, which sets out the objectives of Prosperous Economy, Strong Society, Balanced Environment and Confident Culture.

Under the blueprint the Government is committed to unlocking the potential of the regions through increasing the capacity and capability of Aboriginal Territorians and businesses; engaging and encouraging participation; use, preservation and protection of the environment and a strong working relationship with Traditional Owners, land holders, communities and Land Councils; and recognition and respect for Aboriginal people, organisations and culture.

Schooling

In May 2014 the Northern Territory Government released *A Share in the Future—Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory*, an independent and comprehensive review of Indigenous education delivery. The report's recommendations include:

- differentiating between schools, providing additional support and programs to disadvantaged groups including the mandating of teaching programs
- identifying and building on successful programs in child and parent literacy from birth including a strong emphasis on English oracy
- providing access to quality secondary education programs in urban and regional high schools for students from remote communities by increasing the availability of full-service residential and boarding facilities
- developing a community engagement charter committing to appropriate cultural competence training, effective induction processes and tailored school council governance training
- developing a comprehensive plan focused on improving workforce quality and covering all aspects of employment in schools.

Early childhood

The Northern Territory Government provides a range of quality Indigenous specific early childhood education and care programs, parenting support programs, staff training and infrastructure programs including the Families as First Teachers early learning and parenting support programs in 35 remote sites.

Health

The Northern Territory is committed to a new health and hospital services framework that decentralises the delivery of healthcare through regional boards. An investment of \$50 million will also see the construction of new health centres at seven remote locations.

Economic participation

The *Northern Territory Employment Strategy 2012–2015* is focused on increasing Indigenous participation in the workforce and supporting business and industry to continue to develop sustainable employment opportunities for Indigenous Territorians. The economic participation of Indigenous Territorians is also strengthened through a number of programs, including: the Indigenous Workforce Participation Initiatives Program, the Stronger Futures Local Jobs Package, the Indigenous Responsive Program, the Indigenous Business Development Program and the Indigenous Tourism Development Program.

Healthy homes

Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing* a total of 1066 new houses and 2929 rebuilds and refurbishments have been completed at end March 2014 in addition to the employment of over 2000 Indigenous employees, exceeding the employment target by 8 per cent. Going forward there is a requirement of 40 per cent Indigenous employment for the Housing Maintenance Services and 50 per cent for the Tenancy Management Services which will facilitate increased local employment opportunities on remote communities. The Northern Territory is also implementing a remote public housing sales program from 01 July 2014 that will allow remote public housing tenants the opportunity to purchase their own home.