



Australian Government
Office of the Coordinator-General
for Remote Indigenous Services

The Hon. Jenny Macklin, MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present to you my first six monthly report for the period covering July to November 2009.

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 15 of the *Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services Act 2009*:

The Coordinator-General must prepare and give to the Minister twice each year, or as otherwise required by the Minister, a report on:

- a. the development and delivery, during the period since the Coordinator General last gave a report to the Minister under this section, of government services and facilities in each of the specified remote communities ... including through:*
 - i. improvements to the coordination of the development and delivery of such services and facilities; and*
 - ii. reforms to the development and delivery of such services and facilities; and*
- b. the progress that has been made during that period towards achieving the Closing the Gap targets in the specified remote communities.*

I commend the attached *Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services Six Monthly Report July-November 2009* to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Gleeson'.

Brian Gleeson
Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services

30 November 2009



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ISSN: 1837-6029
ISBN: 978-1-921647-18-5
ABN: 36 342 015 855

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In many areas of Indigenous Australia it is considered offensive to publish photographs of Indigenous Australians who have recently died. Readers are warned that the publication may inadvertently contain such images.

A complete copy of the report is also available online at www.cgris.gov.au

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Report Highlights

I have made it a priority to visit all 29 priority communities since my appointment and this report includes one page snapshots for each community highlighting the issues raised by communities during those visits.

On the basis of these early visits and material provided by government departments in the course of preparing this report, I am convinced that the National Partnership on Remote Service Delivery agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments can and will work.

Clear progress is being made across the seven COAG building blocks. Highlights include:

In the area of governance:

- Joint government Regional Operations Centres are up and running, and all Government Business Managers will be in place in all 29 communities prior to Christmas.

In early childhood:

- Ten communities have been selected to receive new child and family centres and eight communities will benefit from new maternal and child health services. The first child and family centre will be operational from March 2010.

In education:

- Schools in 27 of the communities are being targeted for assistance under the Smarter Schools National Partnerships from 2010.
- All priority communities are benefiting from the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* and *National School Pride* programs with total investment of \$72.8 million with projects completed by 2011.
- Trades Training Centres have been approved for the benefit of seven communities from 2010 and the National Secondary School Computer Fund has to date delivered 225 computers to 11 communities.

In economic participation:

- Around 633 jobs have been created in 28 communities through the conversion of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) places.
- 96 per cent of the estimated 9,200 job seekers are receiving Stream 3 and 4 support (the highest level) under the reformed Job Services Australia program.

In health:

- \$62 million worth of capital works is being invested over a ten year period to provide upgrades to health care related facilities in 22 of the 29 communities including \$21.9 million in current projects.

In housing:

- 327 new homes and 687 refurbishments are on track to be completed in the 29 communities by December 2010.

In community safety:

- 25 communities have alcohol restrictions in place.

However, progress is qualified:

- Based on available implementation data, the roll out of new COAG investments is broadly on track. But community expectations are high as a result of the Apology and the COAG commitments of November 2008 and people are impatient to see tangible improvements.
- In each jurisdiction, there are key obstacles to be overcome or opportunities that must be taken:
 - in South Australia, governance in the APY lands must be resolved by political leaders;
 - in Western Australia, complex tenure issues must be addressed so that houses can be built;
 - in the Northern Territory and New South Wales, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments must work together to strengthen community governance; and
 - in Queensland, community-driven education reforms in Cape York must be allowed to progress.
- The level of servicing is variable across communities, for example, less than half have the services of a GP on most days and only two have a dentist on a fortnightly basis, eight have no permanent police presence and only 13 have a swimming pool.
- Good governance within communities, which includes Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Government presence and coordination and strong community leadership are preconditions for success – without these, the new investments are at risk.
- Mainstream agencies need to embrace the whole of government approach, including considering the outposting of staff to Regional Operations Centres for periods of time to assist Government Business Managers and Regional Operations Centres to coordinate new investment in a way that supports governments' Closing the Gap targets.
- Governance and leadership training needs to be pooled and tailored to local circumstances given the proportion of communities struggling with governance issues.
- Local Government needs to be brought into the Remote Service Delivery partnership.
- Visible policing is vital to both community perceptions of safety itself.
- There are too many examples of small to medium size infrastructure projects that have been delayed due to a combination of poor scoping and project management. I believe that consideration must be given to a whole of government contracting approach. This might help overcome these unacceptable delays and enable a pipeline of projects to be drawn up which will support local Indigenous training and employment.

If these risks are managed I believe that as many as a third of the 29 communities may be considered to be 'thriving' within eighteen months, which would allow governments to gazette additional locations to receive the full benefits of this new approach to remote servicing.

Over the coming months the balance of my focus will shift as State and Territory COAG Implementation Plans are agreed and Local Implementation Planning and baseline mapping progress.

- Local Implementation Planning should be finalised by the time of my next report. Developing documents which reflect the community's priorities and set out detailed strategies will be a challenge in those communities without strong governance. I have recommended that dedicated support be provided to communities through the Regional Operations Centre where external assistance will hasten the completion of the Local Implementation Planning process.
- I will also seek to draw out further, the common themes that emerge from my visits and interactions with all levels of government. I intend to focus on assessing results on the ground, acting on delays in implementation and communicating good news where I find it. I will also be following through commitments made during community visits.
- The critical role of the Single Government Interface should be well established by the time of my next report. I will be actively monitoring the adherence of government agencies to the requirement to coordinate their activities through the Single Government Interface, including the requirement that visits to communities are planned and coordinated with the relevant Regional Operations Centre.
- I intend to concentrate on continuing to build a strong relationship with the network of State and Territory Coordinators General and respective Boards of Management. I will also seek to maintain strong links with Australian Government agencies.



Introduction

This is my first six monthly report under s15 of the *Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services Act 2009*. It coincides with the first anniversary of the signing of the COAG National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery and a number of related agreements which aim to improve services to remote Indigenous communities and close the gap in Indigenous life outcomes.

The National Apology to the Stolen Generations, the agreement of COAG to \$4.6 billion in additional long term funding for Indigenous people, and the commitment to a new way of working, all represent an important turning point in our history. This fresh start has inspired some hope and belief that addressing the complex challenges of overcoming Indigenous disadvantage, including delivering services to remote communities and arresting the dysfunction that has become accepted and commonplace is possible.

I am convinced that, with strong commitment from all involved, the new approach under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery can and will work. While progress is being made, my report notes that further adjustments to our collective approach to the priority communities are required to ensure the new investments are built on solid foundations and have a sustainable impact.

The approach outlined under the Remote Service Delivery partnership has, in my view, some notable strengths. The place based focus allows for a whole of community approach to addressing entrenched disadvantage. The decision to start in 29 priority communities provides the scope for innovative approaches to be trialled and for ‘what works’ to be replicated in other locations.

Increasing the ongoing government presence in remote communities has enormous potential to facilitate change. Most importantly, the Remote Service Delivery Partnership and local planning with its emphasis on community development, provides a real opportunity for governments to truly work in partnership with communities to build on their strengths and address local issues.

A substantial amount of my first four months has been taken up with visits to all 29 priority communities. In all my visits, I have stressed the importance of community driven solutions to achieve the best results. I have emphasised the need for both government and community leadership. My visits have also provided the opportunity to see the issues and challenges from a community perspective. I have gained an insight into the outstanding work of many individuals and organisations to improve the life chances of Indigenous people.

Structure of this report

The first section of this report provides community specific information. I have included summary information on the basic services available in each of the communities, as well as a one page brief on each of the 29 communities. These briefs focus on the issues and challenges observed during my visits, and I will be reporting on progress with these and emerging issues in future reports. They are necessarily subjective assessments, but hopefully capture the core ambitions of those I have met with.

The next section reports on progress against closing the gap in the 29 communities. It provides an initial catalogue and assessment of progress and key challenges at a local level. Wherever possible, I have identified some of the many positive things that are happening in these communities which I hope the Remote Service Delivery partnership process will build on. This section also includes an assessment of progress under COAG National Partnership Agreements which are contributing to the development of the 29 communities.

While progress is being made, the expectations created by the Apology and the November 2008 COAG reform are very high.



One year after COAG's commitment to critical new investments in education, health and housing, there is some evidence of the substantial benefits flowing through to individual communities, but people are impatient for more. In areas where the agreed implementation lead times are longer, Commonwealth, State and Territory departments advise that significant planning is occurring in preparation for the roll out of investments. However, in some cases, agencies are unable to show how much and where these new resources will flow. Given their obvious need and the clear commitment of governments, the 29 priority communities should be the first priority for roll out of additional services and funding under the National Partnerships.

Because leadership from Indigenous community members and organisations and from all levels of government is a necessary precondition for closing the gap, the next section analyses some of the key governance and enabling issues that need to be addressed as a priority.

The report concludes with general information on the establishment of my Office, providing detail on our governance and working arrangements, liaison with communities, government agencies, local governments, community organisations and service providers. I am pleased to note that I have not had cause to use the powers available under the legislation (Appendix 2), as I have had excellent cooperation from all parties in the provision of information.

In compiling this first report I have provided Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies a number of opportunities to respond to the content and issues raised.

I am conscious that there are a number of forums, processes and reviews which this report may also inform. For this reason I have included a number of recommendations in the report.

Future reports

This first report provides only a first examination of priority communities and the implementation of the various COAG agreements which have a bearing on these communities.

With some notable exceptions, it focuses more on the Commonwealth's role than that of the States and the Northern Territory and it necessarily concentrates on the initial inputs to the remote service delivery approach, rather than the outcomes.

Strong and effective leadership and good governance are a precondition for the effective roll out of the remote service delivery approach. It is clear from my early visits that around half of the 29 priority communities face governance challenges. For this reason I have focused in this report on the issue and I will be monitoring the level of support provided to assist communities to strengthen governance in the short term.

The balance of my focus will shift over the coming months as COAG National Partnership Implementation Plans are agreed with States and Territories and Local Implementation Planning and baseline mapping progress.

Local Implementation Planning should be well advanced by the time of my next report. It will be central to achieving progress in the priority communities. Developing documents which reflect the community's priorities and set out detailed strategies will be a challenge in those communities without strong governance. I have raised the need for governance development support with the Regional Operations Centres. Baseline mapping of the priority communities is due for completion in March 2010. It will be critical that this data is provided in a form that is meaningful to stakeholders.

I will also seek to draw out further the common themes that emerge from my visits and interactions with all levels of government. I intend to focus on assessing results on the ground, acting on delays in implementation and communicating good news where I find it. I will also be monitoring and following through with commitments made during community visits.

The critical role of the Single Government Interface should be well established by the time of my next report. I will be actively monitoring the adherence of government agencies to the requirement to coordinate their activities through the Single Government Interface, including the requirement that visits to communities are planned and coordinated with the relevant Regional Operations Centre.

I intend to concentrate on building a strong relationship with the network of State and Territory Coordinators General and respective Boards of Management. These networks are vital to the success of the remote service delivery strategy and to resolving blockages and delays where they occur. I will also seek to maintain strong links with Australian Government agencies.

I also propose to work with State and Territory Coordinators General to develop information sharing protocols to trial in the 29 communities.

Assessing progress

The remote service delivery approach has involved the selection of a set of 29 initial priority communities to test new ways of working. Closing the Gap will require governments to nominate additional communities for attention, once the first tranche of 29 can be said to be thriving.

While some will argue that it is unfair that some remote communities have not received early concentrated government attention, there is no doubt they will benefit from the lessons learned from what is a first stage of a new remote service delivery approach.

I believe a critical part of my role, in conjunction with State and Territory Coordinators General, is to assist governments in judging the point at which we can say a priority community is thriving. This should not mean that services or assistance are withdrawn at this point – most critically government presence through the single interface and the Government Business Managers must be a long term support, if we are to maintain the gains we are seeking.

However, as communities can be judged to be thriving, there is a clear case for new ones to be gazetted and for the intensive process of priority setting, planning and delivery to begin.

COAG has already identified the principles to determine new remote service delivery communities (Schedules A and B to the National Partnership). These include a willingness for the community to actively participate in reform, supported by strong leadership, the availability of labour market opportunities and the capacity of the community and existing local service providers to support increased service effort. It should be possible to support a short list of aspiring communities to undertake preliminary planning ahead of gazettal.

On the basis of my initial visits, I believe that as many as a third of the 29 communities might be judged to be thriving within eighteen months. There may also be up to a third which will need sustained attention for up to four years to be in a similar position.

I intend to work with State and Territory Coordinators General and lead agencies over the next three months to develop a basic methodology for making such an assessment. In my view, a community could be said to be thriving if it is achieving benchmark levels of functioning across the agreed seven building blocks. Of these, basic governance is critical.

The task of assessing communities against the building blocks will be assisted by the completion of baseline mapping, and agencies at all levels of government having the capacity to detail their investments within the priority locations.



Community Specific Information

At present the Remote Service Delivery partnership identifies 29 communities in New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Over time, the strategy will be expanded to other remote communities on the basis of a common set of investment principles, which are set out in Schedules A and B to the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery.

In visiting the first 29 priority communities over the last few months I have been struck by the differences between them – in terms of the level of infrastructure and services available and the capacity of local governance to work with governments to develop the community.

At the same time, it is also clear that there are a number of fundamental issues that cut across all communities, including safety, policing, education, the need for effective and supportive local government and land councils and the need for a strong focus on developing our young people.

The following comparative services table provides information on the availability of a number of services in each of the priority communities. It does not however reflect the quality of services. This information was derived from a survey of Government Business Managers conducted by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, verified by State and NT Coordinators General, and from information provided by the Department of Human Services. It is not intended to be definitive, nor to replace the baseline mapping of services which is currently being undertaken. The services included are also unashamedly subjective, however they do, to my mind, represent many of the services that a reasonable person might expect to see in a remote Indigenous community.

It is quite clear that the level of servicing is highly variable, and often bears little relationship to population or need. For example, less than half the communities have the services of a GP on most days. Only two communities have a dentist on a fortnightly basis, and many have no dental service at all. Eight communities have no permanent police presence. Most communities have a sport and recreation officer, but only nine have a swimming pool.

I will be developing and updating this table in future reports, and where possible linking it to the priorities identified by communities, governments and other parties in their Local Implementation Plans.

The remainder of this section provides a one page brief for each community. Many of these briefs focus on stand out issues that were raised with me by Indigenous people living in the communities during my visits. They are also based on information provided by the joint Commonwealth and State/NT governments Regional Operations Centres through their monthly situation reports. Most of the issues pre-date the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership, but their resolution will be important to a sound foundation being laid for local partnerships between the community, governments and other parties.

Where views have differed or were unable to be verified, I have put forward how an issue was presented to me during my community visit. It is communities’ perceptions that create a lived reality on the ground and change for communities happens when perceptions change. Discrepancies in views have also highlighted a need for better communication, to ensure that communities are better informed by government about issues affecting them or are of particular community importance.





















































































These briefs are somewhat subjective in nature. They represent an initial view of communities and a different perspective to that of government agencies. Care has been taken to validate material to be included with relevant agencies and individuals. Future reports will provide additional information on the follow up of the issues identified.

COMPARATIVE SERVICES TABLE

EDUCATION					
Location	Child care centre / crèche	Pre-primary / pre-school program	Primary school	Secondary* school	Post school training / JSA
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION LESS THAN 250 PEOPLE					
Ardyaloon	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	TAFE, CDEP, JSA
Beagle Bay	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	TAFE, VET, IEP, CDEP, JSA
Coen	✓	✓	✓	✗	CDEP, JSA
Mossman Gorge	✗	✗	✗	✗	VET, IEP, JSA
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 250 - 750					
Amata	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	TAFE, VET, CDEP, IEP
Fitzroy Crossing	✓	N/A	✓	Up to yr 12	TAFE & University programs, CDEP, JSA
Lajamanu	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	JSA
Mimili	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	TAFE & University programs, IEP, CDEP
Numbulwar	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	CDEP, JSA
Umbakumba	✓	N/A	✓	Up to yr 10	CDEP Job Network
Wilcannia	✓	More than one	More than one	Up to yr 12	TAFE programs run by JSA only, IEP, CDEP, DEN, JSA
Yuendumu	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	TAFE, Bachelor college, CDEP, JSA
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 750 - 1249					
Angurugu	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	Training programs related to employment, CDEP, JSA
Aurukun	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	TAFE, IEP, CDEP, JSA
Doomadgee	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	IEP, CDEP, JSA
Gapuwiyak	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	IEP, CDEP
Gunbalanya	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, CDEP, JSA
Halls Creek	✓	More than one	More than one	Up to yr 12	TAFE, CDEP
Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, IEP, CDEP, DEN, JSA
Hope Vale	✓	✓	✓	✗	CDEP, JSA, Tare, Creep
Milingimbi	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, IEP, CDEP, JSA
Mornington Island	✗	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	CDEP, JSA, TAFE, VET
Ngukurr	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, CDEP, DEN JSA
Walgett	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	IEP, CDEP, DEN, JSA, TAFE, VET
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION OVER 1250					
Galiwin'ku	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, IEP, CDEP
Maningrida	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	CDEP, JSA
Nguiu	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 10	VET, IEP, CDEP, JSA
Wadeye	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, CDEP, JSA
Yirrkala	✓	✓	✓	Up to yr 12	VET, IEP, CDEP

Employment Services: Indigenous Employment Programme providers - IEP. Community Development Employment Programs - CDEP. Disability Employment Network - DEN. Job Services Australia - JSA. Accredited Adult Education Programs: TAFE Programs. University Programs. Other vocational education training programs - VET. Centre of Appropriate Technology - CAT.
* Educational level indicates level available, does not reflect the current student attendance.

HEALTH			
Distance to nearest hospital	GP work/visit in community	Dentist work/visit in community	Aged Accommodation
100-249 km	Weekly	✗	✗
100-249 km	Weekly	Yes, frequency of visit N/A	✗
over 250 km	Fortnightly	Monthly	✓
Less than 10 km	Weekly	✗	✗
over 250 km	Weekly	3 Monthly	✓
In Community	Every day	✗	✗
over 250 km	Every day	✗	✗
over 250 km	✗	✗	✗
over 250 km	Weekly	Monthly	✗
50-99 km	Every day	✗	✗
In Community	Every day	Fortnightly	✗
over 250 km	Yes, frequency of visit N/A	3 Monthly	✗
100-249 km	Every day	3 Monthly	✗
over 250 km	Every week day	3 Monthly	✗
In Community	Weekly	6 Monthly	✓
100-249 km	N/A	Monthly	✗
over 250 km	Every day	6 Weekly	✗
In Community	Every day	3 Monthly	✗
100-249 km	Weekly	Yes, frequency of visit N/A	✗
In Community	Weekly	Fortnightly	✓
over 250 km	Weekly	Monthly	✗
In Community	Every week day	3 Monthly	✓
over 250 km	Fortnightly	3 Monthly	✗
In Community	Every day	Weekly	✓
100-249 km	Every day	3 Monthly	✗
over 250 km	Yes, frequency of visit N/A	Yes, frequency of visit N/A	✓
50-99 km	Every day	Monthly	✓
over 250 km	Every day	Monthly	✓
10-24 km	Weekly	✗	✗

	SPORTS AND RECREATION		YOUTH DIVERSION PERSONNEL		POSTAL SERVICES
Location	Swimming pool	Sports grounds	Sport & Recreation Officer	Youth Worker	Post Office / Postal Service
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION LESS THAN 250 PEOPLE					
Ardyaloon	✗		Visiting Only	Visiting Only	✓
Beagle Bay	✗		Visiting Only	Visiting Only	✓
Coen	✗	   	✓	✗	✓
Mossman Gorge	✗	 	✓	✗	No, 5kms to nearest
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 250 - 750					
Amata	✓	 	✗	✓	✗
Fitzroy Crossing	✓	   	✓	✗	✓
Lajamanu	✗	   	✓	✓	✓
Mimili	✓		✗	✓	✓
Numbulwar	✗	  	✓	✗	✓
Umbakumba	✗	 	✓	✗	N/A
Wilcannia	✓	     	✓	✓	✓
Yuendumu	✓	  	✓	✓	✓
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 750 - 1249					
Angurugu	✗		✓	✗	✓
Aurukun	✓	  	✓	✓	✓
Doomadgee	✓ (In School)	  	✓	✓	✓
Gapuwiyak	✗	 	✓	✗	✓
Gunbalanya	✗	  	✓	✓	✓
Halls Creek	✓	   	✓	✓	✓
Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	✗	  	✓	✗	✓
Hope Vale	✗		✓	✓	✓
Milingimbi	✗	 	✓	✗	✓
Mornington Island	✗	   	✓	✓	✓
Ngukurr	✓	   	✓	✓	✓
Walgett	✓	     	✓	✓	✓
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION OVER 1250					
Galiwin'ku	✗	 	✓	✗	✓
Maningrida	✓	 	✓	✓	✓
Nguiu	✓	  	✓	✓	✓
Wadeye	✓	     	✓	✗	✓
Yirrkala	✗	 	✓	✗	✓

 Sports grounds

 Outdoor basketball/netball courts

 Skate ramp

 Rodeo grounds

 Tennis courts

 Indoor/covered sporting facilities

 Skate park

 Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)

 School facilities

 Other buildings used for sport

 BMX track

 Indoor multi purpose court

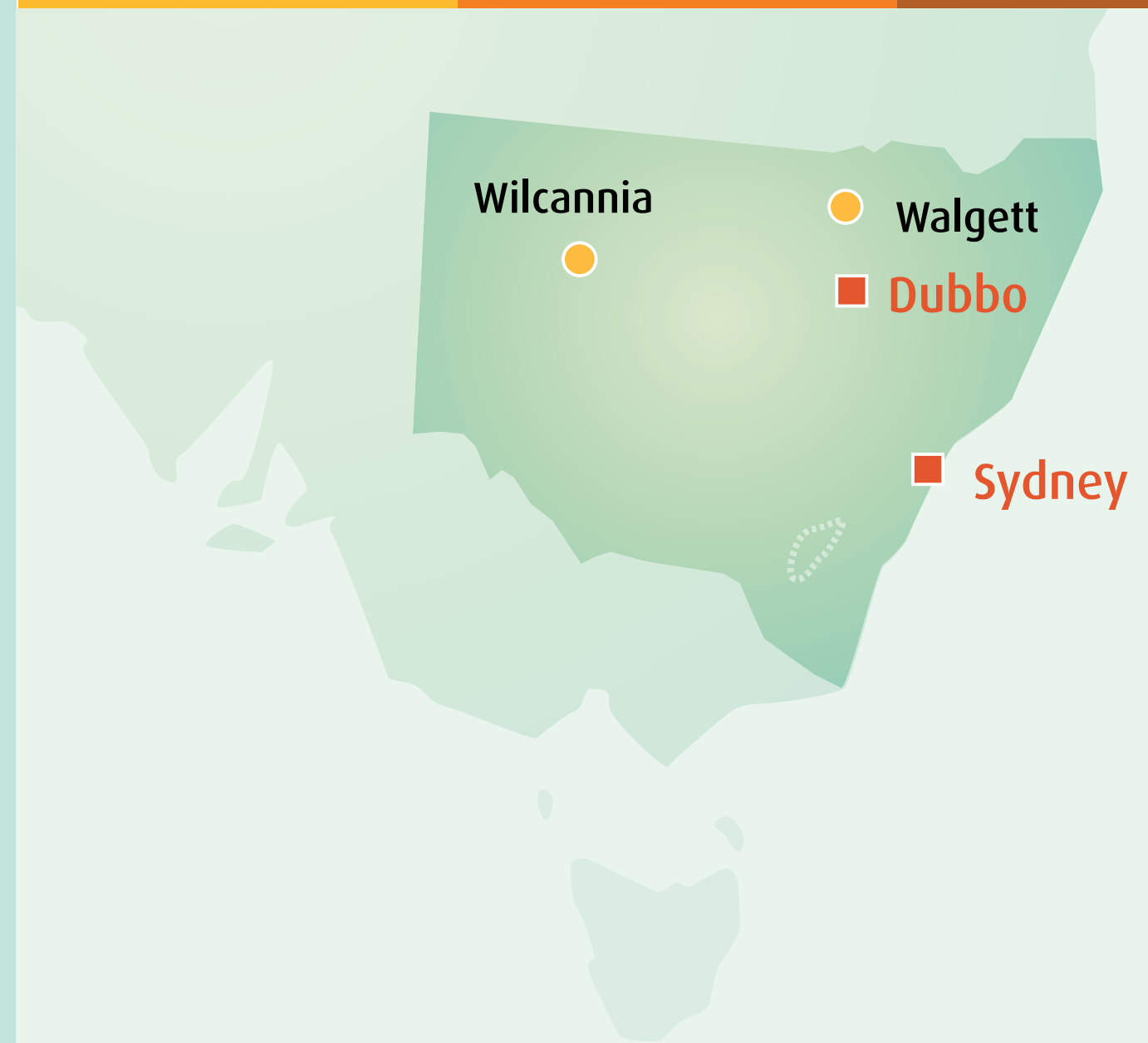
FINANCIAL SERVICES		INTERNET		ELECTRICITY	ACCESS TO GOODS/PRODUCE	CENTRELINK	
ATM	EFTPOS	Public internet	Access Points	All permanent dwellings connected to electricity	Supermarket/Community store	Presence	Service Delivery
✗	1	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	4 Weekly visits
✗	1	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	4 Weekly visits
✓	4	✓	5	✓	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits (on average)
✗	1	✗	0	✓	✗	No	CSC in Mossman approx 2 km away
✓	✓	✓	1	✓	✓	Agent	3 Weekly visits
✓	3	✓	N/A	✓	✓	RASC	* please refer to footnote below
✓	2	✓	1	✓	✓	Agent	3 Weekly visits
✓	1	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits (recently on 4 weekly due to increased need).
✓	2	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	3 Weekly visits
✓	1	✓	1	✓	✓	Agent	3 Weekly visits
✓	3	✓	N/A	✓	✓	Agent	2 Weekly visits
✓	1	✓	N/A	✗	✓	RASC	Standard business hours**
✓	1	✓	1	✓	✓	Agent	2 Weekly visits
✓	1	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits (on average)
✓	1	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits (on average)
✓	1	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	3 Weekly visits
✓	2	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	3 Weekly visits
✓	2	✓	1	✓	✓	RASC	Standard business hours***
✓	1	✓	N/A	✓	✓	Agent & RAP	RAP - Open 20 hours p/w****
✓	2	✓	N/A	✗	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits (on average)
✓	1	✓	3	✓	✓	Agent	2 Weekly visits
✓	1	✗	0	✓	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits (on average)
✓	1	✓	1	✓	✓	Agent	3 weekly visits
✓	3	✓	1	✓	✓	CSC	Standard business hours
✓	1	✓	1	✓	✓	Agent	2 weekly visits
✗	3	✗	0	✓	✓	CSC	3 weekly visits
✓	2	✓	N/A	✓	✓	RASC	3 weekly visits
✓	1	✓	N/A	✓	✓	RASC	4 weekly visits
✓	1	✓	3	✓	✓	Agent	6 weekly visits

*Centrelink staff visit the surrounding Communities of: Wangkatjunta, Yakanarra, Yungnora, 1 day every 4 weeks. Centrelink staff visit Koorabye, Kadjina, Djugerari, Moongardie 1 day every 8 weeks due to their size. **Supported by Central Hub - Alice Springs. ***Yiyili - 1 day every 4 weeks. Balgo 2 days every 4 weeks. Mulan 1 day every 4 weeks. Mindibungu 1 day every 4 weeks. Kundat Jaru 1 -2 days every 4 weeks. ****Supported by Central Hub - Alice Springs. Centrelink provides remote servicing visits to the outstations.

SAFETY					
Location	Number of police stationed in community	Nearest police station / police post	Community night patrol / Frequency	Number of safe houses	Women's centre
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION LESS THAN 250 PEOPLE					
Ardyaloon	0	26 kms	✗	0	✓
Beagle Bay	0	45 kms	✗	N/A	✓
Coen	2		✗	(1) not currently in operation	✓
Mossman Gorge	0	5 kms	✗	N/A	✗
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 250 - 750					
Amata	0		✗	0	✓
Fitzroy Crossing	10		✗	(1) Daily	✓
Lajamanu	2		5-6 times p/w	(1) Daily	✗
Mimili	0	130 kms	✗	0	✓
Numbulwar	4		5-6 times p/w	0	✗
Umbakumba	0	70 kms	Daily	0	✗
Wilcannia	10		3-4 times p/w	(1) Daily	✗
Yuendumu	5		Daily	(2) Daily	✓
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 750 - 1249					
Angurugu	0	20 kms	5-6 times p/w	(1) 5-6 days p/w	✗
Aurukun	10		✗	(1) not currently in operation	✗
Doomadgee	9		1-2 times p/w	(1) Daily	✓
Gapuwiyak	3		5-6 times p/w	0	✓
Gunbalanya	4		5-6 times p/w	(1) not currently in operation	✓
Halls Creek	18		5-6 times p/w	(1) 5-6 days p/w	✓
Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	5		3-4 times p/w	(1) 5-6 days p/w	✗
Hope Vale	4		✗	0	✗
Milingimbi	0	28 kms	Daily	0	✗
Mornington Island	9		✗	0	✗
Ngukurr	2		Daily	(2) Daily	✓
Walgett	32		5-6 times p/w	(1) Daily	✗
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION OVER 1250					
Galiwin'ku	4		Daily	0	✓
Maningrida	7		Daily	(2) Daily	✓
Nguiu	4		Daily	(2) Daily	✓
Wadeye	7		5-6 times p/w	0	✓
Yirrkala	0	20 kms	Daily	N/A	✓



New South Wales Priority Communities



Communities: Wilcannia, Walgett.
Regional Operations Centre: Dubbo.

Walgett

New South Wales

Walgett was proclaimed a settlement in March 1885. It is located approximately 281km north west of Dubbo. Indigenous population estimates for Walgett range from 822 to 944 people.

Issues

The Walgett Community Working Party was established some time ago to strengthen community governance and work in partnership with State and Commonwealth agencies.

During my 26 August 2009 visit, the community raised a number of issues including the need for ongoing funding to support the activities of the local men's group.

A significant issue in Walgett is delays in delivering a program of repairs and maintenance to housing owned by the Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council under the management of the Murdi Paaki Housing Corporation.

On 20 June 2008 the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs contracted the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) to manage this project. NSWALC submitted a project plan on 12 November 2008 and on 21 November 2008 the Minister, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP and Ms Bev Manton, Chair of the NSWALC, jointly announced the allocation of \$2.1 million funding to the project.

On 30 April 2009 NSWALC subcontracted ARUP Consulting to manage the repairs and maintenance at Walgett. During the implementation phase of the project ARUP Consulting conducted a community engagement process with Walgett Aboriginal Local Land Council members and residents. They then undertook a thorough audit of the properties and developed a detailed scope of works.

ARUP Consulting is now commencing a select tender process which should be concluded by the end of December 2009. Work should commence shortly thereafter and it is anticipated that the repairs and maintenance work will be complete by June 2010, almost two years after the contract was signed with the NSWALC.

Follow-up

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has provided \$3,000 to the Walgett Men's Group as additional operational support while they seek ongoing support.

The Men's Group will be followed up through the Regional Operations Centre and will be included in the Local Implementation Plan.

Under the Orana Far West Safe House project, funds from the Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership will be used to purchase two houses in 2009–10 to function as transitional housing for people escaping domestic violence. In addition to housing associated with the Safe House project, funds from the Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership will also be used to build 5 houses in Walgett in June 2010–11. My Office will be closely monitoring this commitment.

At the request of Minister Macklin, my Office has brought the NSWALC and ARUP Consulting together and an agreement has been reached on fast tracking the repairs and maintenance program to commence before Christmas. In addition, I will be monitoring the progress of this work closely to ensure that the revised milestones that have been agreed to are met.



The community meeting where the issues with the delays in repairs and maintenance in Walgett were first raised with me

Wilcannia

New South Wales

Wilcannia is located 965km northwest of Sydney on the edge of the New South Wales desert. Indigenous population estimates for Wilcannia range from 402 to 453 people.

Issues

Youth engagement stands out as a critical concern for Wilcannia, which is being addressed by a number of positive community initiatives.

One example is the Wings Drop-in Centre which is attracting up to 70 children aged between 5 and 18, per day. The centre is run by committed staff who offer a range of services, including sporting programs, cooking classes and computer facilities. It is currently funded by a number of agencies including the New South Wales Department of Human Services, however, additional funds are needed to extend its program to include much needed after school, holiday and men's programs.

The school is also committed to youth engagement, with the Principal advising of efforts to increase attendance by using creative techniques to reach out to the children. For example the school has expanded vocational training and work experiences in the curriculum for older students. The school is committed to developing a community garden within the school premises. This will be supported by the local Men's Group.

Regional Operations Centre Staff and Aboriginal Affairs New South Wales are working closely with the community to improve the effectiveness of the existing governance model and its relationship to local government and other bodies in town. The community is seeing more young people participating in the Community Working Party, which is bringing a fresh view to community matters.

Housing has been raised as a central issue for the community including shortages of housing stock, the condition and maintenance of housing, lack of air conditioning and issues surrounding the payment of rent. Since the Wilcannia Land Council was placed under administration in April the administrator has sought to address significant rental arrears and the outstanding payment of rates to the local shire council. The strategy includes negotiating new tenancy agreements, arrears payment plans and potentially taking action in the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal.

The community has flagged an urgent need for home air-conditioning and funding options for this are currently being urgently examined. These works would be predicated on housing asset management agreements and rental agreements with tenants being in place, and support from the local Land Council.

Follow-up

My Office will be closely monitoring the progression of housing as well as housing repairs and maintenance. Under the Orana Far West Safe House project, funds from the Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership will be used to build or acquire a number of houses in Wilcannia. Subject to final approval, it is intended that a new Safe House will be built by the NSW Government by June 2011, two houses will be purchased in 2009/10 to function as transition housing for people escaping domestic violence and two further transition houses will be completed in 2010–11. In addition to housing associated with the Safe House project, funds under the Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership will also be used to build one house in Wilcannia in 2010–11.

My Office will work with all involved to ensure that employment targets are met, maximising Aboriginal employment opportunities through upcoming building and maintenance work.

The Regional Operations Centre is following up on the provision of air-conditioners to the community.

Wellness and healing – particularly for men – is to be followed up by the Regional Operations Centre Manager and the Aboriginal Affairs New South Wales Partnership Community Project Officer. These issues will be dealt with as priorities in the Local Implementation Planning process.



Wings Drop-in Centre

Northern Territory Priority Communities



Communities: Angurugu, Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Hermannsburg, Lajamanu, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Nguiu, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Umbakumba, Wadeye, Yirrkala and Yuendumu.

Regional Operations Centres: Darwin and Alice Springs.

Angurugu
Northern Territory

The community is situated on the banks of the Angurugu River half way down the western coast of Groote Eylandt which is approximately 650km east of Darwin. Population estimates range from 778 to 1,377 people.

Issues

The Local Government Advisory Board for Angurugu has recently been ratified after a 12 month delay. When I met informally with the Board on my 17 September 2009 visit to the community, members shared feelings of disenfranchisement with recent changes in the community. Despite a long standing and positive working relationship with the Shire, members commented on the lack of information they received and the lack of input they now have into local government decisions affecting the community.

Policing was a key issue raised, with response times and a lack of community engagement and policing visibility a concern. Police services for the island are provided from the mining town of Alyangula approximately 15 km away along a sealed road. The community have asked for regular patrolling in Angurugu including a permanent presence.

Educational outcomes in the community are poor. School enrolment and attendance is unacceptably low and is impacted by bullying and teasing. The school is currently placing an emphasis on positive school behaviours, with encouraging results.

There are limited recreational activities for young people, particularly at night. The community expressed concern that this contributes to the overall wellbeing of the community as young people and children roam the streets at all hours with little to do. Sports, including football and basketball, are a popular community activity. Participation levels are high and greater interest has been shown in healthy eating and improving physical fitness.

Women in the community have formed a group to become better informed on family issues such as child well being and they are hoping to form a women's council soon.

Follow-up

Key issues raised at Angurugu are being addressed through the Regional Partnership Agreement Stage 2 (the Agreement) between the Anindilyakwa Land Council, the Australian and Northern Territory Governments, the East Arnhem Shire Council

and the Groote Eylandt Mining Company. The Agreement covers the geographic area known as the Anindilyakwa region; comprising Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island, and includes the communities of Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra.

An independent review of education services was completed as part of stage one of the Agreement. The review underscored the need to better support the educational aspirations of Anindilyakwa families, who will be the main focus in implementing the recommendations of the review. A Taskforce is being formed with the community to work on enhancing education and training outcomes in the region, from early childhood through primary and secondary school to tertiary, vocational and adult education.

The Agreement provides the framework for implementation of Remote Service Delivery in Angurugu and Umbakumba and there will be further discussions with the Anindilyakwa Land Council and the communities. Policing matters are also being addressed through the Agreement and individual community needs should be built into the Local Implementation Plan. The Local Implementation Planning process for Angurugu will need to be carefully balanced, to be consistent with the Agreement, but also reflective of specific community needs.



Community sports oval

Galiwin'ku
Northern Territory

Galiwin'ku is located on the southern end of Elcho Island in North East Arnhem Land and is one of the largest communities in the region with population estimates ranging from 1,574 to 2,158 people.

Issues

On my 18 September 2009 visit, I met with a range of community representatives and heard about a number of successful activities undertaken to increase school attendance and learning outcomes.

At the time of the visit, the school was preparing an exhibition of 35 art works in Darwin. Eight students, rewarded for their attendance and participation, were invited to attend the opening of the exhibition. The opportunity not only exposes students to the art industry, but also increases their exposure to the business skills required to establish, promote and conduct an exhibition.

I met with Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre Incorporated, which is responsible for the economic and social development of over 20 homelands and 500 residents across North East Arnhem Land. Marthakal has initiated a business plan to become a self sustaining community within five years.

There has been positive progress with housing, with 90 new homes proposed for construction along with new a subdivision commencing in 2010. Areas of concern for the community include:

- the standard and upkeep of roads throughout the region;

- lack of youth activities and pre vocational training opportunities – the former police station is being re-established as a youth drop in centre in direct response to a recent suicide; and
- there is no safe house within the community and local police believe that due to the rate of domestic incidents it warrants further consideration.

Follow-up

A Local Implementation Committee for planning and governance is currently being established with the first meeting proposed for November 2009.

Education and training pathways have been incorporated into the Local Implementation Planning process to ensure support for school attendance strategies is provided by local service providers and the broader community. My Office is working with both the Australian and Northern Territory Government departments responsible for education through the Northern Territory Board of Management to ensure that government efforts are aligned and provide coordinated services in communities such as Galiwin'ku.



Shepherdson College art room



Shepherdson College

Gapuwiyak
Northern Territory

The community of Gapuwiyak is in north east Arnhem Land approximately 60km south of Elcho Island and 540km east of Darwin. Population estimates range from 885 to 1,208 people.

Issues

On my 18 September 2009 visit to the community, I met with the Mala Leaders Group and representatives from a range of local service providers, including the school; health clinic; police; and East Arnhem Shire Council, who highlighted the areas of key concern for Gapuwiyak.

Education and training is a major concern for Mala Leaders, who are struggling to address poor school attendance. Underutilised employment and pre-vocational training places mean that there is a persistent lack of suitably qualified trades people and other personnel within the community. Construction and completion of the Gapuwiyak Training Centre has been delayed by a lack of clarity about project scope and cost. There is now a concern that there are insufficient funds to deliver the project.

An overall lack of capacity, expertise, qualified personnel and equipment impedes the delivery of a range of projects on time and on budget. Despite these concerns, a range of community instigated development activities exist in Gapuwiyak including a Health, Beauty and Hygiene program, and parenting support programs run by the Women's Centre.

Other areas of key concern include the need for:

- additional sport and recreation activities for young people;
- improved roads;
- dog control measures;
- school attendance strategies; and
- improved housing.

Follow-up

My Office has asked the Regional Operations Centre to coordinate efforts to address the uncertainty surrounding the construction of the Training Centre to ensure the project proceeds as a matter of priority. Education and training pathways including agreed strategies to improve school attendance should be built into the Local Implementation Planning process as a key priority.



Meeting with community representatives

Gunbalanya
Northern Territory

Gunbalanya is located in Arnhem Land approximately 330km east of Darwin. Population estimates range from 881 to 1,500 people.

Issues

As highlighted to me on my 15 September 2009 visit, the Gunbalanya community has a keen business enterprise. Through a recent agreement with Gunbalanya Meat Supply Pty Ltd, the Northern Land Council and the Indigenous Land Corporation, \$3.1 million will be spent over 15 years to upgrade and manage the community-owned meatworks and floodplain grazing enterprises. The Gunbalanya pastoral and meatworks operations will provide job-ready training for local people and will initially employ 28 Indigenous people. The Indigenous Land Corporation will also fund governance training to support the enterprise.

While local community governance structures include the store committee and governing boards of the arts centre, the sports and social club, outstation resource centre and the school, broader leadership is a central issue for the community. Concerns relate to Shire governance and the leadership of community organisations and leadership within the community more generally.

Engagement and communication between the Shire and community was expressed as an area of concern. I was informed at the community meeting that this has led to some community confusion and a lack of clarity over the use of funding, awarding of contacts and local job opportunities.

Despite the use of creative strategies by the school, attendance levels remain low. To assist in raising school attendance, the Clontarf Foundation is establishing a football academy jointly at Gunbalanya and Jabiru.

Other issues for the community include:

- a lack of rural transaction facilities such as internet access, motor vehicle registration, post office and local banking facilities;
- sustainability of the child care centre, the youth and recreation centre and the swimming pool; and
- lack of appropriate community cemetery and morgue facilities.

Follow-up

Acknowledging the Shire's significant role in community service delivery, the local Government Business Manager and Regional Operations Centre will work with Shire representatives to ensure the Shire is a key partner in the Local Implementation Planning process, including setting out their functions and responsibilities within the community.



Community meeting

Hermannsburg (Ntaria)

Northern Territory

Hermannsburg is located 130km west of Alice Springs. Population estimates range from 550 to 938 people. Established as a Lutheran mission in 1877, Hermannsburg was the initial point of contact between the western Aranda and European cultures. The mission land was handed over to traditional ownership in 1982.

Issues

Both an ongoing issue and an example of excellence in the community are education and the school. Recently named NT school of the year, the Ntaria School regularly achieves attendance rates in excess of 90 per cent. Whilst the school is part of the School Enrolment Attendance Measure, the rise in attendance is also attributed to a focus on getting secondary students to school, which encourages their younger peers.

The community is concentrating its efforts on creating an education and training continuum, starting from childcare, to school, trade training and adult learning. Three classrooms (Northern Territory Emergency Response funded) and classroom verandas (Building the Education Revolution funded) have recently been completed and new early learning classrooms are due for construction shortly.

A number of issues present a challenge to community efforts including: a lack of progress in securing a Trades Training Centre; uncertainty about the continuity of CDEP converted positions at the school; the inability to modify planned early learning classroom plans to allow for a future extension to co-locate the local crèche; and lack of progress in advancing the development of adult learning facilities. With a high proportion of young people it is critical that governments and community progress education as a priority in the community.

Other issues for the community, highlighted by the Western Aranda Health Aboriginal Corporation include:

- the need to upgrade the health clinic to better meet community requirements;
- the lack of chronic disease workers and programs;
- the lack of staff accommodation for additional health staff and local health workers;
- the need to replace the current youth and recreation hall and provide further youth activities; and
- overcrowding and need for more community housing.

Board members advised of confusion over the provision of community dialysis services that they understood were to be provided to allow patients to access treatment in the community. Board members had been talking about this for a long time and had yet to see any progress.

Follow-up

My Office has confirmed that the four job positions converted from CDEP will remain in place permanently. This has been communicated to the school.

My Office has also held meetings with the Australian and Northern Territory Government education departments, the Government Business Manager and Principal of the school to ensure government effort is aligned. I have approached the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to determine whether a Trades Training Centre for the school can be progressed as a priority. The Northern Territory Board of Management has also agreed to address the issue of coordination of education services as a priority.

Meetings to progress the provision of community dialysis services with the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, Western Aranda Health Aboriginal Corporation and the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjakt Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation have also been held through my Office.



Ntaria School

Lajamanu

Northern Territory

Lajamanu is located 550km south of west Katherine on the northern edge of the Tanami Desert in the traditional country of the Gurindji people. Population estimates for Lajamanu range from 669 to 1,162 people.

Issues

The community appears to have strong, functioning leadership. The Government Business Manager is working with the Indigenous Engagement Officer to establish a community leadership group to assist and improve engagement with governments and the local Shire. This work will formalise the strong community leadership already present and should assist in community consultations with the Shire.

The need for a new health clinic was identified as a central priority for the community. Katherine West Health Board manages the clinic and has applied for funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. The current clinic is run down and is not readily accessed by men as there is no separate entrance. A funding agreement for \$2.6 million is currently being negotiated with the Katherine West Health Board to extend and upgrade the health clinic and construct staff housing at Lajamanu and Yarralin.

The original scoping study in 2008 suggested an investment of \$8 million would be required and there is some concern that a more limited refurbishment will not meet longer term community needs. The Department of Health and Ageing is continuing to work with Katherine West Health Board on this matter.

A swimming pool has been a key priority for the community for some time and the Shire has secured funding to undertake a feasibility study for a pool.

Follow-up

My Office is holding discussions with the Department of Health and Ageing to resolve the budget for, and timing of, the health clinic refurbishment to ensure it meets the needs of the community and is progressing as a priority.

The Government Business Manager is now coordinating the efforts of the community and governments to identify funding sources for the pool, including working with the community to lodge a submission with the Aboriginals Benefit Account before the end of the year. My Office is supporting the efforts to source matching contributions from the Northern Territory Government, the Shire and mining royalties to support the application.



Lajamanu Health Centre

Maningrida
Northern Territory

Maningrida is located 352km east of Darwin on the Central Arnhem coast at the mouth of the Liverpool River. Population estimates range from 2,068 to 2,700 people.

Issues

Governance is both a strength and a concern in Maningrida. There appears to be strong, consistent leadership from traditional owners and the Bawanninga Aboriginal Corporation, Maningrida Progress Association and the Malabam Health Board. However, on my 15 September 2009 visit I was advised that leaders in the community are concerned about the lack of emerging young leaders within the community. Promisingly, Kingsley Murphy, a local Indigenous youth trainee at GREATS Youth Services, has been nominated for the Young Australian of the Year Northern Territory Division. Kingsley is considered to be a promising leader and role model to the children and young people of Maningrida.

Youth issues are a central concern for Maningrida, in particular the creation of education, training and employment pathways for young people. Funding of \$1.05 million over three years has recently been approved for the GREATS Youth Services to operate as a youth hub in Maningrida. The service delivers early intervention and prevention strategies targeted at young people at risk of using illicit drugs, alcohol, petrol and other substances; suicide and intentional self-harm; and criminal activity. In addition the service has supported a number of local young people to complete Certificate IV studies in Youth Work who will be employed alongside a Youth Coordinator to expand youth activities, improve service delivery and encourage greater involvement throughout the community.

Dog control is problematic and both the numbers and management of the dogs create a safety concern for the community. The Shire has developed a dog control plan though there is limited financial capacity to fully implement the plan without additional government support, which is currently being sought. The community is also working to implement community regulations on the numbers of dogs per family and their management.

Other key issues highlighted during my visit include:

- significant concerns about school attendance and the quality of schooling;
- the need for a youth strategy;
- the need for strategies to encourage sustainable employment;
- the lack of timely communication from government agencies around the outcome of funding applications and reporting requirements; and
- the need for enhanced government communication and inclusion of the Shire as a key service delivery agency.

Follow-up

Under the Remote Service Delivery partnership funding is available for community governance capacity building. While the issues highlighted during my visit can be addressed through the Local Implementation Planning process, the Regional Operations Centre and Government Business Managers will need to work directly with communities to ensure governance support and training is effectively delivered.



GREATS Youth Services

Milingimbi
Northern Territory

Milingimbi is one of the Crocodile Islands located between the Blyth and the Glyde Rivers. It is approximately 500km east of Darwin and 250km west of Nhulunbuy. Population estimates for the homelands and Milingimbi community range between 800 and 1,500 people.

Issues

On my 18 September 2009 visit to the community, I learned of the enrolment and attendance strategies successfully used to increase and sustain attendance and participation in education and training. The community recently held a concert in the park to engage children and their families about the benefits of being engaged in school.

Local governance is complicated in Milingimbi, with over twenty one clan groups residing in the area. The governance issues at times impede effective engagement on local priorities. For example, due to a lack of agreement over a suitable site, a two year delay has been experienced in commencing construction of a new health centre for the community.

A ‘self care’ dialysis facility has recently been located in Milingimbi. The unit is administered by the local health clinic. Patients are trained in self care dialysis in Darwin prior to returning to Milingimbi. Assistance is provided where necessary by the health clinic. Prior to this unit being established, dialysis patients had to reside in Darwin to receive treatment.

Additional issues raised by the community include:

- a lack of infrastructure such as aged care facilities, safe houses, women’s and men’s centres;
- limited youth and recreation facilities and programs;
- the prevalence of rubbish and waste on streets and properties; and
- the poor condition of infrastructure throughout the community.

Follow-up

The Government Business Manager is working with the community to establish a leadership and governance system that will facilitate engagement on the Local Implementation Planning process.



Milingimbi

Nguiu (Wurrumiyanga)

Northern Territory

Nguiu is located 80km north of Darwin on Bathurst Island in the Arafura Sea. The community has recently indicated a desire to return to the traditional name of the region 'Wurrumiyanga' as opposed to Nguiu which is considered to be a name adopted by the missionaries. Population estimates range from 1,265 to 1,582 people.

Issues

On 10 August 2009 I visited the community and met with the Government Business Manager, the local police, Centrelink, the store, the Chief Executive Officer of the Tiwi Islands Shire Council and several Traditional Owners.

The employment and workforce development component of the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program is exceeding targets with 26 community members employed and a further 17 people having completed work readiness training.

Territory Alliance has completed the demolition of 13 condemned houses and is laying foundations for new houses on those blocks. The floor slabs are being constructed off-island and are scheduled to be transported to the community in December 2009 to be fitted to the foundations. The focus is to complete as much of the in-ground works as possible before the onset of the wet season, enabling work to continue uninterrupted on the construction of walls and interior fit out.

The refurbishment program is underway and the first of the refurbished houses is due to be completed by the end of November 2009.

There have been recent changes to the Tiwi Islands Shire Council, including a new executive in 2009. A new Chief Executive Officer has also been appointed and it is anticipated that improved Shire Council accounting and reporting mechanisms will occur. The Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Housing has appointed an independent investigator in response to concerns about irregularities in financial management and local governance activities.

No local advisory boards exist in any of the Tiwi communities and local government consultations are held with community skin groups. Local boards need to be established as a priority to enable effective engagement between the shire and the community.

Education, training, numeracy and literacy are problematic throughout the community with low learning outcomes. The School Enrolment and Attendance Measure commenced a 12 month trial in December 2008. While the community feels that there were some problems with its implementation, including engagement with the community, enthusiasm remains about exploring measures to drive school attendance including the ability to issue 'on-the-spot' fines to parents of children who fail to attend school. Other areas of concern to the community include:

- better coordination of prevocational training, employment services and CDEP to lift participation and opportunities for community members; and
- alcohol, drugs and chronic disease.

Follow-up

The Government Business Manager and Regional Operations Centre are working with the Shire to improve the governance of the community skin groups to enable them to effectively perform the local advisory board function. This is the first step towards the establishment of formal local advisory boards. Education and training pathways are being built into the Local Implementation Planning process to assist in coordinating government efforts.



Joseph Tipiloura excavating a house site

Ngukurr

Northern Territory

Ngukurr is located 320km south east of Katherine on the Roper River which forms the southern boundary of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Population estimates for Ngukurr vary between seasons and range from 1,055 to around 2,000 people.

Issues

On my 16 September 2009 visit to the community, I met with Yugul Mangi leaders and was presented with a copy of the Yugul Mangi Community Development Plan 2009-2014. Yugul Mangi encompasses the Aboriginal peoples belonging to the seven Indigenous language groups of the lower Roper River/Gulf of Carpentaria region of South East Arnhem Land.

The Plan, developed in consultation with all of the family groups in the area, describes the community's aspirations and identifies their immediate and future priorities. The priorities include:

- working with governments and others to build capacity to grow and strengthen the community;
- developing a solid economic-base for the community through the creation and support of profitable and sustainable business enterprises;
- improving educational outcomes from early childhood through to adult-education programs;
- expanding cultural, language, literacy and numeracy training and programs;
- expanding and improving existing health services, patient support and transport;
- addressing sub-standard housing and overcrowding;
- addressing domestic violence and violence related issues; and
- sealing roads, building a bridge and culverts across creeks throughout the region to improve access during the wet season.

The school is working with the community to improve attendance, with the introduction of pre-vocational training and work experience into the curriculum for older students, linked to employment in the region.

The relationship between the Shire Council and the community appeared positive, with the Shire engaging actively with community members. The Shire places a priority on employing and training local people.

Follow-up

In acknowledging current community efforts, my Office is monitoring how each of the nine priorities identified in the Community Development Plan can be incorporated into the Local Implementation Planning process.



Ngukurr School

Numbulwar
Northern Territory

Numbulwar is located in East Arnhem Land in the Gulf of Carpentaria 570km south east of Darwin with population estimates ranging between 678 and 1,274 people.

Issues

During my 16 September 2009 visit to Numbulwar, the importance of high quality teachers with a good appreciation of working in an Indigenous culture, and higher educational standards became evident. There is a concern in the community that students leave school without obtaining ‘job ready’ skills which makes it hard for them to successfully transition into employment or participation. Adult education classes are keenly sought, but the lack of accommodation for trainers is an issue.

I was advised that youth boredom is a concern for the community, with young people wandering the community at all hours. Construction of a three-quarter sized basketball court is currently underway with Building the Education Revolution funding. My Office has been advised that additional funding will soon be sought to construct an all weather cover over an existing full-size basketball court, providing the community with a facility that would be accessible to the community year round.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments have established a successful supported playgroup in Numbulwar. However the playgroup is operating on the verandah of the preschool due to a current lack of facilities.

Additional issues within the community include:

- the poor quality of roads and access in and around the community and the need for community transport;
- the need for improved frequency of dental services;
- location-based training within the community rather than students needing to travel into Katherine or Darwin;
- the need to identify sustainable jobs;
- persistent overcrowding and the poor quality of housing; and
- general lack of community facilities such as a community hall; women’s centre; men’s place; arts centre; swimming pool, internet access and other recreational facilities.

Follow-up

I have supported the Government Business Manager to ensure that further attention is given to facilitating improved stakeholder collaboration to establish youth services. A youth strategy can also be built into the Local Implementation Planning process that is linked to local education and training strategies.



Open community meeting at The GBM complex – 16 September 2009

Umbakumba
Northern Territory

The Umbakumba community is on the north east coast of Groote Eylandt, approximately 50km off the Arnhem Land coast in the Gulf of Carpentaria and about 700km from Darwin. It is one of three significant communities on the island. Population estimates for Umbakumba range from 350 to 528 people.

Issues

The quality of the road linking Umbakumba to Angurugu and Alyangula is an ongoing safety concern. The existing gravel road, with varying degrees of access during the wet season, limits the community’s connection with the rest of the region, affecting employment opportunities, teacher access and medical aid in cases of an emergency.

There is frustration at the slow progress in housing construction, but the community, and the CDEP participants in particular, are looking forward to the associated training and job opportunities.

During my 17 September 2009 visit, policing was raised as a concern, with community members asking to see more engagement from the police and police staying overnight in the community. I was advised that new police accommodation has been provided to allow for overnight stays by police, however the community feel that the accommodation has not been fully utilised.

Umbakumba would also like to see teachers live in the community, instead of travelling daily from Alyangula. School attendance is a key issue for the community and it is considered that the permanent presence of a teacher would encourage attendance and a range of activities are underway to promote the school as a safe and friendly environment, including painting the school.

Sport is a central focus of the community, with a new football competition between Angurugu, Alyangula and Umbakumba recently established. The oval at Umbakumba requires significant upgrade and the Government Business Manager is working with the community to grass the oval and establish change room facilities and seating.

Follow-up

Umbakumba is part of the Groote Eylandt Regional Partnership Agreement described under my report on Angurugu. A joint project by the Anindilyakwa Land Council, the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government to seal the road, under the Agreement, has recently been announced.

Increased police servicing is being addressed through the Regional Partnership Agreement. The Northern Territory Government has committed to provide for the deployment of police officers so as to significantly increase their presence in Umbakumba. This commitment extends to at least one programmed visit to Umbakumba per week and two unscheduled visits per week. Overnight visits to the community will occur on a needs basis and where operational circumstances allow. My Office will be working with the Government Business Manager to ensure that these commitments are understood at the community level.

Teacher accommodation is also being addressed as part of the Regional Partnership Agreement so teachers can live in the communities in which they work.



Umbakumba School

Wadeye

Northern Territory

Wadeye, also known as Port Keats, is located 270km south west of Darwin in the Daly River reserve at the mouth of the Fitzmaurice River. In 1934 a Catholic Mission was founded at Port Keats and for decades the Church acted as the main service provider in such areas as education and health. Population estimates for Wadeye range from 1,930 to 2,856 people.

Issues

On my 14 September 2009 visit, community members representing Thamarrurr Incorporated gave an informative presentation of key issues and a longer term vision for the region. Thamarrurr Incorporated focuses its efforts around social issues within the greater Wadeye region with priorities including youth, housing, education, health, governance and leadership – all key concerns for the region.

Youth issues are of critical concern for Wadeye and while there are both a Regional AFL Program and Youth, Sport and Recreational Programs, there are limited youth activities, particularly during the evenings. A large proportion of the young people in the community are not actively engaged and it is perceived that employment opportunities associated with the youth programs are currently underutilised. Effective youth engagement programs are considered to be of great importance to the community.

During my visit I was informed of the hurdles to improving school attendance and the creative solutions that were being applied such as employing attendance officers to work directly with the community. The school has committed staff, including an active school board and there is very little violence or bullying throughout the school. The school does however lack the capacity to accommodate high attendance rates which will need to be addressed as attendance rates improve.

The community also raised concerns with me about delays in establishing the Children's Services Centre and Safe House. This was originally announced in May 2007 however construction only commenced in September 2009. I examine issues of this type later in the report, but I am pleased to note that, after a protracted planning phase, construction is now on track for completion of the complex in March 2010.

Follow-up

My Office is working with the Government Business Manager and Regional Operations Centre to ensure that a youth strategy forms part of the Local Implementation Planning process with the community.



Wadeye School

Yirrkala

Northern Territory

Yirrkala is located on the north-eastern tip of Arnhem Land approximately 700km east of Darwin. The community has a strong artistic community that was established in 1975. Population estimates for Yirrkala range from 578 to 1,472 people.

Issues

On 9 August 2009 I visited the Yirrkala community and met a range of service providers and stakeholders. While attending the Garma Festival I also had the opportunity to meet with Yirrkala and Yolngu leaders from the Gove Peninsula.

The community, Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Minister Macklin recently launched Australia's first ever Indigenous Surf Life Saving Club, Walngawu Djakamirri at Shady Beach, which helps prevent water-related injuries and actively engages children in the community.

Enrolment and attendance in schooling and training are issues for the community. The Yirrkala School Community Board and the Yirrkala Senior Leaders are trialing a range of approaches including home visits to discuss attendance with parents.

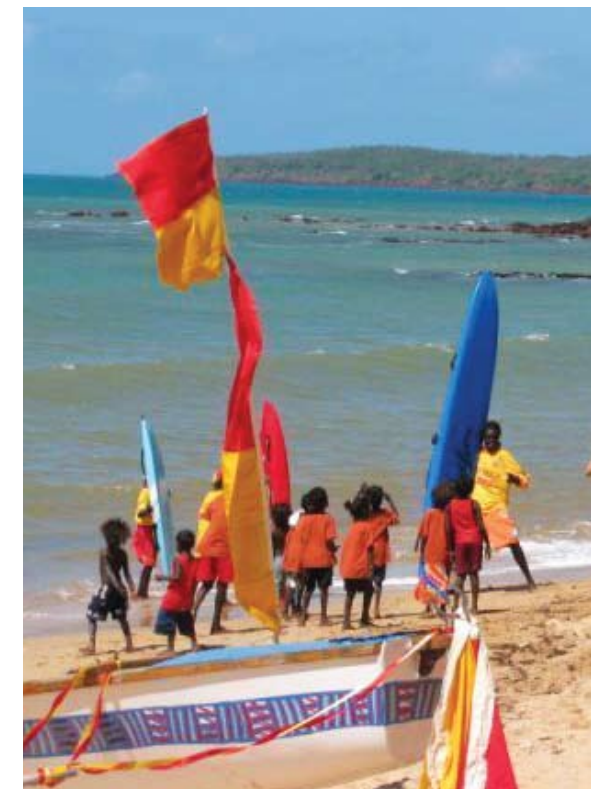
Employment opportunities in the region are limited. As a consequence, there is a heightened need for pre-vocational training, employment opportunities and improved pathways for secondary students.

Additional issues requiring attention include:

- consistently high demands on early childhood facilities;
- improved Yolngu representation on Nhulunbuy based night patrol – including training and employment of Yolngu workers; and
- leasing negotiations to enable housing improvements throughout Yirrkala need to be resolved.

Follow-up

My Office has commenced discussions with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, and the Regional Operations Centre about the development of education and learning pathways strategies that ensure government investment is coordinated and provides opportunities for young people. These strategies will be reflected in Local Implementation Plans.



Children Participating in Walngawu Djakamirra Surf Life Saving Club activities

Yuendumu

Northern Territory

Yuendumu is located 290km north west of Alice Springs with population estimates ranging from 605 to 1195 people. It is one of the largest communities in Central Australia. Yuendumu Aboriginal Reserve was proclaimed in 1952 and this reserve became Aboriginal land following a declaration under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

Issues

Yuendumu is a hub for the Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (Mt Theo Program), an effective youth development program servicing Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Willowra and Lajamanu. Mt Theo works to develop strong young community leaders through activity-based programs and by preventing petrol sniffing and other substance misuse.

Known for its sporting talents, the community recently received \$2 million from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for an undercover basketball court and construction is almost complete.

The ungrassed community oval is dusty, hard and covered in small rocks, making it difficult to train, play and attract Central Australian Football League games. Yuendumu also hosts a number of regional football competitions and is keen to formalise a softball competition for women.

The childcare facility is fully utilised providing a program for around 50 children each day. It is also providing vocational training in early childhood for five women. However, concerns were raised during my visit on 23 October 2009 about the Shire auspice fee including both the quality and quantity of fee for service activity undertaken on behalf of the community.

School attendance is low in Yuendumu and is compounded by school yard bullying and teasing. Teacher quality, community leadership and creative attendance strategies will need to be explored.

Community governance is a concern in Yuendumu. From my observations, it will be difficult to complete Local Implementation Planning unless these matters are addressed.

Follow-up

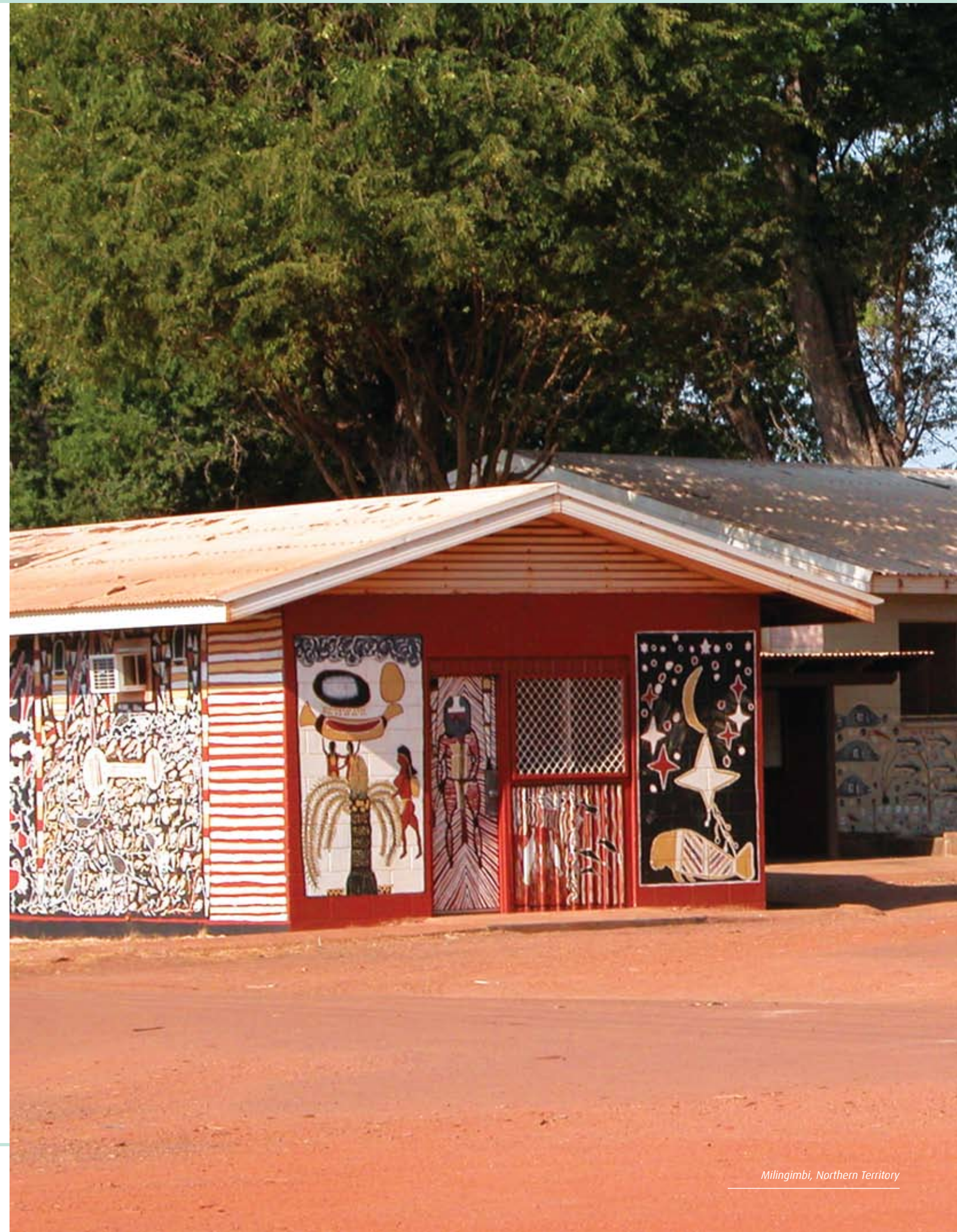
The Alice Springs Regional Operations Centre is providing additional support to the Government Business Manager to help facilitate improved governance arrangements.

My Office has sought an explanation for the child care centre auspice fee from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. If existing funding cannot be maximised for the benefit of the community, the Government Business Manager will explore alternative auspice arrangements which do not see such a large percentage of funds diverted from service provision.

My Office is working closely with the Government Business Manager, Regional Operations Centre, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Shire to secure funding to grass and upgrade the oval in time for the next football season. Any project developed or undertaken should include training and employment opportunities for local people and initiatives to encourage a sense of community ownership, management and sustainability.



The community oval



Queensland Priority Communities



Aurukun Queensland

Aurukun is situated on the western side of Cape York Peninsula about 200km south of Weipa. Indigenous population estimates for Aurukun range from 955 to 1,059 people. Aurukun is one of four communities participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials which commenced on 1 July 2008.

Issues

The community has an excellent early childhood service with the Aurukun Koolkan Early Childhood Centre. The centre is committed to making sure that all staff have appropriate qualifications and recently three more staff graduated with a Certificate III in Child Care. For a small fee the centre provides meals for the children and staff. The Coordinator of the centre has worked with a local person who has become a qualified cook.

The introduction of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials has had a direct effect on school attendance which has increased from 44.5 per cent in term 3 2008 to 66 per cent in term 3 2009. While this is a large improvement, attendance is still well below the state average.

Worker accommodation is an essential element to the delivery of services in remote communities. The Commonwealth Government, Queensland State Government and the Cape York Partnership for Welfare Reform have come together to build 10 accommodation units and a parenting service facility in the community. Additional police housing has also been provided in the community which will allow an approved strength of 10 officers.

Servicing of the community by Centrelink is an issue. Following a funding dispute, the agency service provided by the Aurukun Shire Council was temporarily discontinued. At present Centrelink services the community with three staff travelling from Weipa daily. Centrelink has been discussing alternative models of service delivery with the Regional Operations Centre. I was pleased to receive advice recently that the Council has agreed to take on the Centrelink agency contract on an interim basis, while a more permanent resolution is being negotiated.

Some of the other issues raised during my visit include:

- While the Alcohol licensing restrictions in the community have had a positive effect, there has also been an increase in home brewing; and
- Home and Community Care services are currently being delivered from a building which is in need of urgent repair.

Follow-up

I will be monitoring Queensland Health's efforts to address the issue of the building where Home and Community Care Services are located.



Koolkan Early Childhood Centre

Coen Queensland

Coen is a small community within the Cook Shire, 250km south east of Weipa. Indigenous population estimates range from 196 to 239 people. It is one of four communities participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials which commenced on 1 July 2008.

Issues

The school had an attendance rate of around 92.9 per cent in term 3 2009 which is above average for the state. All students have at least one sponsor and some students have multiple sponsors through Student Education Trusts which provide a money management service, through the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials to assist parents to be able to support their child's education and development from birth to graduation.

During my 3 November 2009 visit the community asked my Office for assistance to bring together the five clan groups and other community individuals to form a new leadership group to improve governance in the community.

There are concerns about patchy service delivery, lack of coordination between employment service providers and allegations that service providers were being selective about who they assist. The need to better align and strengthen Centrelink services in the community was also identified.

Policing is a significant issue. Coen currently has two permanent police officers who cover a very large area, including all of the outstations within the region. It is believed that Alcohol Management Plans at Aurukun and Lockhart River have led to an increase in visitors, with a corresponding impact on policing, in Coen, where there are no alcohol restrictions. As a result, the community believes that the current level of resourcing is insufficient.

There is limited short term accommodation available, particularly during peak times, as well as insufficient worker accommodation available to support the delivery of services under the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials and Remote Services Delivery initiatives. To compound this, the amount of freehold land available for further development is limited. For example, the local sporting and recreation service has struggled to deliver services as a result of difficulties attracting staff and providing appropriate housing.

Follow-up

My Office is working with the Regional Operations Centre to identify an appropriate person to facilitate the community's request for assistance to form a new leadership group and develop a clear mandate for the group including agreed roles and responsibilities.

The Regional Operations Centre Manager and Government Engagement and Coordination Officer are working to resolve employment service provider issues and develop a better coordinated service. I have been advised that a new strategy has been developed with the CDEP provider which should result in improved service delivery including full time staff on the ground.

The Government Engagement and Coordination Officer will discuss further worker accommodation with the Wunthulpu Aboriginal Land Trust. The Regional Operations Centre Manager will also work with the Cook Shire Council on the release of additional land for development.

The Queensland Coordinator General will ensure that a recruitment process occurs for a Sport and Recreation Officer and appropriate accommodation for the officer is provided.



Coen joint government Local Program Office

Doomadgee
Queensland

Doomadgee is located in the north-west Queensland lower gulf region, approximately 500km northwest of Mount Isa. Indigenous population estimates for Doomadgee range from 978 to 1,102 people.

Issues

Over the last few years Doomadgee has taken control of its affairs, resulting in significant changes and improvements across the community. For example, they supported the implementation of alcohol restrictions administered through the local Alcohol Management Plan which continues to realise a positive reduction in alcohol-related harm and offences.

The education of its children and young people are a focus for the community and in conjunction with dedicated teaching staff, community members have worked hard with the students to achieve their National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) targets across a number of levels at the school (3, 5, 7 and 9).

During my 14 October 2009 visit the council expressed frustration with the progress of the refurbishment of the Sport and Recreational Hall. While the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has committed capital funding to the project, negotiations are continuing with the Queensland Government to secure their further contribution to the refurbishment and recurrent funding for the staff. Once the refurbishment is complete it is anticipated the hall will become the base for the Police Citizens Youth Club.

Other issues raised include:

- during the wet session aircraft are sometimes not able to land as the community is waiting for a new GPS approach system to be developed by Airservices Australia; and
- general building maintenance of the health clinic is poor and the community is having difficulty recruiting and retaining health professionals.

Follow-up

My Office has met with Airservices Australia about wet season use of the airstrip. They will make a decision on Doomadgee's application by the end of November and move to agree the terms and conditions of the contract with Doomadgee Council before the end of the year.

The Office of the Coordinator General in Queensland is progressing the issues of the hall refurbishment and ongoing program funding for the Police Citizens Youth Club as a high priority. I understand that work has been finalised on a jointly funded All Abilities playground. I intend to monitor the progress of negotiations with the Queensland Government and work closely with all parties to avoid further delays.

The ongoing building maintenance for health facilities, recruitment and training issues raised by the community will be a focus in the Local Implementation Planning process which has commenced.



Sport and Recreational Hall

Hope Vale
Queensland

Hope Vale is on the Cape York Peninsula about 46km north west of Cooktown. Indigenous population estimates range from 781 to 830 people. Hope Vale is one of four communities participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform trials which commenced on 1 July 2008.

Issues

The Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council is in the process of negotiating a number of economic developments which will benefit the community. These include the development of a banana plantation, a new sporting precinct including a pool and the redevelopment of the business precinct in the community.

The Families Responsibilities Commission has been operating for over a year with a positive impact in Hope Vale and my 4 November 2009 visit enabled me to meet both with Commissioner David Glasgow and two Local Commissioners, Brian Cobus and Doreen Hart.

A Wellbeing Centre has now been established in Hope Vale. While recruiting the right person to complement the community's needs has been slower than hoped, the Government Engagement and Coordination Officer and Local Program Office have been working with Centre staff to develop a community engagement strategy and the Advisory Group for the Centre have been undertaking training to build the capacity and skill base of community members so that they can take over management in the longer term.

The community market garden is a CDEP project which commenced in October 2008. It currently has 10 people working on the garden gaining their Certificate II in Horticulture. Four CDEP participants are gaining their tractor licence. At present participants are trying out vegetables and herbs that are best suited to the climate. The long term goal for the market garden will be that a community person can lease the garden from Hope Vale Council as a Business Enterprise.

During my visit a number of issues were raised at both the Council meeting and the community meeting including:

- animal control issues in the community (both dogs and horses);
- the need for new transport solutions for Aged Care, the kindergarten and non essential medical transport;

- lack of space for the delivery of Home and Community Care services;
- infrastructure issues, including that the Disability Services building is below standard; and
- education standards at both schools is an issue, where children are behind in numeracy and literacy standards.

Follow-up

My Office is working with the Office of the Queensland Coordinator General and the Cairns Regional Operation Centre to resolve building maintenance issues for the facility where the Disability Service is currently located.

The issues of infrastructure are being addressed through a feasibility assessment study for future infrastructure needs.

My Office will work with the Office of the Queensland Coordinator General and the Cairns Regional Operations Centre to determine the issues which are the responsibility of local government and ensure they are resolved.



Community Market Garden

Mornington Island (Gununa)

Queensland

Mornington Island is in the Gulf of Carpentaria approximately 125km north-west of Burketown and 200km west of Karumba on the mainland. The main township on Mornington Island is Gununa. Indigenous population estimates for the Island range from 914 to 1,028 people.

Issues

There are a number of positive things happening in the community. The Mirndiyan Gununa Aboriginal Corporation operates a successful arts centre, which employs six people and has up to 30 working artists to create paintings and traditional craft. Art work from the centre is exhibited internationally.

The community has a very successful Police Citizens Youth Club in operation (see story in the Closing the Gap section).

Governance is a major issue in the community and resolution of this is a priority. At the recent Negotiation Table, the community were not able to come to agreement on a number of issues including: the application of child protection laws; land tenure; whether to encourage tourism; and uneven access to services.

There are also a series of issues identified during my visit to the community on 13 October 2009 which I believe could be addressed through the Local Implementation Planning process. These include:

- upgrade of water supply infrastructure;
- provision of a safe house for children in the community;
- completion of the planned Family Wellbeing Centre;
- training of staff to use new X-ray equipment;
- attraction and retention of permanent health staff; and
- access to maternal health care including at the school

Follow-up

The Mount Isa Regional Operations Centre is working with the community to determine the range and mix of supports and services required to develop and strengthen the leadership and governance requirements on Mornington Island. In addition, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (Local Government and Planning) has appointed Mr Ron McCullough, a former Mayor of Mount Isa, as a mentor to the Councillors.



This painting by Ellen Roughsey is about Murndalbi (a special story place) which is a big rock that sits in the middle of a flat reef right in the middle of the channel between Turtle Island and the top end of Mornington Island. The seas and waves bash against the rock, and cover it up but can't break it down. The people of Mornington Island use this story to teach the young people to be strong, stand firm, hold their culture and don't let outside influences weaken them.

Mossman Gorge

Queensland

Located 80km north of Cairns, Mossman Gorge is a discrete Aboriginal community in the Cairns Regional Council area. The population is estimated at 160 people. Mossman Gorge is one of four communities participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials that commenced on 1 July 2008.

Issues

In partnership with the Indigenous Land Corporation, Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc and the community are involved in a \$16 million tourist development of the Mossman Gorge Gateway Centre. This project will provide between 40 (low season) and 70 (high season) jobs. Considerable attention is being applied to ensure that jobs for local community members are maximised. This is a significant challenge given the lack of work readiness of many community members.

The Wellbeing Centre is now established and beginning to roll out services as part of the Cape York Welfare Reform trials. The facility is also used as a community meeting place. However, a number of concerns with the current model of service delivery and the coordination of those services were raised with me. These included:

- lack of alignment with the principles of welfare reform by some service providers resulting in poor engagement with the community;
- the mix of staff at the Centre does not reflect the community's needs as there is no dedicated drug and alcohol worker; and
- lack of coordination between the delivery of medical and counselling services and the implementation of an effective alcohol and drug treatment and referral strategy.

On a positive note the community now has 10 homes which have been designated "dry" by the people who live in them and the introduction of the Cape York Welfare Reform trials to the community has had a positive effect.

On my 5 November 2009 visit the community also expressed concerns about the trading practices of the liquor outlets in neighbouring Mossman. Combined with an influx in people from dry communities, this has emphasised the need for a drug and alcohol worker to be located in the Wellbeing Centre. Community members commented that the affects of misuse of alcohol are compounded by having no police station in the community.

Follow-up

My Office is following up with the Department of Health and Ageing and Queensland Health:

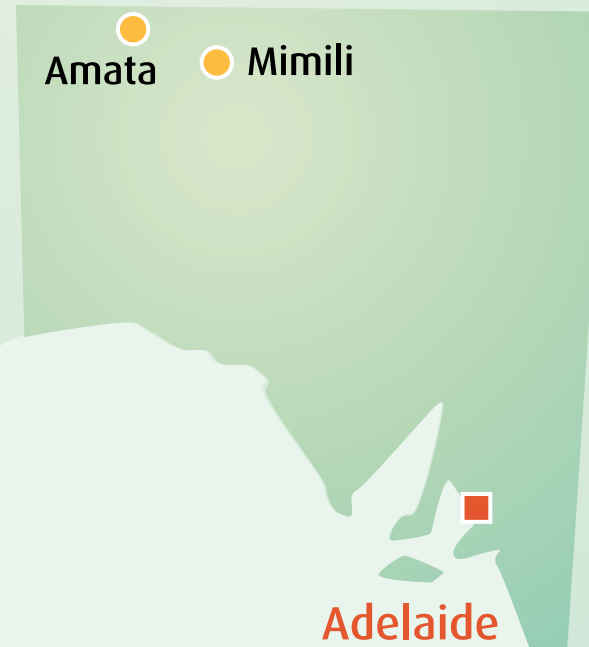
- the coordination of services at the Wellbeing Centre, including the funding model and lack of an effective alcohol and drug treatment strategy;
- the recruitment of a permanent drug and alcohol worker for the community possibly from within existing resources; and
- limited access to the health clinic due to the ramp being incorrectly constructed.

The Queensland Coordinator General has raised the issue of police resourcing with Queensland Police. Queensland Police have confirmed that response times from Mossman to Mossman Gorge in most cases is between five and ten minutes, if no other operational duties are being performed elsewhere at the time.



Chatting to the first group of trainees for the Mossman Gorge Gateway Centre

South Australia Priority Communities



Communities: Amata, Mimili.
Regional Operations Centre: Adelaide.

Amata

South Australia

Amata is an Anangu community on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands situated at the western end of the Musgrave ranges, approximately 500km south-west of Alice Springs. Population estimates range from 290 to 350 but population can increase to 500.

Issues

During my 11 November 2009 visit I met with a number of service providers, the Community Council and the women's group in the Homemaker's Centre.

The community has gone to considerable lengths to identify its priorities in line with the Early Childhood, Safe Communities, and Governance and Leadership COAG building blocks. Identified activities include parenting support; nutrition programs; child care services; a safe house; education about violence; and support for the community council that develops current leaders, and provides education and training for future community leaders and support staff. This work will be used in the Local Implementation Planning process and I look forward to seeing these ventures progress.

The energy and vision of the women of Amata were clear. They have many ideas for community business including a coffee van catering for building workers, handcrafts, and an expansion of their current bush medicine enterprise. The Tjala Arts centre is impressive and the works produced there by local artists have an international reputation.

I am concerned that funding for construction of an early childhood facility in Amata was agreed in 2005 however construction is yet to commence. I understand that State and Commonwealth agencies are now working together to progress the project and a site has been agreed. Discussions are now focussed on ensuring links across early childhood services and ongoing funding.

I am also concerned that the purpose built Substance Misuse facility in Amata has very low rates of occupancy and use. Whilst this can partially be attributed to the success of programs to reduce petrol sniffing in the APY lands and the success of the outreach service rather than the residential service, I urge all agencies concerned with its operation to examine expanding the purpose and use of the centre to ensure that it is fully utilised.

Follow-up

My Office is liaising with the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet to ensure speedy resolution of these issues.



Family accommodation and outdoor shelters with fire pits at the Amata Substance Misuse Centre

Mimili

South Australia

Mimili is an Anangu community on the APY Lands in the north west of South Australia. with an approximate population of 275. It lies 645km south of Alice Springs and approximately 1200kms north of Adelaide.

Issues

During my 10 November 2009 visit, a number of positive things were very apparent. The local school caters to students through to Year 12. Seventy-two students are currently enrolled, including 36 secondary school students and 12 Year 12 students. Students at the school are currently meeting the national Year 3 and Year 5 literacy and numeracy benchmarks. Year 12 students participate in school to work activities including training as lifeguards and attendees for the local swimming pool. Eight young people are employed at the pool after school hours and are instrumental in keeping the pool operating and open to the community.

However, the school is limited in the after hours support it can provide for young people in Mimili. A youth worker would significantly support the positive work being done at the school as well as supporting young people at risk in the community.

The Mimili community has also been working to improve community governance, and this was very apparent in meetings during my visit. The Community Council has restructured and membership now includes representation from the 8 major family groups in the community. All groups were present or represented at the meeting, and all had the opportunity to present their views.

Follow-up

The South Australian Department of Families and Communities has identified youth support worker and community support worker positions for Mimili under the Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership Agreement.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has funded governance support for community councils. Community governance and leadership will also be supported through the Remote Service Delivery partnership.



Swimming pool at Mimili

Western Australia Priority Communities



Communities: Ardyaloon, Beagle Bay, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek.
Regional Operations Centre: Broome.

Ardyaloon – Dampier Peninsula
Western Australia

Ardyaloon is located on the northern tip of the Dampier Peninsula, 220km from Broome along the Cape Leveque road. It was settled in the 1970s and has grown quickly to be one of the larger communities on the Dampier Peninsula, with a population of approximately 500 people.

Issues

Ardyaloon is the base for municipal service operations for the neighbouring communities of Lombadina and Djarindjin and a service hub for a number of long term and seasonal outstations.

The Ardyaloon community supports a number of enterprises. The store is community owned and operated and provides a wide selection of goods. It has experienced a long period of stable management and profitability and has a focus on nutritional products.

The Hatchery/Aquaculture Centre seeds, harvests and sells trochus shells and is visited by 4 000 people each year. Depending on the season, 5-10 local CDEP participants are engaged in these activities.

At my meeting on 29 October 2009 I was advised that maintenance, expansion and increased operating capacity for the childcare centre and early childhood services are a number one priority for the community. Funding was approved in August 2009 for an Indigenous Parenting Support Service in Ardyaloon.

The meeting also expressed concern about policing and the response times from the Multifunction Police Facility in Djarindjin which is 40 minutes away by road. They requested that the Warden’s Program be reinstated in the community to assist with community safety and school attendance. Reinstatement of this program was also recommended by the Blank Page Summit held in Billard on the Dampier Peninsula in July 2009.

Follow-up

Further expansion of early childhood services will be progressed through the Local Implementation Planning process and will be actively monitored by my Office. The WA Coordinator General is investigating options for the Warden’s Program with the WA Police.



Ardyaloon Chief Executive Officer Andrew Carter with community members Valerie Wiggan and Shirley Hunter meet with Coordinator General Brian Gleeson, WA Coordinator General Patrick Walker, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Secretary Jeff Harmer and acting Local Area Coordinator Colin Kenworthy.

Beagle Bay – Dampier Peninsula
Western Australia

Beagle Bay is located approximately 125km north of Broome near the western coast of the Dampier Peninsula. Beagle Bay has a resident population of approximately 300 to 350 people, as well as has a significant satellite population who use the community as a social, service and resource hub.

Issues

Beagle Bay is experiencing some noteworthy successes including the recent reform and improvement of the community store (despite sub-standard buildings and fitout), the establishment of a popular bakery with a widespread reputation, and a motivated women’s group with clear plans for the development of early childhood services and an upgrade of the Beagle Bay Women’s Centre.

However, a number of longstanding issues were apparent in my 29 October 2009 visit. Community governance remains a challenge which impacts on service planning and access. The interim Community Reference Group is working with governments to plan future development.

Services and opportunities for young people are also a concern for the community. Organised activities for young people are rare, and the region has a significant problem with youth suicide. A youth worker, and youth services and activities were requested. Community members also expressed concern with policing response times. There is a multi-functional police facility for the Dampier Peninsula located in Djarindjin, 65 kilometres from Beagle Bay.

Follow-up

Funding has been approved for a Locational Supported Playgroup and Indigenous Parenting Support Service in Beagle Bay.

Issues raised by the community will also be addressed through the Local Implementation Planning process and timetables, and resources from existing State and Commonwealth Government programs will be identified to address the priorities. Stakeholders and service providers, including WA Police, will be encouraged to participate. I will monitor progress and intervene when necessary with my WA colleague to ensure effective implementation.

I will also ensure that the Local Implementation Planning process includes additional support to address the issue of community governance.



Banner designed and hand printed by women at the Beagle Bay Women’s Centre

Fitzroy Crossing

Western Australia

Fitzroy Crossing is located on the Great Northern Highway approximately 260km from Derby and 353km from Broome. Indigenous population estimates for Fitzroy Crossing range from 625 to 733 people. Fitzroy Crossing services over 30 small, remote Aboriginal communities and outstations situated in the Fitzroy Valley.

Issues

Alcohol restrictions were introduced in Fitzroy Crossing in September 2007, as a result of a community led campaign which I have covered in more detail in the Closing the Gap section.

The Fitzroy Valley is also notable for its outstanding leadership and robust governance through the Fitzroy Futures Forum. The Indigenous membership of the Governing Committee is broadly recognised as the interface between government and the communities of Fitzroy Crossing and the surrounding Fitzroy Valley. The members have been instrumental in assisting government to better understand community needs and working with them to develop appropriate service responses.

My meeting with the Fitzroy Crossing community on 30 October 2009 was strongly attended. Issues of concern raised at the meeting included a lack of connection between the local TAFE and CDEP activities. The availability of housing for local community members and for workers providing services to the community was a concern as this limits the services that can be provided to the community.

However, the key concern expressed was that the role and value of the Fitzroy Futures Forum be recognised and used in the implementation of the Remote Service Delivery partnership.

Follow-up

I am discussing the issue of training for CDEP workers with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

I am pleased to note that the Regional Operations Centre has confirmed that the Fitzroy Futures Forum has already engaged with government and will be a key partner in the Local Implementation Planning process.



Joe Ross of the Fitzroy Futures forum speaks with Coordinator General Brian Gleeson, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Secretary Jeff Harmer and Deputy Secretary Andrew Tongue at the community meeting on 30 October 2009.

Halls Creek

Western Australia

Halls Creek is situated on the edges of the Great Sandy and Tanami Deserts, 362km south west of Kununurra. Indigenous population estimates range from 853 to 1500.

Issues

Alcohol Restrictions were introduced in Halls Creek in May 2009. Calls for the restrictions were lead by the Halls Creek Alcohol Management Group despite significant opposition from alcohol retailers in the community. The restrictions have resulted in major improvements in community safety and the health and well being of residents. Police in Halls Creek have noted a 48% reduction in the number of arrests, 35% reduction in incidents of domestic violence, and a 48% reduction in the number of incidents police attend.

The main issues raised at my meeting with the Halls Creek community on 30 October 2009 were the shortage of housing, the condition of public housing and housing allocation, the need for local dialysis services, availability of opportunities for training and employment, and the state of community infrastructure. The existing child care facility (Little Nuggets) is inadequate for the needs of the community. There are currently 25 places available for children, with another 16 on the waiting list.

A further major concern was the lack of progress made on two projects of community significance: construction of the Halls Creek Worker's Hostel on Burks Park Station and the issues with the land set aside on Moola Bulla Station for Stolen Generation activities. These projects were delayed as a result of heritage claims on the proposed sites.

Follow-up

Funding for Locational Supported Playgroups and an Indigenous Parenting Support Service has recently been approved. The Australian Government has also recently announced the establishment of a Child and Family Centre for the community. Construction is expected to be complete by December 2010, with the centre operational in February 2011.

Following my visit, and discussions with the WA Coordinator General, the Kimberley Land Council has agreed to expedite the examination of the heritage claims for these important projects. Local community meetings organised by the Kimberley Land Council to test the heritage claims have now been held.

The WA Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Kimberley Land Council are now working together to expedite the development of the Worker Hostel at Burks Park Station.



Demountables for the Worker Hostel in storage at Burks Park Station



Progress against Closing the Gap in the 29 Remote Service Delivery Locations

One of my responsibilities is to monitor progress against the 'Closing the Gap' in the 29 Remote Service Delivery communities. Significant new investments will be implemented using National Partnerships which have been agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). National Partnerships have been agreed in the areas of early childhood, housing, health and schooling and will provide critical additional resources to the 29 locations, complementing work undertaken as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery.

This section seeks to collect and summarise details of existing and planned investments in the 29 priority communities, under each of the COAG Closing the Gap "Building Blocks".

As I have previously noted, the COAG agreed timing of investments into, and for the benefit of priority communities need to be weighed against the expectations of Indigenous Australians who have been told to expect a new approach to remote service delivery by governments. While progress is broadly on track, people are impatient to see tangible changes in their communities.

In responding to my request for details of tangible progress on National Partnerships, Commonwealth agencies, who are the lead agencies for the National Partnerships, have sought to assure me that consultation and implementation planning is progressing well. Their explanation for being unable to detail the value of investments or local strategies in some instances is that State and Territory Governments hold this information. Further, the nature of the new COAG agreements is such that Commonwealth agencies now have limited ability to access this data. As a result I have sought more detailed information on progress under the National Partnerships from State and Territory Governments. This request has produced some additional information in all jurisdictions in the area of early childhood and education but not in health.

While I understand and support COAG's focus on outcomes, I struggle with the concept that data relating to a joint investment in communities cannot be made available on an ongoing basis. This issue needs to be addressed to ensure that communities can be better informed of the size and nature of additional measures in their region and that the roll out of this investment can be properly tracked.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT				
	Indigenous Early Childhood Development			Early Childhood Education
Location	CFC	Ante-natal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual health	Mothers and Babies services	Pre-school
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION LESS THAN 250 PEOPLE				
Ardyaloon		*		2013
Beagle Bay		*		2013
Coen		*	2010	2013
Mossman Gorge		*	2010	2013
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 250 - 750				
Amata		*		2013
Fitzroy Crossing	2011	*		2013
Lajamanu		*		2013
Mimili		*		2013
Numbulwar		*		2013
Umbakumba		*		2013
Wilcannia		*		2013
Yuendumu	2011	*	2010	2013
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 750 - 1249				
Angurugu		*		2013
Aurukun		*	2010	2013
Doomadgee	2012	*	2010	2013
Gapuwiyak		*		2013
Gunbalanya	2011	*		2013
Halls Creek	2011	*	2010	2013
Hermannsburg (Ntaria)		*		2013
Hope Vale		*	2010	2013
Milingimbi		*		2013
Mornington Island	2012	*	2010	2013
Ngukurr	2011	*		2013
Walgett †	2012	*		2013
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION OVER 1250				
Galiwin'ku		*		2013
Maningrida	2011	*		2013
Nguiu		*		2013
Wadeye	2010	*		2013
Yirrkala		*		2013

† This facility is not part of the National Partnership. * Information not yet available.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION		HEALTHY HOMES	
Indigenous Economic Participation		Remote Indigenous Housing Program	Nation Building Social Housing
Jobs filled		New houses	Refurbishments
		New houses	
4		1	
0		10	5
18			4
18			10
1		19	29
17		3	19
35.6			
7		18	26
15			
3		6	30
5		2	
35			
4		18	31
11		15	83
2		22	70
19			
40		31	30
41		19	25
31.2			
15		4	63
13.5			
13		11	49
37			
1		2	29
30		36	60
62		36	28
49.5		43	56
76		31	40
29			

	SCHOOLING					
	Low SES Schools	Building the Education Revolution			Digital Education Revolution	Trade Training Centres in Schools
Location		National School Pride	Primary Schools for the 21st century	Science and Language Centres	Secondary school computer fund (no. of computers)	
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION LESS THAN 250 PEOPLE						
Ardyaloon	2010	2010	2011			
Beagle Bay	2010	2009	2010			
Coen		2010	2010			
Mossman Gorge		2010	2011			
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 250 - 750						
Amata	2012	2009	2010		10	
Fitzroy Crossing	2010	2010	2011		25	
Lajamanu	2010	2009	2011			
Mimili	2012	2009	2010			
Numbulwar	2010	2009	2010			2011
Umbakumba	2010	2009	2010			
Wilcannia	2010	2010	2010		3	2011
Yuendumu	2010	2009	2010		6	
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION 750 - 1249						
Angurugu	2010	2010	2011			
Aurukun	2010	2009	2011			
Doomadgee	2010	2009	2011		13	2011
Gapuwiyak	2010	2010	2010	2010		
Gunbalanya	2010	2010	2010	2010		
Halls Creek	2010	2010	2011		43	
Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	2011	2010	2011			
Hope Vale	2010	2009	2010			
Milingimbi	2010	2010	2011	2010		
Mornington Island	2010	2009	2011		5	2011
Ngukurr	2011	2009	2011		16	2011
Walgett	2010	2009	2010		37	
COMMUNITIES OF POPULATION OVER 1250						
Galiwin'ku	2010	2010	2010	2010	41	
Maningrida	2010	2009	2010	2010		
Nguiu	2010	2009	2011			2011
Wadeye	2010	2010	2010	2010		2010
Yirrkala	2010	2010	2010		26	

SCHOOLING		HEALTH								
Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory (National Partnership)										
Additional teachers	Additional classrooms	Additional teacher houses	Ear, Nose and Throat		Audiology	Dental follow up		Mobile Outreach Service		Expanding Health Service Delivery
			08-09 09-10		08-09*	08-09 09-10	08-09 09-10	08-09 09-10		
3				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.5	2		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
3.9	2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3.7	2	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
7.8		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	1		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
3	4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.4		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

* From 2009–10 Audiology services will be provided through the Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative.

Early childhood

Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Implementation progress summary

Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership signed	July 2009
Total value of the National Partnership	\$564.6 million over six years
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes.

There are three elements of the National Partnership which are explained briefly below. Investments planned for the 29 priority communities are detailed where known.

Element 1 - Children and Family Centres

Children and Family Centres (CFCs) will provide integrated early childhood services, including, early learning, child care and parent and family support as well as connecting to other relevant services for Indigenous children. The Centres will target the needs of Indigenous families and their young children, but all families will be able to use the Centres. The following table describes the current status of implementation of the CFCs in the 29 priority locations. CFCs have been earmarked for 10 of the 29 priority communities.

The budgets for individual services cannot be confirmed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations at this time and are subject to further community consultation.

Location	Timeframes
Wadeye	Construction has commenced. Due for completion March 2010. Note that this facility is not part of the National Partnership, however represents new investment in a children’s service centre.
Halls Creek	Construction is expected to be completed by December 2010. The CFC is expected to become operational in February 2011.
Yuendumu	Construction is expected to commence in 2010–11. The CFC is expected to be operational in early 2011.
Fitzroy Crossing	Construction is expected to be completed by May 2011. The CFC is expected to be operational in May 2011.
Gunbalanya	Construction is expected to commence in 2010–11. The CFC is expected to be operational in mid 2011.
Maningrida	Construction is expected to commence in 2010–11. The CFC is expected to be operational in late 2011.
Ngukurr	Construction is expected to commence in 2010–11. The CFC is expected to be operational in late 2011.
Doomadgee	The CFC is expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2012.
Mornington Island	The CFC is expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2012.
Lightning Ridge (Walgett LGA)	The CFC is expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2012.

Element 2 – Increase access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual reproductive health

Under this element of the National Partnership the Commonwealth has agreed to provide \$107 million over five years in payments to State and Territory governments to increase access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual and reproductive health. The Department of Health and Ageing has reported that under the terms of the National Partnership, the first financial year is an establishment year. \$7.5 million has been transferred to State and Territory Governments in facilitation payments to commence implementing their activities.

The determination of locations for investment under the National Partnership is the responsibility of State and Territory Governments. So while the Commonwealth can suggest that additional resources are allocated to the 29 priority communities, they cannot compel other jurisdictions to do so under the terms of the National Partnership.

I will be closely monitoring the progress of this element and report on Commonwealth efforts to encourage the prioritisation of funds to the 29 locations. I will also report on State and Territory efforts to direct new investments under this element to these communities.

Element 3 - Increase access to child and maternal health care

Element 3 comprises both Commonwealth own purpose funding and complementary investment by State and Territory Governments for mothers and babies services. The combined investment by States and Territories under this element is \$75 million over five years. Commonwealth own purpose funding totals \$90.3 million over five years and is directed through the New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services program which has been funding service delivery since the 2007–08 financial year.

As at 11 November 2009, 48 New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services have been approved for funding. Of these, 30 are operational and providing services to communities. The remaining 18 services are in an establishment phase or negotiating funding agreements. It is expected they will be operational in the first quarter of the 2010-11 financial year.

Four organisations approved for funding have advised that they intend to deliver services in eight of the 29 remote service delivery regions. The following table shows the project location, primary and secondary locations where outreach services will be provided and the funding that has been agreed to date.

location	Secondary location	2008/09 Funding	2009/10 Funding
Yuendumu	Willowra, Nyirripi	\$ 85,234	\$ 209,171
Cairns	Coen, Hope Vale, Aurukun, Mossman Gorge, Laura, Mapoon, Wujail Wujal	\$ 839,019	\$ 1,025,297
Mt Isa	Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Burketown, Uradangie, Normanton	\$ 408,687	\$ 409,200
Halls Creek	Ringer Soak, Koongi Park, Lamboo Village, Redhill, Nicholson Block, Mardiwah Loop	\$ 253,570	\$ 409,200

The total funding allocated to these organisations to date is \$3,639,378.

The Department of Health and Ageing is currently negotiating further services within identified remote service delivery regions, with confirmation by the end of 2009.

Early Childhood Education National Partnership Agreement Implementation progress summary

The National Partnership on Early Childhood Education commits the Australian Government and the States and Territories to work together to ensure that by 2013 all Australian children, including those in remote communities, will have access to early childhood education in the year prior to formal schooling.	
Early Childhood Education National Partnership signed	December 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$970 million over five years to 2012-13
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	By the end of 2009 \$116 million will have been allocated

The Commonwealth Government has committed \$970 million over the five years to 2012–2013, including \$955 million to States and Territories to support universal access and \$15 million for data development and evaluation.

This commitment is underpinned by bilateral agreements which include strategies to increase preschool participation by increasing the number of hours available to 15 per week, increase the number of teachers delivering programs that are early childhood qualified and four year trained, and reducing the cost where it is a barrier to participation.

Under this National Partnership pre-schools will be funded in all 29 priority communities. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has indicated that as the new Federal Financial Relations arrangements are focussed on jurisdiction-wide outcomes and there is significant State/ Territory funding already committed to the provision of pre-school/ kindergarten services.

The National Partnership does not require jurisdictions to track Commonwealth funding separately to State/Territory funding. Under the National Partnership the States and Territories have developed strategies to implement universal access to pre-school including for Indigenous children, especially in remote communities. State and Territory Governments do not report detailed input costs to the Commonwealth.

All states and territories have a small number of targeted strategies aimed at increasing preschool participation by Indigenous children. Examples of the main strategies include:

- providing significant additional funding to community preschools in New South Wales;
- providing up to 12 mobile and 6 outreach services in Queensland over four years to meet the needs of Indigenous children in rural and regional areas where centre based delivery is not viable;
- maintaining existing Aboriginal Kindergartens in remote locations in Western Australia;
- providing 15 hours of preschool education in South Australia to assist in increasing attendance rates for Indigenous children; and
- a Northern Territory wide plan with costed models of delivery for preschool children in small remote communities to improve access to participation and attendance in preschool programs.

Key issues

While progress in this area is in accordance with COAG agreed timelines, it is nonetheless slow for communities who have been informed of the renewed interest in remote Australia and the size of COAG investments. The Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership was approved by Commonwealth, State and Territory leaders on 2 October 2008 and came into effect on 1 January 2009. Elements 2 and 3 of the National Partnership came into effect on 1 July 2009. The other National Partnerships were not agreed until 29 November 2008.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations points out that in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia the opening dates of a number of Child and Family Centres have been accelerated. This is welcome, but it remains the case that of those new centres which will be constructed in priority locations, a majority will not be operational until the middle of 2011 or later. While acknowledging that funding for these initiatives is finite, there is a clear case for further acceleration of the roll out of these services if we are to make an impact on Year 12 attainment rates over the medium term.

In cities and regional centres there are active efforts to co-locate and better coordinate early childhood services. Co-location can contribute to better integration of education and care and can assist with the identification of developmental and health issues within a mainstream, non-judgmental setting. In the remote context there may be additional benefits from consolidating scarce resources and the creation of safe, educationally focused precincts.

There are instances in the early childhood area where it appears that sufficient consideration is not being given to how new capital projects and services are best aligned:

- a new classroom with an early childhood focus was progressing towards construction in one remote priority community without allowance being made in the plans for the possibility of co-location with COAG investments or future upgrades to early childhood facilities. Intervention by a Government Business Manager has helped to ensure the plans provide for a second stage build that will provide the option of co-locating the local crèche with this new facility; and
- both Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments provide recurrent funding for playgroups and other family supports, but there appears to be little consideration given to whether these services, particularly the professionals engaged, might be co-located within a single early childhood facility or precinct.

Given engagement by Government Business Managers and Regional Operations Centres has commenced with communities to develop implementation plans in each of the Remote Service Delivery communities, there is an urgent need for Commonwealth, State and Territory education experts to partner these officers to ensure additional early childhood investments are delivered in a coordinated fashion, consistent with the best evidence of what works.

As highlighted in the following story, a well run early childhood centre can play a significant role in a community.

Kurdu Kurdu Kurlangu Yuendumu Child Care Centre

Northern Territory

The Centre attracts between 40 and 60 children daily and provides a safe space for mums, aunts, sisters, cousins and carers to bring their children and share in a range of early childhood activities. The Centre plays a significant role in the community, mentoring and supporting staff and families. As part of the weekly program for the Centre, the children and carers are connected to other services in Yuendumu, including nurse visits from the health clinic, swimming at the pool and cultural bush trips.

The Centre employs 14 full time Aboriginal Child Care Workers. In March 2009, all 14 staff had commenced Certificate III in Child Care Studies with Central TAFE Western Australia which is providing on the job training and lecturers every six weeks.

Much of the success of the Centre is due to the work of its Director, Judith McKay, who has developed a strong relationship with the Yuendumu community and tailors programs to meet the needs of local families and their children.

The Centre receives funding from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Project, which supports education and training in the Warlpiri region through mining royalties.

Schooling

Smarter Schools National Partnerships

On 29 November 2008 COAG agreed to implement a package of reforms aimed at ensuring that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy. Over the period 2009 to 2012, the Commonwealth has committed to provide an estimated \$47.4 billion in schools funding for government and non-government schools to support the national agenda for school reform.

Under new funding arrangements agreed by COAG, the National Education Agreement will provide an estimated \$23.2 billion to the States and Territories for government schools over 2008-09 to 2012-13, which includes funding for National Partnerships and Indigenous education programs. This also includes an estimated additional \$635 million that will align the historical differences between primary and secondary rates for recurrent funding for students attending government schools. This additional funding for primary schools amounts to around \$100 per student and acknowledges the importance of the early years of schooling in students' future educational success. However, this is at the discretion of States and Territory governments.

The new funding framework agreed by COAG provides greater flexibility for States and Territories to allocate Commonwealth funding to areas which they believe will produce the best outcomes for students. The new framework reduces Commonwealth prescriptions on service delivery by the States and Territories, in conjunction with outlining clearer roles and responsibilities and implementing outcomes-based public accountability. State and Territory Governments are responsible for ensuring that schools, including primary schools, are appropriately resourced to achieve the mutually-agreed objectives and performance benchmarks of the National Education Agreement.

Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership Implementation progress summary

This agreement supports reforms to address the complex challenges facing students in disadvantaged communities.	
National Partnership signed	November 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$1.5 billion over seven years
Is money available to jurisdictions in the 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. The Commonwealth made the first facilitation payments to States and Territories in June/July 2009. A final list of State and Territory schools participating in this National Partnership will be available by the end of 2009.

Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership Implementation progress summary

The focus of this agreement is on improving teacher quality.	
National Partnership signed	November 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$550 million over five years
Is money available to jurisdictions in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. The Commonwealth made the first facilitation payments to States and Territories in June/July 2009. This National Partnership does not identify individual participating schools as it targets all teachers with an emphasis on strategies to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and leaders.

Smarter Schools – Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership Implementation progress summary

This agreement focuses on teaching, leadership and the effective use of student performance information to deliver sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy.	
National Partnership signed	November 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$540 million over four years
Is money available to jurisdictions in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. The Commonwealth made the first facilitation payments to States and Territories in June/July 2009. A list of state and territory schools participating in this partnership will be finalised by the end of 2009.

The three Smarter Schools National Partnerships preliminary implementation plans were agreed in June 2009. Final implementation plans are expected to be agreed by the end of 2009.

The list of schools participating under the Smarter Schools National Partnership (Low Socio-Economic Status and Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership Agreements) is currently being finalised. Selection of schools and the allocation of funding are the responsibility of State and Territory Governments in partnership with schooling authorities. The following summary table provides an indication of how priority communities are benefiting under the Low Socio-economic Status Schools National Partnership based on data available at 18 November 2009. This material has been provided by State and Territory Governments. Funding allocations are not available at this time.

Priority Community Schools scheduled to benefit under the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership

Northern Territory	
Angurugu	Angurugu School
Galiwin'ku	Shepherdson College
Gapuwiyak	Gapuwiyak School
Gunbalanya	Gunbalanya School
Hermannsburg	Ntaria School
Lajamanu	Lajamanu School
Maningrida	Maningrida School
Millingimbi	Millingimbi School
Nguiu	Xavier CEC, Murrupurtyanuwu Catholic School
Ngukurr	Ngukurr School
Numbulwar	Numbulwar School
Umbakumba	Umbakumba School
Wadeye	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr
Yirrkala	Yirrkala School (Yamburpa)
Yuendumu	Yuendumu School
Queensland	
Aurukun	Western Cape College will receive assistance under the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership
Coen	Not targeted at this stage
Doomadgee	Doomadgee State School
Hope Vale	Hope Vale State School
Mornington Island	Mornington Island State School
Mossman Gorge	Not targeted at this stage
South Australia	
Amata	Amata Anangu School
Mimili	Mimili Anangu School
Western Australia	
Ardyaloon	One Arm Point School
Beagle Bay	Sacred Heart School
Fitzroy Crossing	Fitzroy Crossing District High School
Halls Creek	Halls Creek District High School
New South Wales	
Walgett	Walgett Community College St Joseph's School
Wilcannia	Wilcannia Central School St Therese's Community School

On 6 November 2009, Australia’s Education Ministers agreed on a draft Indigenous Education Action Plan that will be released for further consultation. The Action Plan is to guide the national effort towards closing the gaps in early childhood and school education outcomes for Indigenous Australians. It will include a range of actions to bring about both systemic and local-level improvements across six domains of activity that evidence has shown will make the most impact on closing the gap. They are:

- readiness for school;
- engagement and connections;
- attendance;
- leadership, quality teaching and workforce development;
- literacy and numeracy; and
- pathways to post-school options.

Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership Implementation progress summary

The focus of this agreement is on young people attaining Year 12 or Certificate II or above and transitioning to further education, training or employment.	
National Partnership signed	July 2009
Total value of the National Partnership	\$723 million over five years
Is money available to jurisdictions in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. \$13.3 million

Building the Education Revolution Implementation progress summary

As part of the Commonwealth Government’s economic stimulus package, \$16.2 billion is being invested over two years in three capital programs targeted at multipurpose halls, libraries and classrooms in all primary schools, general maintenance and repairs in all schools and science and language training facilities in selected secondary schools.	
National Partnership signed	December 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$16.2 billion
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes

Under the three elements of the Building the Education Revolution almost all communities have received additional investment in educational infrastructure.

Building the Education Revolution Element	Number of communities benefitting
National School Pride	All communities (\$4.9 million),
Primary Schools for the 21 st Century	All communities (\$67.9 million)
Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools	Galiwin’ku, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Wadeye (\$11.6 million)

Mossman Gorge

The nearest education facilities to Mossman Gorge are found in Mossman, less than two kilometres away. Under the Building the Education Revolution (BER) \$3.3 million in total has been committed to Mossman State School, Mossman State High School and St Augustine’s School.

Secondary School Computer Fund

The Australian Government is investing over \$2.2 billion in the Digital Education Revolution to improve access to world class information for Australian school students. A key element of this investment is over \$2.1 billion for the National Secondary School Computer Fund (the Fund), which will assist schools to provide new information and communications technology for secondary students in years 9–12. The overall aim of the Fund is to achieve a 1:1 computer to student ratio for students in years 9–12 in Australian secondary schools by 2011.

Eleven communities have benefitted from the Fund. These schools have received a total of 225 computers, of which 43 are installed.

Communities which have received funding to date	Number of computers (Total \$0.2m)	Number of computers installed
Amata	10	
Doomadgee	13	
Fitzroy Crossing	25	9
Galiwin’ku	41	
Halls Creek	43	6
Mornington Island	5	
Ngukurr	16	
Walgett	37	19
Wilcannia	3	3
Yirrkala	26	
Yuendumu	6	6

* Installation of computers as at 23 November 2009

Trade Training Centres in Schools Program

Seven priority communities have benefitted from five funded projects under the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program.

Approved projects	Project, project costs and progress
Mornington Island and Doomadgee	Mornington Island State School and Doomadgee State School received funding as part of a cluster project with Spinifex State College (\$4.5 million). To be completed in 2010.
Wilcannia	Wilcannia Central School received funding as part of a cluster application with Broken Hill High School, Ivanhoe Central School, Menindee Central School and Willyama Central School (\$5.6 million). To be completed in 2010.
Wadeye	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic School received funding to construct an automotive workshop and refurbish a wood and metal work and hospitality classrooms (\$1.5 million). To be completed in 2010.
Ngukurr and Numbulwar	Ngukurr and Numbulwar Schools have been approved for funding as part of a cluster project to build a facility at Ngukurr School (\$3.9 million). To be completed in 2010.
Nguiu	Xavier Community Education Centre was approved for funding to refurbish a facility to deliver Hospitality, Building and Construction, Graphic Art and Printing, Rural Operations and Horticulture training (\$1.5 million). To be completed in 2010.

Based on existing Ten Year Plans for the Program, locations for future Trade Training Centre projects already include 13 of the remaining 21 priority locations (including 10 priority locations in the Northern Territory; both priority locations in South Australia and the remaining location in New South Wales). The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is considering how best to encourage and support schools in these locations to access the Program including looking at Program Guidelines to focus support in these communities.

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory

Under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory Government, fourteen of the fifteen priority communities have received additional teachers and/or classrooms to boost their capacity.

Extra teachers

Total funding of \$98.8 million over five years from 2008-09 was provided to employ an additional 200 teachers in the Northern Territory. 47.3 teacher positions have been funded to date in 13 of the 15 priority communities in the Northern Territory. A total of 85 government positions have been funded in total to date. It is expected that the remaining positions will be rolled out as school attendance increases and in line with the funding profile of the measure including to the 15 priority communities.

Additional teacher housing

Total funding of \$18.2 million has been committed by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments to construct up to 50 new homes in remote communities. Ten priority communities will benefit from this initiative, with an expected completion date of 30 June 2010.

Classrooms

Total funding of \$10.3 million over 2 years from 2007-08 has been committed for the construction of 26 classrooms in Northern Territory schools. Fourteen classrooms in eight priority communities are scheduled for completion by October 2010 under this initiative.

Priority community	Additional teachers	Additional classrooms	Additional teacher houses
Angurugu	2 teachers in place		
Galiwin'ku	7.8 teachers in place		Yes
Gapuwiyak	1.5 teachers in place	2 classrooms. Target: completion July 2010	
Gunbalanya	2 teachers in place	1 classroom. Target: completion July 2010	Yes
Hermannsburg	3.9 teachers in place	2 classrooms. Target: completion March 2010	Yes
Lajamanu	3 teachers in place		
Maningrida	6 teachers in place	1 classroom. Target: contract let Jan 2010. Completion Oct 2010	Yes
Millingimbi	6 teachers in place	1 classroom. Target: completion Aug 2010	
Nguiu	3 teachers in place	1 classroom	
Ngukurr	3.7 teachers	2 classrooms Target: completion Dec 2009	Yes
Numbulwar	Nil teachers		
Umbakumba	2 teachers in place		Yes
Wadeye	3 teachers in place	4 classrooms*	
Yirrkala	3.4 teachers		Yes
Yuendumu	Nil teachers		Yes

* No completion dates are available for non-government schools

Funding is also available in the Northern Territory under the Quality Teaching Package and Accelerating Literacy measures for all 15 priority communities. The Quality Teaching Package is a professional development framework focused on upskilling local Indigenous staff who are more likely to stay long term in communities. Accelerating Literacy is designed to support Northern Territory education providers to embed good teaching practices to manage the anticipated increases in enrolment and attendance and to accelerate literacy outcomes for Indigenous students in remote communities. Funding under these measures is currently available and will continue until 2012-13.

Key issues

My visits have confirmed for me the central importance of education and training to governments' commitment to close the gap. High performing schools have the potential to be the hubs of many remote communities - a focus for learning; an enabling education environment; a safe community meeting place for parents and the broader community; and in some cases a site for adult learning, transition to work experience, access to computers and the internet and a place for recreation (see following story).



**Mimili Anangu School
South Australia**

The Mimili Anangu School is actively pursuing retention of students to year 12 and positive transition to study and work beyond year 12. Sixty-eight students are currently enrolled at the school to year 12. There are 36 secondary students.

Links between school programs and the Mimili Community Pool provide opportunities for sport and recreation, work related training, and part-time work that also makes a valuable contribution to community health and wellbeing.

Students participate in squad training at the pool two to three times per week through the warmer months. All classes receive the Royal Life Swimming Program, and South Australian Certificate of Education (senior secondary) students work towards achieving their Bronze Medallion. Students who achieve their Bronze Medallion are then qualified to work as lifeguards at the swimming pool.

Eight senior secondary students currently have part-time jobs as lifeguards at the pool, providing the supervision necessary to keep the pool open for the community. If the part-time life guards do not present for work the pool cannot open for the afternoon. Student lifeguards are gaining important and real work experience, earning their own money and playing important roles in the health of the community.

In almost every one of the 29 communities, capital improvements are in progress or planned as a result of the Building the Education Revolution program. In many Northern Territory communities, additional classrooms have been built as part of the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership.

Some of the additional \$2.2 billion invested in schooling National Partnerships will shortly also be distributed to participating schools. \$87.3 million has already been delivered to States and Territories. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has stated that it is progressively identifying the overlap between participating National Partnership schools and the 29 priority locations. Given the importance of the Remote Service Delivery partnership, I would expect that every one of the 29 priority locations will benefit from this significant additional investment.

I will be monitoring these National Partnerships closely and will report on the degree to which Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments prioritise COAG investments to the 29 priority communities.

At a time when there is significant additional educational infrastructure and recurrent funding on offer there is a risk these investments will not be deployed in a coordinated way in remote Australia. As a result, the efforts of individual school communities will not realise their full potential – lifting attendance and retention and providing hope for future economic independence.

In the next section of this report I have recognised existing mechanisms in some jurisdictions to coordinate and tailor investment at the local level and I have also proposed the development of Education and Training Pathway Plans which can be incorporated into the Local Implementation Planning process being undertaken with communities. These educational plans could link new investments with existing infrastructure to ensure students:

- attend early childhood education programs to prepare them for school and their parents receive advice and support on early learning and referral to other early childhood services available in the community;
- attend and participate in school and are afforded opportunities to gain skills in areas for which there are local and remote post school training and employment opportunities; and
- participate in post school training including local apprenticeships or vocational education opportunities.

These plans may require the creative use of infrastructure and existing services including:

- the use of school facilities for adult learning, internet access and community events;
- Trades Training Centres providing instruction for junior secondary students and adults;
- co-location of childcare, schooling and playgroups; and
- identifying training places and providing them within existing services such as schools, stores, child care centres, council services.

In some communities some or all of these things are being tried already.

In relation to another Commonwealth election commitment – to provide funding of up to \$1.5 million per eligible secondary school for Trade Training Centre facilities – to date six projects in eight of the 29 Remote Service Delivery communities have benefitted. All eligible schools in the priority areas are expected to benefit from the Program over the next decade. However, as the Program relies on a competitive process, it is likely many of these communities will not receive assistance until later in the 10 year life of the Program.

Given the importance of trades as a strategy to keep secondary Indigenous students engaged at school and the explicit commitment to lift Indigenous attendance and school retention to close the gap - there is a case for accelerating the roll out of Trade Training Centres for the benefit of all 29 priority communities. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is considering options to facilitate such acceleration.

Beyond the Trade Training Centres program, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is also considering flexible options to support school training centres. For example, Ministerial approval was recently given to support a training centre project at Mossman Gorge from targeted funds within the Department.

Health

Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes National Partnership Implementation progress summary

The initiatives in this Agreement tackle smoking; healthy youth transition to adulthood; make Indigenous health everyone’s business; improve primary health care service delivery; improve continuity of care and co-ordination with health services; and improve access to acute care.	
National Partnership signed	December 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$1.6 billion over four years
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. Allocation of funding under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package will commence in 2010.

The Indigenous Health Outcomes National Partnership targets five priority areas:

- tackling smoking;
- primary health care services that can deliver;
- fixing the gaps and improving the patient journey;
- providing a healthy transition to adulthood; and
- making Indigenous health everyone’s business.

The Indigenous Chronic Disease Package – the Commonwealth component of the Partnership - commenced on 1 July 2009. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing is currently consulting with the Indigenous health partnership forums on priority areas for investment for its contribution to this National Partnership. The Department has indicated it will ensure that the forums consider the 29 priority locations in identifying target regions. State and Territory Governments have provided no details of implementation progress under this Partnership.

Hospital and Health Workforce Reform National Partnership Implementation progress summary

The focus of this agreement is on reforming the efficiency of public hospital services, health workforce capability and supply, the volume and quality of subacute services and the functioning of emergency departments.	
National Partnership signed	December 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$3.042 billion over five years
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. The Commonwealth provided States and Territories full funding in 2008-09 of \$500 million for subacute care and \$750 million for taking pressure off public hospital (Emergency Department) reforms. Refer below to the availability of funding for communities.

The Hospital and Health Workforce Reform National Partnership aims to reform the efficiency of public hospital services, health workforce capability and supply, the volume and quality of subacute services and the functioning of emergency departments. Funding for the three components of the Agreement relating to hospitals will be provided across all states and territories and will benefit the Australian community as a whole. The Workforce Enablers component will be implemented through Health Workforce Australia, and on the whole, will be facilitating subsidies to assist in the provision of clinical training and will provide timely and accurate advice and policy information to governments. This will help to address workforce shortages and support health workforce planning to ensure Australia’s future health workforce can meet the increasing demand for services for all Australians. State and Territory Governments have provided no details of implementation progress under this Partnership.

The National Partnership Agreement does not require information about Indigenous initiatives to be separately identified. Some States and Territories, however, have included such information in their subacute care implementation plans. For example:

- enhancing the Hospital in the Home Program at Alice Springs Hospital by recruiting Aboriginal Health Workers in 2009-10 in the Northern Territory; and
- possible recruitment of an Aboriginal Health worker in palliative care services in New South Wales.

In addition to National Partnership requirements, the Commonwealth will request specific information from States and Territories relating to the priority locations for the Subacute Care and Emergency Department reform elements through the relevant implementation groups and will provide this information once it becomes available.

The Partnership Agreement funds for the Subacute Care and Emergency Departments were paid in their entirety in the 2008-09 financial year. State and Territory implementation plans were agreed with the Commonwealth in June 2009 and States and Territories are now in the early stages of delivering against those implementation plans. This information will be available for future reports.

Preventative Health National Partnership Implementation progress summary

The agreement will address lifestyle risks associated with chronic disease through healthy lifestyle programs in workplaces, communities and childhood settings and through social marketing campaigns.	
National Partnership signed	December 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$872.1 million
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes

The Preventative Health National Partnership includes provisions for addressing the particular needs of socio-economically disadvantaged Australians, including those living in rural and remote communities. The Department of Health and Ageing has indicated it will ensure that the Healthy Communities, Healthy Workers and Healthy Children initiatives which form part of the Agreement have the potential to deliver benefits to some of the 29 priority locations. The Healthy Communities initiative is the only element of the Agreement for which funds are available in 2009-10. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing is currently identifying 12 communities, which include rural and remote communities, to participate in a pilot phase under the initiative. The Department has indicated it will ensure that the 29 priority locations are considered as part of this process.

The Social Marketing initiative for Measure Up includes an extension of the campaign targeting adults at key life stages and high risk groups. The Building upon the Tomorrow Peoples campaign, a strategy based on formative research, will be rolled out to specifically target Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing will ensure that the 29 priority communities are considered when identifying the audience for this initiative. State and Territory Governments have provided no details of implementation progress under this Partnership to date.

Many of the COAG National Partnerships relating to health were separately negotiated prior to the COAG Remote Service Delivery partnership and as a result may not align with the priorities in the latter agreement. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has indicated that for the elements of agreements that are in the early phases of planning and implementation, it will pursue alignment opportunities toward the 29 priority communities. For example, the Department has indicated:

- it is seeking advice from its Indigenous health partnership forums on priority regions for investment for its contribution to the Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes National Partnership and will ensure that the forums consider the 29 priority locations in providing this advice;
- it has recently advertised an open Request for Tender process to engage a consultant to undertake a planning and needs analysis for the strategic location of hearing equipment in Aboriginal Medical Services and that the successful tenderer will be provided with a list of priority locations and will need to identify primary health care services within the priority locations that would be within scope to receive hearing equipment;
- in expanding the current Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program to fund multidisciplinary teams to better manage complex and chronic health conditions in rural and remote Indigenous communities, implementation will have regard to the 29 priority locations; and
- the implementation of an \$11 million initiative to pilot the use of mobile dental facilities in regional and remote Indigenous communities will have regard to the 29 priority locations.

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership

Under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership, priority locations are benefiting from targeted health services including ear nose and throat, dental and audiology services. A Mobile Outreach Service was funded in 2008-09 and is being progressively implemented over four years. Since commencement in 2008, the service has been delivered to all priority locations. Details of visits completed are summarised in the table below.

Follow up Health Care provided in Northern Territory Priority Locations

	Ear Nose and Throat			Audiology			Dental follow up			Mobile Outreach Service		
	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10
Angurugu	N	Y	N	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Galiwin'ku	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Gapuwiyak	N	Y	Y	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	N
Gunbalanya	N	Y	Y	N	Y	*	Y	Y	Y	n/a	N	Y
Hermannsburg	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	*	Y	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Lajamanu	N	N	Y	Y	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Maningrida	N	Y	Y	N	Y	*	Y	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Milingimbi	N	Y	Y	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	N
Nguiu	N	Y	N	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	N	Y
Ngukurr	N	Y	N	Y	Y	*	Y	Y	N	n/a	N	Y
Numbulwar	N	Y	N	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Umbakumba	N	Y	N	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	N	Y
Wadeye	N	Y	Y	N	Y	*	N	Y	Y	n/a	Y	Y
Yirrkala	N	Y	N	Y	Y	*	N	Y	N	n/a	Y	Y
Yuendumu	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	*	Y	Y	N	n/a	Y	Y

*From 2009-10 onwards, Audiology services will be provided through the Expanding Heath Service Delivery Initiative.

Under the Expanding Heath Service Delivery Initiative considerable additional investment is being made in the 15 priority locations. This investment is being used to deliver long term improvements in the Northern Territory primary health care system.

The Commonwealth Government committed \$99.7 million to expand primary health care service delivery in remote Northern Territory Indigenous communities over two years from July 2008. The expansion of services provided by this initiative will contribute to Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth Government is providing a further \$131.1 million over three years commencing in 2009-10 which is an addition to the funds already committed for the EHSDI in 2009-10 for the Northern Territory. This measure will:

- maintain the increased primary care services;
- continue regional reform of remote Indigenous primary care health services in the Northern Territory;
- continue the Remote Area Health Corps;
- continue dental care provision;
- expand the Mobile Outreach Services to respond to child abuse-related trauma;
- continue alcohol and other drug treatment and rehabilitation services; and
- complete ear, nose and throat follow up services.

Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Sites with Expanding Heath Service Delivery Initiative Details

Priority community	Health Service Delivery Area	2008-09	2009-10
Hermannsburg	Central Australia	\$525,736	\$525,736**
Yuendumu	Central Australia	\$508,813	\$508,813**
Angurugu	East Arnhem	\$456,779	\$456,779*
Galiwin'ku	East Arnhem	\$921,107	\$921,107*
Gapuwiyak and outstations	East Arnhem	\$614,858	\$614,858*
Milingimbi	East Arnhem	\$551,626	\$551,626*
Numbulwar and outstations	East Arnhem	\$361,931	\$361,931*
Umbakumba	East Arnhem	\$210,930	\$210,930*
Yirrkala	East Arnhem	\$337,393	\$337,393*
Ngukurr	Katherine East	\$671,617	\$1,674,911**
Lajamanu	Katherine West	\$0	\$747,766**
Maningrida and outstations	Maningrida	\$1,465,907	\$1,933,176
Nguiu	Tiwi	\$833,398	\$852,292
Wadeye	Top End West	\$840,717	\$956,016
Gunbalanya	West Arnhem	\$997,076	\$1,291,965
Total		\$9,297,888	\$11,945,299

*An additional funding allocation of \$2.8 million is available for the East Arnhem Health Services Delivery Area which may result in additional funding to these sites.

**The funding for 2008-09 and 2009-10 refers to total Health Service Delivery Area Funding, not site specific funding levels.

***The Funding for 2008-09 and 2009-10 refers to sub-Health Service Deliver Area Funding, not site specific funding levels. However, an additional Funding allocation of \$2.5 million is available for the Central Australia Health Service Delivery Area which may result in additional funding to these sites.

Outside of the National Partnership Agreements, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has indicated it has invested significant capital funds in 22 of the 29 priority locations to upgrade the quality of health care facilities. An investment in health-related capital works of \$62.1 million has been provided since 2000 to 22 of the 29 communities. Of this, \$40 million is for completed works and \$21.9 million is currently in progress.

Key issues

The nature and implementation timeframes of the health National Partnerships reached at COAG make it difficult to discern progress at this time, particularly in regard to the 29 priority locations which are a focus for my Office.

I want to stress there is no evidence that the implementation of COAG health agreements is currently behind schedule. However, State and Territory Governments who are responsible for much of the implementation tasks have not indicated that additional funding is contemplated for services to remote Indigenous communities. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has provided details of planning, consultation and funding activity in the areas for which it has responsibility. While welcome, this information only succeeds in highlighting the absence of State and Territory data on progress.

A related issue that has been drawn to my attention by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing is that COAG health related agreements preceded the Remote Service Delivery partnership. While the Department has sought to draw attention to how it will give consideration to remote service delivery and the 29 priority locations where possible, this is unlikely

to produce the same kind of results as an amended set of health agreements which gave stronger direction to health agencies across both levels of government.

I will be monitoring this area of service delivery in the coming months, including seeking information from State and Territory Governments on implementation progress.

End Stage Renal Disease Services

Renal disease is a major concern in almost every community I visited. The incidence of treated end stage renal disease in Indigenous Australians is more than eight times that of other Australians. In the Northern Territory it is more than 28 times.

Given the prevalence of renal disease in Aboriginal communities and the social and economic costs of patients relocating to regional centres for treatment, patients and communities are seeking local provision of services where possible. There is also concern in the Central Desert region at current arrangements that see renal services in Alice Springs effectively closed for patients from cross border regions. While negotiations continue between the Northern Territory and Western and South Australian Governments, patients are being sent further away from family and cultural affiliations to Perth and Adelaide.

State and Territory Governments are responsible for providing tertiary services within their jurisdictions and determining policy regarding the provision of these services. This includes delivering renal dialysis and associated support services within hospital and community settings. The Commonwealth Government provides funding to State and Territory Governments through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations for tertiary services delivered in a manner consistent with the terms of the National Healthcare Agreement, which includes the provision of renal dialysis services. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing is also providing approximately \$10 million through to 2011-12 in additional funding for renal services for Indigenous patients in rural and remote areas in the Northern Territory.

The policies of both levels of government state that if patients are able to learn self care dialysis, they will be supported to return to and access services in their communities on the condition that sufficient family and clinical support is available to enable dialysis to occur safely. However, only a proportion of clients are deemed suitable for self care dialysis and are able to return home.

Both levels of government argue that providing care for Indigenous people in their communities can be unsafe, expensive and impractical given constraints such as the need for a specialist workforce, infrastructure and support, however, there are examples of services that are operating successfully.

In reality some patients will choose not to receive care if they cannot access it locally, which means they are likely to die prematurely and painfully. Patient wishes and quality of life should be considered when determining the most appropriate approach to care. It should also be borne in mind that the costs associated with treatment provided in regional centres can be considerable and often involve the movement of families.

Governments should make every effort to implement measures which might extend the lives of Aboriginal people when the current policy framework agreed by COAG has, as its goal, the closing of the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

I do not want to constrain discussion between governments on the exact nature of measures that may be required to resolve the complex problem of treatment of renal disease in remote Aboriginal communities but I urge action on two key fronts:

- immediate consideration of strategies to boost renal services in Alice Springs including for patients travelling from the desert regions in nearby Western Australia and South Australia; and
- further consideration by State and Territory Governments in partnership with the Commonwealth of the costs (including patient and family movements) and benefits of providing care in priority communities and the merits of co-locating renal services with primary health clinics in these locations.

Community Dialysis Services

Northern Territory

In recognition of a desire to access renal treatment at or closer to home, the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation has taken steps to set up a dialysis support service for Warlpiri renal patients in the Tanami region.

In early 2007, Kurra decided to support Warlpiri renal patients forced to dislocate from their communities to Alice Springs to access dialysis treatment. Kurra asked Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation, the organisation that set up renal care in Kintore in the Western Desert, to help design a service.

Using \$1.6 million in Kurra royalty money, a dialysis clinic will open in Yuendumu in early 2010. This includes a dialysis unit, nurse’s accommodation, and a full time renal nurse in Yuendumu. Self Care training, patient support and return to country trips have been running from the Western Desert’s Purple House for 18 months using Kurra funds. Patients and their families have access to social services, advocacy, GP services, bush medicine, an exercise physiologist as well as dialysis. The funding will also pay for patients from nearby communities to travel to Yuendumu for regular overnight visits and longer holidays at home, where they will be treated in the unit by the renal nurse.



The renal service in Yuendumu will cater for patients in Yuendumu, Nyirripi, Yuelamu and Willowra. Once this service is established, Kurra plans to assist renal patients from Lajamanu.

With the money from Kurra, the renal service in Yuendumu will be able to last for around 12 months. Kurra are hoping that governments and philanthropists will agree to put some money towards the renal service to help keep it running. Taking the initiative to establish the service demonstrates how important it is to Aboriginal people in the region to access treatment closer to home where they can pass on important cultural knowledge and take part and remain connected to their community.

Samuel Nelson learning self care dialysis with the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation

Department of Health and Ageing investment in the 29 priority locations

Location	Capital investment since the year 2000	Capital projects in progress 2009-10	Other Health and Ageing funding in 2009-10
Angurugu	\$800,000	\$350,000	\$ 1,448,604
Galiwin’ku	\$4,834,000	\$2,700,000	\$ 4,493,641
Gapuwiyak	\$648,412	-	\$ 811,339
Gunbalanya	\$1,377,000	\$550,000	\$ 339,463
Hermannsburg	\$380,000	\$380,000	\$ 1,942,839
Lajamanu	\$2,620,000	\$2,620,000	\$ 905,397
Maningrida	\$2,202,000	-	\$ 4,597,804
Millingimbi	\$483,851	-	\$ 1,304,188
Nguiu	\$7,170,579	\$2,000,000	\$ 1,810,173
Ngukurr	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$ 1,986,264
Numbulwar	-	-	\$ 617,162
Umbakumba	\$1,150,000	\$1,150,000	\$ 595,769
Wadeye	\$10,867,260	\$10,175,260	\$ 3,438,548
Yirrkala	\$5,435,000	-	\$ 2,630,093
Yuendumu	\$11,701,933	-	\$ 3,001,622
Aurukun	\$482,000	-	\$ 3,648,152
Coen	-	-	\$ 1,478,365
Doomadgee	-	-	\$ 2,832,432
Hope Vale	-	-	\$ 2,490,298
Mornington Island	\$449,000	-	\$ 3,033,445
Mossman Gorge	\$409,000	-	\$ 2,007,237
Ardyaloon	-	-	\$ 2,606,004
Beagle Bay	\$415,000	-	\$10,124,570
Fitzroy Crossing	\$4,256,698	-	\$ 9,048,702
Halls Creek	\$2,595,371	\$1,262,500	\$10,185,207
Walgett	\$1,051,586	-	\$ 4,258,464
Wilcannia	-	-	\$ 1,078,382
Amata (and homelands)	\$110,000	-	\$ 67,280
Mimili (and homelands)	\$1,940,000	-	\$ 56,682
Total	\$62,128,690	\$21,937.760	\$82,838,125

Note that capital works funding is generally multi-year funding due to the duration of projects. Figures for 2009-10 contain a list of funding agreements for capital works which are currently in progress by the Department of Health and Ageing in the 2009-10 financial year. Projects identified as undertaken since the year 2000 may be either complete or in progress.

Other Department of Health and Ageing funding includes estimates attributed to the communities based on a proportion of region-wide funding.

Economic participation

National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation Implementation progress summary

This agreement seeks to assist up to 13,000 Indigenous people into employment and ensure Indigenous workforce strategies are incorporated in all COAG reforms.	
National Partnership signed	February 2009
Total value of the National Partnership	\$228.9 million for Element 1 only
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes. Jurisdictions have been provided with funds to help CDEP participants to find jobs outside of CDEP.

The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation involves complementary investment and effort by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to significantly improve opportunities for Indigenous people to engage in private and public sector jobs through four elements:

- Element 1: creating jobs in areas of government service delivery that have previously relied on subsidies through the CDEP program;
- Element 2: strengthening government procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment;
- Element 3: incorporating Indigenous workforce strategies into all new major COAG reforms contributing to Closing the Gap targets; and
- Element 4: increasing public sector employment to reflect Indigenous working age population share by 2015.

Under Element 1 of the National Partnership, as at 4 November 2009, a total of 1,549 jobs for Indigenous Australians have been created in government service delivery from CDEP activities in rural and remote areas of Australia. Of the 1,549, only 1,206 have been filled. This includes around 632 in the 29 priority communities of which 153 jobs have been created in the 14 priority communities of the COAG Indigenous Economic Participation Jobs Package Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Jobs were intended to be in place at the time of CDEP reform on 1 July 2009.

Northern Territory conversions are part of the NT Jobs Package, created in December 2007 as a key priority of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Under this earlier program, the Australian Government provided more than \$90 million over three years to generate around 2000 jobs supporting government service delivery. As of 30 September 2009 over 479.8 jobs have been created under the Northern Territory Jobs Package in the 15 Remote Service Delivery communities.

The following table shows the total jobs created under the Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership and Northern Territory Jobs Packages in each of the 29 priority RSD communities.

Total jobs filled under Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership Jobs Package and Northern Territory Jobs Package in the 29 Priority Locations

Jurisdiction	Priority community	Jobs
NT	Angurugu	4
NT	Galiwin'ku	30
NT	Gapuwiyak	19
NT	Gunbalanya	40
NT	Hermannsburg	31.2
NT	Lajamanu	35.6
NT	Maningrida	62
NT	Milingimbi	13.5
NT	Nguiu	49.5
NT	Ngukurr	37
NT	Numbulwar	15
NT	Umbakumba	3
NT	Wadeye	76
NT	Yirrkala	29
NT	Yuendumu	35
NT Jobs Package Sub-total		479.8
QLD	Aurukun	11
QLD	Coen	18
QLD	Doomadgee	2
QLD	Hope Vale	15
QLD	Mornington Island	13
QLD	Mossman Gorge	18
NSW	Walgett	1
NSW	Wilcannia	5
SA	Amata	1
SA	Mimili	7
WA	Ardyaloon	4
WA	Beagle Bay	
WA	Fitzroy Crossing	17
WA	Halls Creek	41
COAG Jobs Package Sub-total		153
Total		632.8

Note - Data does not include Northern Territory Jobs Package Municipal Services and Night Patrol positions. Agencies currently have different methodologies of information management and contract management and therefore data is not currently provided in a consistent format by community. Agencies are working to meet a streamlined approach to information management reports for December 09 quarters' end.

Under Element 2, a revised Indigenous Opportunities Policy has been drafted and is currently under consideration by the Commonwealth Government. It is not clear when the revised Policy will be agreed and implemented. Nor is it clear what progress the States and Territories have made in contributing to this element. Further, the advisory service, to be established by the Commonwealth to support agencies, including State and Territory Governments has not yet been created.

Separate from the National Partnership, but contributing to its objectives, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations executed a \$3 million funding agreement in June 2009 to support the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council pilot project over three years. The pilot will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the minority supplier model in promoting Indigenous business and employment outcomes in Australia. The Council aims to encourage the growth of the Indigenous private sector by linking corporate purchasers with registered Indigenous businesses, thereby providing employment opportunities to Indigenous Australians.

In relation to Element 3, COAG's commitment to include Indigenous workforce strategies in all new major COAG reforms has not formally been reflected in all new National Partnerships. Some National Partnerships include strategies to develop Indigenous employment and training opportunities such as:

- work is progressing as part of the National Partnership for the East Kimberley Development Package to ensure that the projects include contractual requirements to implement an Indigenous training and employment plan;
- the National Partnership Agreement for Remote Indigenous Housing includes a national benchmark of 20 per cent of local Indigenous employment for the procurement for new housing construction – noting that individual States and Territories may contribute in different proportions; and
- under the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership, each jurisdiction will have a workforce development strategy which will set out how each Children and Family Centre will develop a local Indigenous workforce and build the cultural competence of the Centre.

Mechanisms are being considered by the Commonwealth to ensure Commonwealth agencies and jurisdictions fully utilise Indigenous employment and economic participation opportunities through National Partnerships.

Under Element 4, all jurisdictions have identified their Indigenous public sector targets to 2015. The Commonwealth target is 2.6% Indigenous public sector and a Commonwealth public sector employment strategy is being developed to support the achievement of the target.

This National Partnership is intended to be supported through a larger investment in Indigenous economic participation that has been made through the reformed Job Services Australia, Indigenous Employment Program and the CDEP program.

Under the new Job Services Australia contract, there are 19 providers servicing the 29 priority communities. These providers service almost 9,200 job seekers. In areas where Job Services Australia and CDEP providers both operate, the providers are required to enter into Service Level Agreements to align delivery of support to jobseekers. All required Service Level Agreements are in place in the 29 priority locations. Under the Job Services Australia deed, each job seeker receives an individualised Employment Pathway Plan tailored to their needs and opportunities in the labour market with the highest level of assistance going to the most disadvantaged job seekers. Data indicate that 96 per cent of job seekers in the 29 communities are receiving the highest levels of Job Services Australia support under Streams 3 and 4.

The reformed Indigenous Employment Program commenced on 1 July 2009. There are currently 92 projects operating in remote Employment Service Areas, some of which are in the 29 priority communities. These projects are funded for \$48.7 million and have the capacity for 3,241 employment places, 3,558 pre-employment support places and 1,442 mentoring places. 25 of the 29 locations have Indigenous Employment Program projects. Job Services Australia has recorded 229 Remote Education Commencement Outcomes between 1 July and 30 September 2009 in the 29 communities.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is also considering piloting workforce innovation projects in some of the 29 remote service delivery locations. Such projects would assist communities, business and industry to put in place specific workforce development solutions for a location.

Key issues

Progress in the creation of properly paid positions for the delivery of government services that were previously supported by CDEP is now substantially complete. It is also welcome that support for these positions will be ongoing. However, it will be important that funding arrangements to support created positions at a local level are not arbitrarily removed from communities and used to plug new or emerging gaps. I will be monitoring this closely to ensure that government services continue to be provided at an appropriate level in these communities in accordance with the principles of the job creation arrangements.

In the course of my visits, some community members have expressed concern at the lack of coordination between Job Services Australia providers and other employment and training providers, including CDEP. I note the mechanism of a local service level agreement to ensure that providers whose role it is to promote economic participation work together. I am advised that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs have recently completed a series of Job Services Australia and CDEP provider workshops involving all providers in the priority locations to emphasise the need for coordination at the local level. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' contract and agreement managers will continue to work with providers on their approach to job seeker servicing to ensure cooperative working relationships continue.

Given the portfolio separation of CDEP and the Job Services Australia programs, these efforts need to be closely coordinated through Regional Operations Centres to ensure that activity is aligned and that employment and training services complement educational and other services in communities.

I have indicated earlier the importance of establishing education and training pathways that allow young people and their parents to identify post school training and employment opportunities in their local communities. From my visits it appears to me that there may be between 15 and 50 vocational education training opportunities that might be attached to the various Commonwealth, State and Territory supported services in each community. Systematic identification, management and promotion of vocational education and training within communities would help school retention by providing young people with a post school opportunity, assist with workforce issues and promote economic independence.

States and Territories have flexibility under the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development for the promotion and delivery of vocational education and training within communities. They are able to implement programs and initiatives which will help achieve the outcomes such as retaining young people in school and developing their skills to improve employment opportunities. Regional Operations Centres need to work with State and Territory authorities to identify and take advantage of these opportunities to maximise the outcomes that can be achieved at the individual community level.

Investment through all of the National Partnerships, coupled with existing program funding in the 29 priority communities, should be structured such that funding agreements or community-wide contracts set out the training places that should accompany each activity.

Employment services

The new job search and training arrangements should provide additional opportunities for job seekers to gain available jobs or return to education. This is because:

- the classification of almost all job seekers within priority locations within streams 3 and 4 of the new system means that significant resources are available to provide the level of support needed by job seekers. These resources include Service Fees paid to providers and Employment Pathway Funds available to help individual job seekers overcome barriers to employment;
- the Job Services Australia deed and CDEP funding agreements provide strong incentives for providers to assist job seekers in remote areas to return to education, undertake accredited training or language, literacy and numeracy training; and
- Job Services Australia and CDEP providers are able to claim for the same outcomes where they are working in close cooperation to assist their common job seekers.

I will be monitoring what happens in practice. In remote servicing, Jobs Services Australia providers will need to maximise their time on the ground in remote communities and properly utilise funding available for each client if they are to achieve robust outcomes.

Working on Country – Mornington Island
Queensland

“The fellas are as proud as punch to put on their uniforms and go out and look after their country. Even though it’s hard work they have a real sense of achievement. The whole community is proud of what they are doing.”

– Bradley Wilson, Wellesley Islands Ranger

Under a Working on Country contract, the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation employs eight Indigenous rangers to implement a much needed weed and pest management plan in the Southern Gulf of Carpentaria and surrounding islands.

While each ranger has their own residence in town, they often camp out on country for weeks at a time to undertake specific work activities. A typical work day can be spent in the one location to deal with a weed infestation, or can cover hundreds of kilometres by vehicle, mapping areas of weed distribution.

In just under a year, the rangers’ achievements include:

- treatment of over 2,000 hectares of weeds on the Wellesley Islands removing infestations in their entirety from several islands and treatment of 2,000 hectares of weeds across Gangalidda country;
- training in using chemicals and GIS/GPS mapping techniques;
- training in fire management specific to weed management; and
- school visits to talk about the importance of ranger work.

Mt Theo Program - Mechanics Training Workshop
Northern Territory



Mt Theo Car Repair Program

Mt Theo has been operating a diesel mechanics’ training workshop for around two years. Initially designed as a diversionary program for young men, the workshop aims to give positive experiences, meaningful jobs and practical support to the local community.

The Workshop provides services to all Yuendumu vehicles and priority clients include the Mt Theo Program and Central Desert Shire.

Under a partnership arrangement the Central Desert Shire provides the workshop facilities; Mt Theo Program upgrades, repairs and does all mechanical work; and Newmont Mining provides assistance with equipment and training.

There are currently eight people undertaking pre-vocational training and the program has the capacity to take four apprentices. When apprentices have completed their training they are offered jobs in Yuendumu or at Newmont mines.

Healthy homes

Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership Implementation progress summary

The agreement aims to achieve reform in the provision of housing for Indigenous people in remote communities, to address overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing condition and severe housing shortages.	
National Partnership signed	December 2008
Total value of the National Partnership	\$5.48 billion over 10 years
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes

Social Housing – Nation Building National Partnership Implementation progress summary

National Partnership signed	February 2009
Total value of the National Partnership	\$5.638 billion over two years
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes

Through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing the Commonwealth Government will provide \$5.48 billion over ten years to address significant overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and the severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities. The National Partnership will deliver up to 4,200 new houses as well as refurbishments to a further 4,800 houses. The Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) is part of the broader National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. Under SIHIP the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments aim to complete 750 new homes, 230 rebuilds and 2500 refurbishments in the Northern Territory between now and 2013.

Other than in the Northern Territory where the Commonwealth is now jointly managing the delivery of SIHIP, the delivery of new housing and refurbishment activity outlined in the tables below is the responsibility of State Governments. All jurisdictions have committed to meet their capital works targets for 2009-10.

In the 2009-10 financial year, jurisdictions have committed to deliver a substantial number of new dwellings across Australia. In the 29 remote service delivery communities:

- 201 new homes are projected to be built in the fifteen Northern Territory communities by 30 December 2010; and
- 126 new homes are projected to be built in the fourteen Western Australian, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australian communities by 30 June 2010.

Projected completions through to 30 December 2010 are not yet available for jurisdictions other than the Northern Territory.

A substantial number of refurbishments and rebuilds are scheduled for completion in the 29 priority locations prior to the end of the 2010 calendar year, including:

- 275 refurbishments and rebuilds in the fifteen Northern Territory communities by 30 December 2010; and
- 412 refurbishments and rebuilds in the fourteen West Australian, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australian communities by 30 June 2010.

One of the preconditions for the construction and refurbishment of housing is the settlement of land tenure issues. This policy was put in place to ensure that significant new investment in housing is underpinned by land tenure arrangements that allow for these assets to be properly managed and maintained as public housing. As the tables below indicate, tenure negotiations are at different stages in each of the 29 priority locations. As tenure arrangements are negotiated, scoping of works is progressed and new housing and refurbishment targets are agreed.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has indicated that while the wet season traditionally reduces work activity across many locations in the Northern Territory, new strategies are being deployed by the contracted Alliance consortiums in 2009 to ensure minimal wet season disruption. For example, site preparation is being expedited in some locations, the stockpiling of building materials is underway ahead of possible wet season road closures and workers camps

are being constructed which will also serve as temporary accommodation for tenants when refurbishment work is carried out on their homes. Despite these efficiencies, the Department advises that a majority of works are scheduled to take place in the middle and later months of the 2010 calendar year.

The tables below provide information on the progress of leasing and works in each of the 29 communities, as well as State and Territory targets. Variations in actual numbers achieved in individual communities may occur as is normal with capital projects in remote areas. Government is confident that the overall targets for SIHIP by December 2010 will be met.

Remote Indigenous Housing Program investment in the 15 Northern Territory priority locations to 31 December 2010

Location	Status of tenure reforms	Progress to date	New houses projected by December 2010	Refurbishments and rebuilds projected by December 2010
Angurugu	Lease in place	Two new houses have had floors laid and a third new house is at foundation stage. Of the five refurbishments and rebuilds underway, three are complete. 14 Indigenous people are currently employed in the Groote package.	18	31
Galwin'ku	Lease in place	The Package Development Report which locks in budget and scope should be finalised before the end of 2009 and refurbishment early works will commence shortly.	36	60
Gapuwiyak	Lease agreed but yet to be executed	Subject to approval of the lease, the package of works is scheduled to be allocated to an Alliance Partner before the end of 2009. Scoping work is due to commence in early 2010 with construction starting in the dry season.	*	*
Gunbalanya	Lease in place	Rebuild of the first house has been completed and 6 refurbishments are underway. A work camp is being established and materials stockpiled to enable capital works during the wet season. 8 Indigenous people are currently employed.	31	30
Hermannsburg	In principle agreement	Subject to approval of the lease, the package of works is scheduled to be allocated to an Alliance Partner before the end of 2009. Scoping work is due to commence in early 2010 with construction starting in the dry season.	*	*
Lajamanu	In principle agreement	Subject to approval of the lease, the package of works is scheduled to be allocated to an Alliance Partner before the end of 2009. Scoping work is due to commence in early 2010 with construction starting in the dry season.	*	*
Maningrida	Lease in place	The Package Development Report which locks in budget and scope should be finalised before the end of 2009 and refurbishment early works will commence shortly.	36	28
Milingimbi	Lease agreed but yet to be executed	Subject to approval of the lease, the package of works is scheduled to be allocated to an Alliance Partner before the end of 2009. Scoping work is due to commence in early 2010 with construction starting in the dry season.	*	*
Nguiu	Lease in place	8 new homes are under construction and 8 refurbishments are underway. 44 Indigenous people are currently employed on the Tiwi package	43	56
Ngukurr	Lease agreed but yet to be executed	Subject to approval of the lease, the package of works is scheduled to be allocated to an Alliance Partner before the end of 2009. Scoping work is due to commence in early 2010 with construction starting in the dry season.	*	*
Numbulwar	In principle agreement	Subject to approval of the lease, the package of works is scheduled to be allocated to an Alliance Partner before the end of 2009. Scoping work is due to commence in early 2010 with construction starting in the dry season.	*	*
Umbakumba	Lease in place	All 4 houses underway at Umbakumba have had floors laid. Of the 8 refurbishments underway, 6 have been completed. 14 Indigenous people are currently employed in the Groote package.	6	30
Wadeye	Lease in place	Preparation work has begun on 7 houses scheduled for refurbishment. 6 of these new houses will be constructed through the local factory. A work camp is being established and materials stockpiled to enable capital works during the wet season. 19 people are currently employed in the Wadeye package	31	40
Yirrkala	Lease negotiations underway	Project scoping will commence as soon as signing of lease is imminent.	*	*
Yuendumu	Lease negotiations underway	Project scoping will commence as soon as signing of lease is imminent.	*	*
Total			201	275

*Further details will be provided as leases are finalised or current negotiations are finalised.

Remote Indigenous Housing Program (RIHP) investment in the 14 priority locations in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia to 30 June 2010

Location	Status of tenure reforms	Progress to date	New houses projected by 30 June 2010	Refurbishments and rebuilds projected by 30 June 2010
Aurukun	Lease negotiations underway	Leasing negotiations are underway with Local Councils. The refurbishment program is at scoping stage with work due to commence in early 2010 and be completed by June 2010.	15	83
Coen	Strategy being developed			4
Doomadgee	In principle agreement		22	70
Hope Vale	Lease negotiations underway		4	63
Mornington Island	Lease negotiations underway		11	49
Mossman Gorge	Strategy being developed			10
Ardyaloon	Current construction is a result of previous leasing commitment. A strategy is being developed for future works	Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.	1	
Beagle Bay	Current projected construction occurring on land where tenure is already secure.	A contract for the new housing construction is expected to be awarded in January 2010 with work to be completed by June 2010. A contract for the refurbishment works was let in October 2009. Work on the five refurbishments has commenced and is expected to be completed by June 2010.	10	5
Fitzroy Crossing	Current projected construction occurring on land where tenure is already secure.	Contracts for the new housing construction are expected to be awarded in January 2010 with work to be completed by June 2010. Contracts for the refurbishment works are expected to be let in February 2010 and with work to be completed by June 2010.	3	19
Halls Creek	Current projected construction occurring on land where tenure is already secure.	Contracts for the new housing construction are expected to be awarded in December 2009 with work to be completed by June 2010. Contracts for the refurbishment works are expected to be let in February 2010 and work completed by June 2010.	19	25
Walgett	Freehold to be purchased	29 refurbishments and 2 new houses are to be completed by 30 June 2010.	2	29 ²
Wilcannia	Freehold to be purchased	Houses are to be purchased or built by June 2010.	2	
Amata	Lease in place	Site preparation and septic tank installation is underway for 11 houses being constructed. Construction on 6 prefabricated houses has commenced offsite. Two transportable homes have been delivered and work is underway on external works, which are expected to be completed prior to Christmas.	19	29
Mimili	Lease in place	Five slabs have been poured and five more are being prepared. Construction of 6 prefabricated houses has commenced off-site. Wall and roof frames have been completed on two houses. Two transportable homes have been delivered and work is underway on external works, which are expected to be completed prior to Christmas.	18	26
Total			126	412

¹ Projected houses includes only those forecast to be completed and handed over by end June 2010. Projected projects through to December 2010 are not yet available for jurisdictions other than the Northern Territory.

² Urgent steps are being taken to expedite the work on 29 (Phase 1) of the planned 70 refurbishments in Walgett and these are expected to be completed by 30 June 2010.

Key issues

The lack of adequate housing in remote communities is a stand out issue. In almost every community I visited it was a priority for community members. Housing also lies at the intersection of much of the Closing the Gap agenda. It provides security, underpins a healthy lifestyle and provides a base for children’s education and development.

While communities are impatient for new and refurbished housing, during my visits individuals have concerns about some aspects of the reforms being implemented. There is some confusion and differences of view in some communities about governments’ insistence that new housing is underpinned by long term leases and mainstream tenancy management arrangements. Those with concerns are wary of reforms that relate to land tenure because of their connection to the land and governments’ changing approach to tenure issues. These concerns have required that governments’ progress tenure reform at a pace that is respectful to Indigenous people and acknowledges their concerns.

Governments appear to have recognised that structural change is required to address tenure and tenancy management. For example, the Queensland Government has established the Remote Land and Infrastructure Program Office in Cairns, which has commenced negotiations with Councils over 40 year leases.

However, I am concerned that State and Territory governments maintain momentum in resolving tenure issues to enable housing upgrades and new builds to continue. This is particularly the case in Western Australia, where this issue is a complex one to resolve. I do not want to see priority locations miss out on new housing because the tenure reforms required are complex. I will be closely monitoring the locations for planned housing to ensure that allocations are based on need already recognised by all parties.

While it is clear progress is being made in resolving tenure issues and construction is underway in many communities, the targets state and territory governments have nominated in some areas, appear ambitious. State and territory governments need to apply the same drive that has been evident in the roll out of the social housing component of the National Building and Stimulus Package to this endeavour.

I note the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has established an Office of Remote Indigenous Housing and agreed to deploy Commonwealth Officers to the Northern Territory and other key jurisdictions to better monitor the delivery of capital works and Indigenous housing reforms agreed under the National Partnership Agreement.

The following case study details the intervention made by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments in the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program.

Like many other infrastructure and program design phases, the review of this program uncovered an absence of detailed scoping, open ended consultation and too many layers of management.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments’ willingness to address early implementation issues with the program demonstrate a commitment to realising improved housing conditions for Indigenous Australians. As land tenure issues are resolved, the model of contracting being used should maximise benefits to remote Indigenous communities, taxpayer value for money and Indigenous employment opportunities.

While the very public re-examination of the program was difficult for some, the willingness of both governments to intervene to ensure the program delivers on its objectives should be encouraged. If governments are serious about working differently to secure better life outcomes for Indigenous people, they must be prepared to be agile, backing approaches that work and discarding those which prove ineffective.

Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program

Northern Territory

Under the \$672 million Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program, the Australian Government will deliver: 750 new houses, 230 rebuilds of existing houses and 2,500 refurbishments across 73 remote Indigenous communities and targeted community living areas (town camps) in the Northern Territory by 2013.

Three construction company consortia or “alliances” have been engaged to deliver the program, working closely with communities and government. A target of 20 percent was set for Indigenous employment across the program and where appropriate alliances will use local companies, including local indigenous companies to deliver some of the works.

In July 2009, after 9 months in operation and in response to considerable criticism about delays, high administration costs and slow delivery of new houses, both governments commissioned a review of the program.

The review found that the program design was fundamentally sound but that it needed to be refocussed to ensure that objectives and targets are met:

- program objectives addressing design and community engagement had taken priority over adherence to unit costs and other program targets;
- there was a lack of effective oversight at the program delivery level and weak program governance and management arrangements;
- the time required to develop the initial packages of works had been underestimated, as had unit costs;
- there were unresolved leadership and capacity issues in the delivery of the program; and
- the program management and establishment costs were higher than expected.

The review recommended that:

- layers of management be reduced from six to three;
- the Commonwealth Government take a stronger leadership role in the delivery of the program, including in community engagement;
- both governments be primarily responsible for engagement on key policy matters; and
- administration costs be reduced to 8% of the program.

It is positive that both levels of Government were prepared to intervene to correct the problems that threatened to take the program off course and lessen its ability to meet the targets set for new housing, upgrades and refurbishments.

The issues this program faced are not unique to the agencies involved or to housing. This Office has heard of several examples where infrastructure provision in remote communities is unacceptably delayed by unfocussed consultation, weak coordination, poor planning in the face of known scheduling and other delivery challenges, as well as the difficulty of keeping programs focussed on multiple policy objectives, particularly when using contractors to deliver.

Safe communities

There is considerable activity in this area occurring across remote Australia by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, including community patrols, youth projects, justice projects, safe houses and substance abuse programs.

In the Northern Territory and Western Australia the importance of permanent police presence in communities has been recognised.

In the Northern Territory, an independent review has been commissioned of police resourcing levels in remote communities. The review is to make recommendations on sustainable policing levels and deployments taking into account regional planning needs. I will be examining the outcome of that review with great interest.

In Western Australia, the Government has confirmed it will fund an extra 500 police personnel which includes 350 police offices and 150 auxiliary police officers. I am hopeful that this initiative will result in additional policing presence In the four priority communities within Western Australia to meet additional need where this is identified.

It is now well established that there are serious levels of child abuse and neglect in many parts of Australia, particularly in Indigenous communities. There have been inquiries in Queensland (1999), West Australia (2002), the Northern Territory (2007) and New South Wales (2008). The most recent was the South Australian Mullighan Inquiry into Children in State Care and the Children on the APY Lands Commission of Inquiry in 2008. The Northern Territory Government recently announced another inquiry into the child protection system in response to reports that children at risk were not investigated.

Inquiries are a legitimate tool of investigation and can assist governments in devising and implementing systemic reforms to protect children and support families. But while they are in operation, day to day tasks and the implementation of sound policies can sometimes be put off. Given the important nexus between the safety of children and their life chances, over coming months I will be monitoring the implementation of recommendations in the 29 priority locations from the previous series of inquiries as well as the new National Child Protection Framework agreed by COAG.

Key issues

One of the most consistent issues raised with me to date has been the concern of individual community members about safety. I urge greater Commonwealth, State and Territory action, as envisaged under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement Integrated Strategy. In this regard the recently convened Indigenous Community Safety Roundtable is a promising development and I will be monitoring their ongoing activities with great interest.

The concerns raised with me were not so much about the overall level of policing in communities, though clearly police strengths could be improved in some areas. Rather they were concerns that policing is not visible and engaged enough and tangible on the ground. Community members want visible and regular patrols by local police and they want improved responsiveness when something goes wrong. Community members also place a premium on policing strategies which target alcohol-related criminal behaviour.

These are not necessarily issues that require large additional investments by government but rather a recognition that the visibility of local policing needs to be maximised to address actual crime and perceptions of safety.

Abuse of alcohol is a driver of the majority of community violence, abuse and property crime. The effective regulation of alcohol is pivotal to the safety of communities. I am concerned that my visits have confirmed that many of the current attempts to manage supply and excessive consumption of alcohol and treat addiction are not working.

The 29 communities provide a ready site for trialling new and upgraded responses to curb alcohol abuse (see story below).

Alcohol Restrictions in Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek

Western Australia

[the restrictions] were never intended to be a panacea for the problems we face. Our prime objective was to create an environment of peace and order from where we could plan strategically and put in place the building blocks for our social recovery. ... (w)hat we have achieved so far could never have been done by government acting alone. The leadership had to come from the community. We had to OWN our problems and create the pathway for recovery.

– Speech given by Ms June Oscar, alcohol restrictions campaigner, 18 August 2009.

Implementation of the restrictions followed very public campaigns by community members who highlighted the detrimental effects of alcohol on the health and well being of community members, including high levels of foetal alcohol syndrome, clear links between alcohol use and high levels of suicide and extreme levels of domestic violence.

The restrictions in Fitzroy Crossing were originally made by the Western Australian Director of Liquor Licensing in October 2007 on a six month trial basis, following representations made to him by the Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource and Legal Centre. The restrictions were extended by a further 12 months in May 2008 following an assessment of their impact which, apart from expert evidence, was measured by vocal and growing community support.

A recent evaluation found a significant reduction in alcohol related crime and violence. Health services have also reported a 36% reduction in the average number of alcohol related Emergency Department presentations, increasing birth weights in babies and healthier newborns.

In Halls Creek the campaign was also lead by local women and, again, the effects on the community are clearly apparent. Local police cite a 48% reduction in the number of arrests, 35% reduction in incidents of domestic violence and a 48% reduction in the number of incidents attended.

The Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek restrictions are now being explored by other towns in the Kimberley and Western Australia more broadly.

The Local Implementation Planning process will provide an opportunity for governments and communities to work together to develop local alcohol management strategies where these do not exist or might be improved. Where communities commit to new or additional actions to manage alcohol, all levels of government must be prepared to set out in Local Implementation Planning documents how they will support the effort. This means setting out policing, licensing and other steps to ensure community actions are reinforced.

In each of the jurisdictions in which the 29 priority communities are situated, juvenile justice statistics tell a worrying story of early contact with the criminal justice system, repeated infringement and ultimately expensive incarceration. Too often, the point at which young Indigenous people spend time in custodial settings, the battle to rehabilitate them has been lost. The importance of youth strategies, proactive sport and recreation officers, youth workers and the availability of youth activities does not appear to be recognised as these are not yet provided in many of the 29 communities.

Given the social and budgetary costs that flow from the imprisonment of so many young Indigenous people, a new approach is needed. This might pair legislative provisions which aim to prevent criminal behaviour and divert juvenile offenders from the justice system with local programs that better engage young people. A nationally consistent approach could be developed jointly by Attorneys-General and Indigenous Ministers and agreed by COAG.

Current alcohol restrictions in priority communities

Jurisdiction	Communities	Basis of restrictions
Western Australia	Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing	Section 64 of the <i>Liquor Control Act 1988</i>
Western Australia	Beagle Bay, Ardyaloon (included in north of -20 degrees latitude decision)	Section 64 of the <i>Liquor Control Act 1998</i>
Northern Territory	All NT RSD priority communities	<i>Liquor Act</i> and the alcohol provisions of the <i>Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007</i>
Queensland	Mornington Island, Doomagee, Hope Vale, Aurukun	<i>Liquor Act 1992, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land & Other Matters) Act 1984, Queensland Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000</i>
Queensland	Coen, Mossman Gorge	No restrictions
South Australia	Amata, Mimili	<i>Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights (Regulated Substances) Amendment Act 2006</i>
New South Wales	Walgett, Wilcannia	No restrictions

Mornington Island Police Citizens Youth Club
Queensland

The Mornington Island Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) managed by the local police Sergeant, offers activities for children and the general community. The Club has won numerous Awards and is recognised as one of the most outstanding PCYC’s in operation. The main programs are outlined below.

- Changing the Cycle: a daily activity program that challenges self-destructive behaviour patterns and offers a more appropriate and constructive lifestyle to assist young people to a healthy cycle of daily living. This program has operated for two years and has helped achieve a reduction in juvenile crime; pre-teenage pregnancies; youth suicide; improved school attendance and improved health & fitness for young people.
- Nundili Cultural Workshop Program: provides opportunity for young people to gain a full understanding of their traditional, cultural and ceremonial heritage.
- Kuba Bida Meals Program: is a health, nutrition and food preparation program run for young mothers and other adults from the PCYC kitchen. The participating community members are shown how to prepare healthy meals for themselves and their families.
- The Breakfast Club: has served over 15,000 nutritional meals each morning but importantly, made a number of additions and variations to enhance the general health and social skills of the children of Mornington Island.
- Ten Days of Christmas Program: has sought to address anti-social behaviour during the difficult Christmas to New Year period by providing structured community and youth activities from early evening until midnight from 22–31 December. Good food and family oriented activities are organised around the PCYC at a time when the store and other food outlets are closed, and the wet season is at its height. This program was so popular and successful the community has requested it be repeated over the 2009 Christmas period.



Uncle Frank Watt, Nundili program Co-ordinator on a trip with the PCYC kids to explore local swamp areas for swimming and bush tucker.

Governance and leadership

Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Implementation progress summary

To improve access to a full range of services; improve governance and leadership within Indigenous communities and Indigenous community organisations; increase economic and social participation, and promote personal responsibility, engagement and behaviours consistent with positive social norms.	
National Partnership signed	January 2009
Total value of the National Partnership	Total value of National Partnership is \$291 million with a \$202 million governance and leadership component
Is money available to communities in 2009-10 financial year?	Yes

A large proportion of the governance and leadership component of this National Partnership concerns the establishment and operation of the Single Government Interface in each priority community.

There will be two types of officers. Firstly there will be at least one government worker who will be mostly responsible for coordination, called “Government Business Managers”, “Government Engagement and Coordination Officers”, or “Local Area Coordinators”. In this report I use the term Government Business Manager. Their work will be supported by an Indigenous person recruited from within the local area who will be responsible to ensuring that community members actively participate in the implementation of the Remote Service Delivery strategy called “Indigenous Engagement Officers”.

All Government Business Manager positions in each priority community will be filled by the end of November 2009. The majority of Indigenous Engagement Officer positions will also be filled by the end of November, and the remainder filled in December 2009, with induction and training to be provided in early 2010. In the Northern Territory, Government Business Managers are well established. Work is on track apart from delays in securing staff facilities. This is not expected to have a significant impact on the overall project as interim office and accommodation facilities are in place.

Regional Operations Centres and jurisdictional Boards of Management have been established in each jurisdiction.

Engagement with communities regarding Local Implementation Planning has commenced in all priority communities. The Local Implementation Plans will be living documents, developed through an iterative process, and capable of being amended as additional inputs become available, including through the baseline mapping process. In some jurisdictions, Local Implementation Plans may be based on or incorporate existing plans that are in place.

An Engagement Workshop with a range of community representatives was held in August 2009 with a further workshop to be held in the first half of 2010. Cultural competency and cultural awareness training programs are also being developed for government staff to help them engage more appropriately with Indigenous people and delivery will commence in early 2010.

Leadership and governance training modules are being developed and delivery will commence in early 2010 to support Indigenous people participate in planning processes.

Key issues

The establishment of Regional Operations Centres and the employment of Government Business Managers and Indigenous Engagement Officers will strengthen Commonwealth, State and Territory presence and engagement in each of the 29 priority communities. However, this interface is not yet truly representative of governments. Mainstream agencies such as health and education departments have their own local networks and established contracting relationships. The Remote Service Delivery partnership can represent a challenge to the normal business processes of these large agencies.

There are a number of areas where significant improvement by the mainstream agencies of governments is required:

- prioritisation of and monitoring of performance in servicing the 29 priority locations agreed by COAG;
- channelling local delivery through the Regional Operations Centres; and
- enabling local officers of agencies greater discretion to amend policies and programs to best fit local need.

In the preparation of this report, it has been clear that not all agencies believe they need to change the way in which they currently do business. If governments are serious about effective remote service delivery and Closing the Gap, any ambiguities which currently allow agencies to avoid their responsibilities must be removed.

Good governance is an important precondition for engagement and Closing the Gap. In the remote service delivery context, good governance requires the presence and engagement of all levels of government and community leadership.

As the community by community snapshot in this report indicates, governance is problematic in a number of the 29 communities. My visits indicated that a significant proportion of the priority locations are experiencing difficulties with governance.

Communities where governance was raised as an issue during my visit included:

- in New South Wales, Walgett and Wilcannia;
- in Queensland, Mornington Island and Coen;
- in West Australia, Beagle Bay; and
- in the Northern Territory, Gunbalunya, Hermannsburg, Lajamanu, Milingimbi, Nguu, Numbulwar, Wadeye, Yirrkala and Yuendumu.

Governance issues raised included:

- achieving functioning community governance bodies which enable all voices on issues affecting that community to be heard;
- management of local organisations, particularly ensuring that services are accessible to all; and
- the absence of a working partnership with government service providers such as police and local councils and with Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments themselves.

As I have noted in the next section of this report, sustained governance and leadership training that is tailored to the needs of individual communities is needed as a matter of priority. This requires that qualified facilitators or trainers who have the trust and support of local communities be engaged to partner Government Business Managers to work with them to address issues of governance and leadership.

Without intervention the current Local Implementation Planning processes and the significant new investments being rolled out will lack strong foundation within communities.

Fitzroy Futures Forum

Western Australia

The Fitzroy Valley is notable for the joint community-government partnership provided through the Fitzroy Futures Forum. This innovative body, formed in 2000, brings together Indigenous people of the Fitzroy Valley, Indigenous organisations and service providers, the Shire of Derby-West Kimberley and representatives from various State Government agencies. The Commonwealth participates through the Derby and Broome offices of the West Kimberley Indigenous Coordination Centre.

The Fitzroy Futures Forum Governing Committee includes a representative from each of the four language groups of the Fitzroy Valley plus an additional three people who can nominate or be nominated to hold a position on the Committee.

The Indigenous membership of the Committee is broadly recognised as the interface between government and the communities of Fitzroy Crossing and the surrounding Fitzroy Valley. The members have been instrumental in assisting government to better understand community needs and working with them to develop appropriate service responses, including construction of a new hospital and school, the completion of a comprehensive town plan and allocation of a small community grants scheme.

The work of Fitzroy Futures Forum and its Governing Committee predates, by some years, the Remote Service Delivery strategy. The Remote Service Delivery strategy creates additional attention and opportunity to build on the confidence and strong Indigenous leadership generated by the Forum.

This chapter of the report shows that significant amounts of funding and effort are being allocated to the effort of closing the gap for Indigenous Australians. However in many cases there is not clear evidence that priority is being given to the Remote Service Delivery 29 communities.

Local Implementation Plans are an important feature of the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership methodology. If prepared carefully with the input of all significant stakeholders, they will identify local need and priorities based on local community priorities as well as the priorities of governments.

When considering how to ensure that Remote Service Delivery locations are addressed when implementing National Partnership Agreements and in all other government service delivery, it will be important for government agencies to consider the Local Implementation Plans.

The Governance and Capacity Gap

Strong governance and strong leadership in remote Indigenous communities are preconditions for the normalisation of relations, improved service provision and closing the gap in life outcomes. It encompasses how governments organise what they do and how they relate to communities, how communities manage themselves and relate to government and the exercise of personal responsibility and leadership.

It is already apparent there is a clear delineation between communities in which government is present and positively engaged and where communities have a means of coming together and individuals are exercising leadership, and those where any or all of these elements are weak or absent.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery is designed to empower the 29 priority communities to work in partnership with governments to improve the availability, quality and efficiency of services. Commonwealth and State and Territory governments, through the National Partnership Agreement, have recognised the critical role of governance in these communities by:

- committing to a new way of working which includes integrated service planning and delivery as well as a single Commonwealth and State and Territory government interface at the community level;
- mapping the community networks and decision making processes as the basis for establishing links with Indigenous community leadership and decision-making processes; and
- implementing initiatives which develop the capacity of community members to organise and exercise leadership.

This commitment of COAG is progressing well with the establishment of joint government offices (a Single Government Interface) in all 29 communities and seven Regional Operations Centres. About 70% of staff are currently in place, with full staffing on track for the end of 2009.

However, pre-existing institutional arrangements can be an impediment to the smooth rollout of this new set of arrangements in remote Australia. While there is generally a significant high level commitment to righting the wrongs of the past, I have encountered a 'business as usual' attitude from some public servants. This is compounded by a culture where delays in the roll out of new services is accepted and justified by a familiar set of factors including the remoteness of communities, the annual wet season, unresolved land tenure, the complexity of Indigenous policy and communities themselves. While each of these issues can be a real constraint, all are well known and need to be managed by experienced and motivated officials. Ministers, senior public servants and communities need to challenge the use of these factors as excuses wherever and whenever they are encountered.

The task of translating national and jurisdictional policies into local programs can be challenging, particularly in remote communities. Thought needs to be given to how single issue programs might be joined to deliver meaningful local services, generate economies of scale, and allow for the recruitment and accommodation of a skilled workforce. In this regard, Regional Operations Centres, Government Business Managers and Indigenous Engagement Officers are a vital new local resource. To be effective, all government departments need to equip these officers with the knowledge, tools and support to guide effective implementation of programs in communities.

In the case of Commonwealth and State and Territory agencies that have not directly provided officers to staff the new Regional Operations Centres, there is a particular need to close the gap between their generic programs and the needs of remote communities for joined up and relevant services.

Government capacity

It is critical for governments to recognise that there is a capacity gap with respect to the new ways of working required under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery which goes well beyond basic cultural competency training for staff. Agencies need to communicate to their staff at all levels that they are authorised to implement the new approach, and to assist them with acquiring the skills and knowledge required for working in a whole-of-government way and to increase their understanding of service delivery in a remote community context. Agencies need to ensure there are strong and streamlined working connections between their officers and the Single Government Interface.

I have made a submission to the Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration making a number of recommendations to improve the long term capacity of the Australian Public Service to work with remote Indigenous communities and will also be pursuing these issues with the State and Territory Coordinators General.

Local Government

The COAG National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery includes the Commonwealth and the Governments of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales.

However, the unique position of local government as a significant service provider and the dominant elected governance structure in many of the 29 priority communities is not adequately reflected in the National Partnership. Compounding this is the impact of reforms in jurisdictions which have seen the amalgamation or consolidation of local government areas. In the Northern Territory in particular, this has meant that where previously an elected council conformed to the boundaries of a priority community; these are now much larger areas. The *Northern Territory Local Government Act 2008*, states that Local Area Boards may be established in each community to involve local communities more closely in issues related to local government; to ensure that local communities are given an opportunity to express their opinions on questions affecting local government; and to allow local communities a voice in the formulation of policies for the locality as well as policies for the area and the region. Their success, however, is mixed at best, with some functioning ineffectively or yet to be established. This has left a community governance vacuum in some cases.

Without support from Shires, local government workers may lack the necessary skills to assist in the establishment and functioning of Local Area Boards, enabling communities to report to council and be involved in matters of local government. Notable exceptions in the Northern Territory are the MacDonnell Shire and Roper Gulf Shire which appear determined to put institutional and governance arrangements in place to ensure local communities have an active voice in Shire decision making.

In my initial visits to communities, the quality of local government services is also the source of considerable community complaint. The scope of local government services is sometimes unclear from a community perspective, with confusion being expressed over justification of the scope of servicing, sometimes veiled in undisclosed ‘core’ or ‘non core’ activities. Concerns have also been raised about a preference for outside contractors ahead of employing local Indigenous people.

Some of the concern could be addressed by ensuring that Local Implementation Planning with communities involves local government and seeks to document their responsibilities within communities.

It is important to note that local government reform, which has been undertaken in most jurisdictions, is a positive development. These reforms are aimed at producing a more robust, effective and accountable tier of governance. Governments need to focus instead on what reformed local government arrangements mean for remote communities and ensure that appropriate supports are in place.

Recommendation 1: Recognising the role of Local Government

- 1.1 By mid-2010, COAG should ensure the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery clearly states the role of local government.
- 1.2 Local Implementation Plans developed under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery should be multilateral agreements between all three levels of government and communities.
- 1.3 Local government in each of the priority locations should, by the end of February 2010, nominate a liaison officer to streamline coordination with Regional Operations Centres and assist in the development of Local Implementation Plans.

Government presence in communities

The roll out of the Remote Service Delivery strategy provides a unique opportunity to build an ongoing and responsive government presence in Indigenous communities.

While the positive impact of Government Business Managers, Indigenous Engagement Officers and Regional Operations Centres is already being felt, there is a critical need to build on this core government presence to ensure success.

One of the key messages emerging from my visits is the under servicing of remote communities by many sectors. This includes basic law enforcement; postal services; banking facilities; housing; education; infrastructure; essential services; and sporting and other recreational facilities. These services are important features of what might be considered a viable community. The remoteness of governments, with limited local presence, encourages the under servicing of communities.

A further consequence of the remoteness of governments from communities can be seen in poorly designed or coordinated services which do not fit local circumstances. Put simply, accountable government and the provision of coordinated, basic services are prerequisites for viable, resilient communities.

Policing

As commented previously, I am concerned about the generally low level of policing services in the 29 communities. The Australian Crime Commission has advised that many policy initiatives, including alcohol reforms and community safety programs, are most effective where there is a permanent police presence. During my community visits, I heard of a number of instances where policing does not involve sufficient days in the community, or there is a lack of visible and active patrolling and long response times to emergencies.

Whilst I acknowledge that policing in remote locations is multifaceted and carries unique challenges, that is the case for all service delivery in such locations and should be able to be managed by experienced and motivated officers. Governments need to respond to the perception within communities that policing is not visible and responsive. In this regard, State and Territory governments need to consider making public within communities the policing strength, the number and nature of daily patrols being provided and average response times.

There is also considerable variation in policing levels between jurisdictions and communities. For example, Doomadgee has nine police stationed in the community while the similarly sized Gapuwiyak has only three. Wadeye, with twice the population of Doomadgee has just seven police officers stationed in the community. I acknowledge that account needs to be taken of the differences between communities such as the level of need and the distances to other communities. However, the opportunity exists for the five jurisdictions involved in the remote service delivery initiative to work together to determine what is an effective level of policing is and to ensure this presence is quickly implemented and maintained.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments have announced a review of policing in remote communities and this will consider overall policing strength. In Western Australia, the Government has confirmed it will fund an extra 500 police personnel. I am hopeful that both initiatives will result in additional permanent policing and better servicing of priority communities.

Case study: Policing

Many Indigenous communities experience comparatively high levels of crime and violence. Community safety in remote communities relies on an effective police presence and community policing is regarded by many as part of the solution. This includes a visible police presence, proactive and positive relationships between police and communities, and working collaboratively with service providers. A good example of this is the work being done by police in Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek to support the alcohol restrictions, and the move from response to proactive crime prevention. During my visits to communities there was widespread support for a police presence.

In recent years significant investments have been made by the States and Commonwealth in policing infrastructure including police stations, multi function police facilities, and staff housing in selected remote communities. Remote Service Delivery locations that will benefit from increased facilities include Amata and Mimili in South Australia, Galiwin'ku, Gunbalanya, Lajamanu, Maningrida, Nguiu, Ngukurr, Wadeye, Yuendumu, Gapuwiyak, Numbulwar, Angurugu, Milingimbi, Umbakumba in the Northern Territory, Doomadgee and Mornington Island in Queensland. However, typical of service expansion in remote communities, construction is expensive, lead times are long, and once construction is complete, staffing is a challenge.



Multi-function police centre under construction in Mimili in South Australia

Transaction-based services

The provision of basic transaction services is fundamental to the normalisation of Remote Service Delivery communities.

During my visits I heard of widespread concern about a lack of basic services in communities including limitations of current postal services, banking and other government and service transaction functions such as driver licensing. Where these services do exist, the levels of support do not always match individual needs. For example, community members have raised concerns that local Centrelink representatives do not have sufficient authority to make decisions on the ground and of reduced Australia Post servicing during the wet season.

Recommendation 2: Government presence in communities

- 2.1 Local Implementation Plans should reflect Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and agencies with community service obligations to remote locations plans to increase their footprint over time to ensure that the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery communities have access to adequate financial transactional capacity, postal services, licensing and bill paying facilities to support the objective of increasing economic and social participation.
- 2.2 State and Territory Governments should commit to providing more visible and responsive policing in National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery communities including regular publicly available reporting to communities of:
 - minimum local policing levels;
 - the number and nature of daily community patrols; and
 - average response times.
- 2.3 The Department of Human Services should by early 2010, examine ways to improve Centrelink transactional and case management services in National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery communities.

Implementation of the new remote service delivery model

There is cause for optimism in the new configuration of government arrangements which will see a single interface with remote communities and a priority on 'getting things right' in the designated 29 locations before identifying the next tranche of communities.

For every government agency – Commonwealth, State and Territory – the challenge is to translate programs which are devised within individual policy domains into services which make sense and knit together at a spatial or community level. The means by which this should be achieved is through a high functioning Regional Operations Centre and Government Business Manager and Indigenous Engagement Officer Network with strong governance by State and Territory Boards of Management.

Agencies which have not directly contributed personnel to the single government interface currently rely on a combination of head office and regional staff to support remote service delivery. In some cases, head office personnel from these agencies do not share the enthusiasm or feel a similar level of responsibility for the whole of government commitment made to remote communities by first ministers. As a result they have been less responsive to requests for action. Regional office staff, while more attuned to the local realities, sometimes lack the authority to be as responsive as they would like to be.

Given the critical importance of improving services in local communities across all the COAG building blocks, the Single Government Interface needs to be invested in by all agencies, not just those with a direct staffing investment in Regional Operations Centres.

I will be actively monitoring the adherence of government agencies to the requirement to coordinate their activities through the Single Government Interface, including:

- the involvement of Commonwealth, State and Territory health, education, child protection, justice and environment departments in Local Implementation Planning; and
- adherence to the requirement that visits to communities are planned and coordinated with the relevant Regional Operations Centre.

Governments have decided that priority should be given to the locations identified in the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery when implementing COAG National Partnerships, when extending or redesigning existing programs and when developing new programs. However, this decision is not being consistently applied and in the absence of a clearly stated decision by COAG that the identified locations are to have priority across all national partnerships (whether negotiated prior to the Remote Service Delivery partnership or not), some agencies will resist any change to business as usual.

The complexity of some of the National Partnership commitments agreed through COAG will require the allocation of dedicated resources from governments to communities to support Government Business Managers in areas where they do not have specialised skills. This 'surge' capacity support should be available to each of the 29 priority locations.

The early identification of the need for surge teams across the policy building blocks should already be being contemplated by government agencies.

Education is the most critical area where Commonwealth, State and Territory policies need to be properly translated into coordinated services through the deployment of additional resources.

There is currently significant activity in the educational and training arena with the roll out of Building the Education Revolution projects in all schools, Trades Training Centres, early childhood centres, maternal and child health services, the conversion of CDEP places to real jobs, new Jobs Services Australia contracts, implementation of the Schooling National Partnerships and through the Digital Education Revolution.

In the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has appointed a liaison officer to streamline interactions with the Regional Operations Centres in Darwin and Alice Springs. Similarly, in the Kimberley in Western Australia, the Department has deployed a senior executive Regional Facilitator to action and deliver on the Closing the Gap and productivity agendas in the region. The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training has an outposted officer in the Northern Regional Operations Centre in Darwin.

These efforts are recognised. However, there is a risk that without assertive and timely action across all jurisdictions and priority locations, the large investments currently being rolled out from head offices will not be properly coordinated to maximise the benefits to communities. For example, I have observed that:

- in rolling out new primary school facilities under the Building the Education Revolution initiative which have an early childhood focus, immediate consideration needs to be given to future provisioning to allow for the future co-location of early learning facilities with crèches and planned child and family centres where appropriate;
- individual government services including crèches, health clinics, council offices and schools, can provide vocational education and training opportunities for local people, and it would be beneficial for this training to be built into the implementation of local service provision and for the total places available to a community to be known so that secondary school students can see what local career opportunities lie beyond school;
- youth recreation and adult education services could be enhanced if they are able to utilise school facilities such as classrooms, trades training facilities and computers outside school hours; and
- strategies to address student attendance appear to be based more on the individual drive and creativity of principals rather than informed by 'what works' across communities and jurisdictions.

It is vital that Commonwealth, State and Territory education departments, through the use of surge teams, outposting or other arrangements, and are actively involved in the Local Implementation Planning process currently being managed through Regional Operations Centres and Government Business Managers. The end goal should be to create robust education and training pathway plans for each remote community that link existing resources to provide opportunities from early childhood through to adulthood for young Indigenous people.

Rethinking one size fits all approaches

In rolling out the Remote Service Delivery strategy, governments are seeking to balance local responsiveness with national consistency.

In some cases, head office products and policy advice is not sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of individual communities. Over time, the interface between departments, Regional Operations Centres and Government Business Managers needs to shift from the provision of standardised one size fits all template products and training to one in which assistance is tailored to meet local circumstances. This could include:

- the development of a consultancy approach to customised governance and leadership training whereby a head office professional or independent expert would partner a Government Business Manager working with community leaders to devise governance development strategies, best-practice interventions and/or training that can be delivered in individual communities;
- the provision of tailored community development support and training to assist Regional Operations Centres and Government Business Managers meet the particular needs of a local community; and
- the bringing together of school principals and employment services providers from the priority communities to share their views on 'what works' in improving attendance at school, engagement with adult education and employment.

Cutting red tape

Representatives of service providers in almost every remote community visited pointed to deficiencies in government programs which hindered their implementation at the local level.

The most critical of these include:

- the myriad of contracts, reporting requirements and funding periods and the inability to tailor national, State and Territory programs to suit local circumstances;
- the failure to build into funding agreements, appropriate salary and housing considerations to attract and retain high quality staff; and
- fragmented and one off leadership and governance training and support which envisages program rather community accountability and ignores the multiple roles individuals may have in a remote community.

The Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has achieved considerable efficiencies through its 'red tape reduction' activities in mainstream and Indigenous communities, reducing the complexity of funding agreements and standardising the period of contracts. These gains both need to be fully applied to the priority communities and could be an undertaking of governments as part of the Local Implementation Planning process. Consideration should also be given to assisting community organisations to pool administration and human resource functions to avoid duplication of back office functions.

This might be achieved through a whole of community head contract which aggregates funding by location rather than program. Accountability could be maintained by tying down outputs and outcomes rather than specifying inputs. As a first step this approach could aggregate Commonwealth funding in one schedule and state or territory funding in another. However the community contract should include single allocation that forms a percentage of all funding for:

- sustained governance training including for managers and board members of local services and broader measures that support effective community governance; and
- worker housing that details plans for accommodation growth over time, maximises the integration of staff housing in communities and avoids the creation of 'compounds' and ensures that social housing and worker housing development occur in parallel.

Recommendation 3: Implementation of remote service delivery

- 3.1 By mid-2010, the Commonwealth State and Territory governments should each examine the use of more flexible funding approaches which aggregate departmental funding into a master contract with each National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery community to:
- align service delivery and provide some flexibility to modify inputs to help achieve the Closing the Gap outcomes; and
 - streamline reporting and reduce red tape.
- 3.2 In conjunction with Local Implementation Planning and by no later than mid-2010, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments should ensure that funding arrangements under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery provide each community with adequate support for ongoing governance and leadership training. These arrangements should recognise the different circumstances of individual communities and provide for flexibility in prioritising funding for governance and training across the Remote Service Delivery communities.
- 3.3 The arrangements under recommendation 3.2 should also include providing Regional Operations Centres and Government Business Managers with specialist support in developing tailored governance and leadership training packages for communities.
- 3.4 Local Implementation Plans should include agreement of all parties to community governance and leadership improvements, and the ongoing funding and support that will be required to meet these outcomes.
- 3.5 That COAG restate its commitment that priority should be given to the locations identified in the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery when implementing all relevant COAG National Partnerships.
- 3.6 Commonwealth, State and Territory government education departments should consider creating liaison officer positions, establishing surge teams or out-posting officers to Regional Operations Centres to assist Government Business Managers to assist with Local Implementation Planning and coordinate investments to develop successful education pathways from early childhood through to post school training and employment tailored to the needs of individual communities.

Construction of facilities in remote communities

Much attention has focused on the implementation of the Strategic Indigenous Housing Infrastructure Program (SIHIP), particularly the slow lead times in moving through the contracting, consultation and design specification phases to construction. The lessons learnt from the early phase of SIHIP are the importance of having absolute clarity of purpose and responsibilities.

These issues, which are now being corrected, should not detract from the intent of using larger contractors to drive timeliness, value for money through economies of scale and meet the broader government policy objective of providing employment and training opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

From my early visits there is evidence that smaller, but no less important, capital projects might be delivered in a more efficient and timely way if project management was centralised and coordinated with other government activity in remote communities.

Case Study: Delays in small scale infrastructure projects

In the course of visiting communities and compiling this report, numerous examples of significant delays in small scale infrastructure projects were brought to my attention. This includes the School Boarding Facilities initiative in the Northern Territory, the Wadeye Children’s Services Centre and Safe House, the Lajamanu Health Clinic, housing repairs in Walgett and the Amata early childhood facilities. The infrastructure projects, whilst individually relatively small, are directly related to Closing the Gap activities in communities and the delays have an impact on the quality of life in those communities.

In questioning responsible departments on the lack of progress against the various projects, explanations have included land tenure issues, delays in agreeing the ongoing governance and maintenance of a facility, protracted community consultations and budget constraints and blow outs caused by remoteness and a lack of contractors.

On further examination, the announcement of projects without detailed prior consultation has created problems with subsequent project and budget definition, scoping, and planning, delaying construction. This appears to be the case with the announcement of both the School Boarding Facilities initiative and the Wadeye Children’s Services Centre and Safe House.

In relation to one of the School Boarding Facilities which has been proposed for the Warlpiri Triangle, community stakeholders contend that the consultations have lacked clarity about what is proposed or feasible. While the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations contends that the project remains on schedule, it is likely that thorough and focused consultation with the Warlpiri people in coming months and a feasibility study will result in delayed construction.

In the case of the Lajamanu Health Clinic, an original scoping study suggested the need for a capital investment of \$8 million for refurbishments to a very substandard facility to meet the current and future health needs of the community. A funding agreement for \$2.6 million is currently being negotiated with the Katherine West Health Board and the Department of Health and Ageing to extend and upgrade the health clinic. I am concerned that this more limited refurbishment will not meet future community needs. Additionally, the contractor selected by the Department of Health and Ageing to complete works, found themselves unable to undertake the task. Their withdrawal has delayed the project.

The shortfall in funding for construction can also be compounded by a failure to agree ongoing service governance and funding required to operate services. This has been the case in the construction of early childhood facilities in Amata.

In the case of house repairs in Walgett, a poorly written funding agreement, between the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the service provider, lacking in adequately identified project milestones and deliverables, has exacerbated poor project management and an inability to leverage progress.



Wadeye Children’s Services Centre and Safe House under construction

Small infrastructure projects are also impacted by their one off conception and implementation in communities. This requires separate oversighting, project management and associated departmental resources. Given the costs of single projects in a remote location, it would be better to identify groups of works that can be undertaken concurrently or sequentially within a community by a single contractor, who provides intensive work or ongoing employment and training for local people.

My Office is continuing to negotiate with the relevant departments around each of these projects.

Individual agencies point to the challenges of the annual wet season, community consultation, budget strictures, land tenure difficulties and contract negotiation delays. Yet many of these issues are known quantities that are capable of being managed. It is apparent that these challenges are often symptoms of a lack of robust contract management, project management or a sense of urgency and skill in executing projects.

The recent stimulus program which has encompassed both education and housing projects has demonstrated that it is possible for both levels of government to work together and with contractors to urgently execute the construction of social infrastructure. The modifications announced to the SIHIP program also provide a path for the efficient and timely construction of remote housing, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities and closer management of program tasks.

Governments should consider whether there are efficiencies to be gained from centralising and coordinating the process to deliver smaller infrastructure projects in remote Australia. A new approach could be piloted in the 29 Remote Service Delivery communities.

One approach would be to replicate the process used in the Department of Defence where a panel of managing contractors is selected for the delivery of infrastructure in remote communities with a value of more than \$1 million and less than \$30 million.

The panel would comprise contractors with a demonstrated capacity to deliver community infrastructure projects in remote locations.

Appointing a managing contractor would deliver identified projects in accordance with COAG policy objectives. They would also manage all Local and State and Territory government regulatory requirements, obtain all building certifications and manage the hand over of the property to the operator.

The key benefits of this approach include:

- the policy objective can be documented in the contract and reported against at desired intervals;
- it allows for the ‘building in’ of economic development elements such as Indigenous training and employment, the use of local materials and other requirements;
- timelines for delivery are enshrined in the contract with a risk, reward and penalty elements to drive the project; and
- administration and project management costs can be fixed in accordance with the value of the managing contractor payment schedule.

Centralising the contract management function would concentrate expertise in a single area, achieve greater efficiency in the management of remote infrastructure roll out and over time, reduce the impact of the challenges described earlier.

The ability to develop a register or roster of projects over a forward period would enable contractors to undertake multiple projects in one community, reducing costs; and identify a stream of ongoing work, allowing for the recruitment of Indigenous people into training, apprenticeships and jobs.

A new entity could be based in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (adjoining the new SIHIP administration function) or within the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. It would be important that such an entity draws on the expertise from the key Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies which currently deliver projects of this type.

To achieve scale over time, COAG would need to agree to channel planned capital funding for projects already notionally allocated under the National Partnership Agreements through such an entity.

Recommendation 4: Construction of Infrastructure

- 4.1 That the Commonwealth Departments of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in consultation with relevant State and Territory departments, investigate the feasibility of a single, whole of government contracting entity to plan and manage construction of community facilities in remote locations, with a scoping paper be presented for consideration by COAG in the second half of 2010.

Evidence base

I am pleased that there is a strong emphasis on developing and maintaining an evidence base in the National Partnership, although detailed baseline mapping information will only be available for inclusion in my next report.

While efforts to compile government data are progressing, where services are provided by third parties, including non-government organisations, there are gaps.

Inadequate information sharing between agencies is a significant impediment to developing a clear picture of the nature and extent of issues in the priority communities. In some cases it also illustrates a gap in safety.

For example, before mandatory reporting of domestic violence legislation was introduced in the Northern Territory, of 602 presentations at the Alice Springs hospital over 3 months in 2006 for domestic violence, only 258 official complaints were made to police. The Australian Crime Commission has found that information sharing between police and health providers, and some non-government organisations, often does not occur, in large part due to (sometimes misguided) privacy and client confidentiality considerations and to ensure the clients continue seeking assistance from the service providers.

While the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has negotiated agreement on information sharing in relation to child protection and safety, under the National Child Protection Framework, this only covers one aspect of the information gap.

Given the critical role data will play in formulating effective strategies to close the Indigenous life expectancy gap over time, non government providers need to participate fully in information sharing.

The recent *Indigenous Community Safety Roundtable* on 6 November 2009 agreed to provide leadership at all levels on the need for information sharing, particularly in relation to family violence and child abuse or neglect cases. This is an issue that has been consistently raised with me from a number of sources, not just across health and police information, but a broad range of areas, so I propose to work with Australian Government agencies, information providers and through State and Territory Coordinators General to develop information sharing protocols to trial in the 29 communities to ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of the nature and extent of issues covered in the Local Implementation Plan.

Jurisdictional issues of significance

If the Remote Service Delivery approach is to be successful, Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments will need to adjust to respond to challenges that emerge and threaten delivery of improved services to the priority communities.

In the short time I have been in place it is clear there significant threats and opportunities in each of the five jurisdictions which require the close attention of each level of government. These issues would benefit from the attention of political leaders.

South Australia

There are a number of impediments to effective service delivery in the APY Lands including lack of clarity regarding powers and functions and uncertainty of tenure and access to the Lands to deliver services. These issues must be resolved by all parties to ensure delivery of vital services if outcomes for Anangu are to improve. It will be essential for governments to work together, with the APY Executive and with service delivery providers to ensure the land tenure and administrative arrangements provide for an effective platform, including certainty of access, for government funded providers, to enable delivery of services to Anangu.

Recommendation 5: APY Lands

- 5.1 That the South Australian Government leads immediate action to develop an effective platform, including certainty of access to government-funded service providers to ensure the delivery of services to Anangu.

Western Australia

The resolution of land tenure issues is a major barrier to achieving timely delivery of the remote housing package in Western Australia.

The land tenure arrangements upon which remote Aboriginal communities are located in Western Australia are complex, with arrangements including crown land managed by the Aboriginal Land Trust; crown land leased to Indigenous corporations; pastoral leases; and freehold owned by Indigenous organisations or other third parties. It is also a state where native title issues are prominent and many still unresolved in relation to remote communities.

Meeting the land tenure requirements of the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing – including long term secure tenure, capacity to implement tenancy management reforms and compliance with native title processes – in Western Australia is critical and the approach will differ depending on the land arrangements applicable at each community.

Case study: Addressing structural impediments to program delivery

The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have agreed in the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing that substantial investment in Indigenous housing must be supported by secure tenure arrangements and that there be compliance with the procedural requirements of the *Native Title Act 1993*.

At present, State governments have indicated there is uncertainty as to the appropriate procedure to apply and that the arrangements can contribute to considerable delay to the construction of public housing and public infrastructure such as health, education and emergency services facilities, as well as essential services.

In October the Commonwealth Government introduced a Bill to include a new process into the *Native Title Act* which will allow for a streamlined and targeted process in relation to construction of public housing and public infrastructure in and for the benefit of the residents of remote Indigenous communities, including some of the priority communities which attract native title processes.

The new process would invoke the non-extinguishment principle and would attract compensation for any impairment of native title. In addition, projects could only proceed following genuine consultation with native title parties on the nature and location of the proposed project.

Some issues facing Western Australia are being pursued through the introduction of legislation into the Western Australian Parliament with the aim of enabling the Western Australia Housing Office to effect robust tenancy management reform. In addition, legislation has been introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament to amend the *Native Title Act 1993* to expedite the construction of public housing and infrastructure in Indigenous communities. However, these legislative reforms in themselves are simply tools – they must be combined with intense and tailored engagement with the community in order to implement sufficient appropriate land tenure arrangements in each desired location, including where necessary long term leases.

While the Western Australian Government has demonstrated a political will to meet these challenges in a manner which will deliver major improvement in remote housing quickly, there is little evidence of action on the ground to put this commitment into operation. Considerable, coordinated effort is needed by Western Australian agencies to drive these initiatives. While current year targets can and should be achieved by ‘cherry-picking’ sites where tenure requirements can be met, this does not give confidence that the housing program can be delivered in future years across locations where secure tenure is not in place and where the need is great.

Recommendation 6: Land tenure in Western Australia

- 6.1 That the Western Australian Government recommits to the resolution of tenure issues as a priority and provides a timeframe for action to ensure new housing is delivered to communities in the greatest need.

Queensland

In Queensland significant inroads have been made in the area of school attendance in Cape York, but clearly more needs to be done to permanently cement change. I note that Queensland has recently launched its Indigenous Education Closing the Gap Strategy which calls for new ways of doing business to achieve improved and sustainable outcomes in attendance, attainment and retention. This includes a culture of high expectations and more holistic approaches that are customised to match the needs of the many and diverse range of localities in Queensland.

In this regard, the Cape York Institute has presented both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments with a proposal for a Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy. In substance the Academy proposal would mean a longer school day for students concentrating on: the basics of literacy and numeracy; language instruction and traditional knowledge outside of regular school hours; and music, sport and literature.

The proposal would be expanded over time, initially servicing two priority communities – Aurukun and Coen.

In my view the substance of the proposal represents an opportunity to build on the work done under the Welfare Reform Trail banner and to accelerate the gains made for the current generation of Cape school students.

Recommendation 7: Education in Queensland

- 7.1 That the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments commit to urgently examine the Cape York Institute’s Academy proposal and what elements of the proposal might be adopted immediately to build on existing efforts to lift educational outcomes in Queensland priority locations.

Northern Territory and New South Wales

In the Northern Territory and in New South Wales, the existence of many organisations and cultural groupings with existing governance roles in the priority communities means that reaching a ‘whole of community’ view on how to tackle problems such as alcohol; housing repair and school attendance is a particular challenge. It is also difficult to achieve whole of community input to issues and facilitate community-led initiatives. Given the extensive local planning that is to occur in support of the COAG Remote Service Delivery approach the Northern Territory Government’s *Territory 2030* Strategic Plan, and the New South Wales Government’s *Partnership Community Governance Framework* intensive efforts must be made to support the development of shared visions among all stakeholders in remote communities.

In my view the current resources deployed through local government to support governance; Commonwealth governance and leadership funding; and existing New South Wales Government or Northern Territory Government funds; should be brought together to support intensive and sustained governance and leadership training in the Remote Service Delivery communities. This will not only assist the development of whole-of-community Local Implementation Plans, but should also assist the continuous improvement of decision-making within local government; local service providers; non-government Aboriginal organisations; and other local enterprises.

Recommendation 8: Governance in the Northern Territory and New South Wales

8.1 That the Northern Territory and New South Wales Governments ensure that in implementing recommendations 3.2-3.4, care is taken to align these activities with jurisdictional activity:

- in the Northern Territory, this should include the government working with local shires to accelerate the roll out of Local Area Boards in the priority communities and ensuring they are properly resourced, informed and effective in advising on decisions associated with local government matters in these communities; and
- in New South Wales, that assistance is consistent with its own *Partnership Community Governance Framework* and the Regional Partnership Agreement for the Murdi Paaki region.





Establishment of the Office of the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services

I commenced duties as the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services on 20 July 2009 and began the task of establishing a new office. I would like to acknowledge the considerable support and assistance provided by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in assisting my Office through the provision of the full range of corporate support functions, including information technology, communications, human resources, information (library) services and records management. My Office is establishing a protocol with the Department to support information sharing and cooperative working arrangements.

My Office includes senior staff who are responsible for each of the five remote service delivery jurisdictions and key portfolio areas.

Governance and working arrangements

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery is primarily about testing new government service delivery models, assisting the 29 priority communities to build community capacity, and harnessing the benefits of funds and initiatives provided through the other COAG National Partnerships.

The Office of the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services was established to:

- oversee the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery in remote Indigenous communities;
- formally report to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs twice a year on progress, and ensure that all government service agencies are held accountable for their implementation responsibilities under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery;
- have the authority to work across agencies to cut through bureaucratic blockages and red tape, and to make sure services are delivered effectively; and
- have a direct line of sight to the whole of government Regional Operations Centres established to coordinate services in communities and the single government contact points located within the priority communities.

I see my key role is to oversight the planning and strategic investment in communities and provide agencies with guidance on good practice. It is also to assess progress and advise governments where there are gaps or slow progress or where improvements need to be made to ensure governments meet their commitments under the Remote Service Delivery strategy.

To do this we will focus our efforts at the local/regional, State/NT and national levels.

The work of my Office will remain firmly grounded in evidence gathered on the ground. We plan to focus on brokering solutions and on supporting building the capacity of government agencies and officers, community members; and community organisations to be able to work through issues themselves and achieve a sustainable outcome. Although clearly, where there is an issue of safety or high priority, we will take a more active role.

I am also committed to focusing on the many positive things that are happening, at the community level as well as within the State/Territory and Australian Governments.



Summary of visits to communities

One of my first priorities was to visit all of the 29 priority communities as soon possible, to enable me to meet with the key people and organisations on the ground and to identify the key challenges faced in these communities. During a 15 week period between August and November 2009 I have visited all of the 29 priority communities. As a result I have been able to meet, listen and engage with more than 1,000 people about issues at the community level.

The table at Appendix 1 below provides more detail of the people and organisations I have met with over recent months.

In each visit I have endeavoured to conduct an open community meeting and meet with key service providers as identified by the local Government Business Manager and joint government coordination offices (the Regional Operations Centres). Unfortunately other events, including sadly, sorry business, have meant that I missed the opportunity to meet with as many people as I would have liked. However, this is only the first stage in an ongoing process of engagement with the 29 communities and I hope to remedy these omissions in future visits.

These visits have been invaluable as they have provided community members with an opportunity to raise their concerns directly and offer frank feedback. It has also allowed me to get an overview of each of the 29 communities, to understand individual and shared concerns, the differing levels of servicing across the communities and the quite diverse governance arrangements in place.

I was very pleased to be accompanied for a majority of visits by the Government Business Managers and the State NT Coordinators General. I greatly appreciate the considerable support and assistance they provided in making these visits possible.

Commonwealth and State agencies

To ensure that the delivery of all government services and programs in Remote Service Delivery communities is coordinated between governments, I have made it a priority to work closely with Commonwealth agencies and the State/NT Coordinators General, who all play a crucial role in coordinating implementation efforts within their jurisdiction.

The role of Government Business Managers as a local coordinator of government service delivery commitments in communities and a key point of contact for my Office is extremely important. The Government Business Managers and the new Regional Operations Centres representing both the Australian and State/NT governments provide a direct link to the 29 priority communities to ensure implementation challenges can be identified and addressed rapidly.

I have made it a priority to personally attend at least one local Board of Management (where convened) meeting in each State and in the Northern Territory. The Board of Management allows me to raise implementation issues at all levels of government and to respond to service delivery and coordination issues quickly.

The State/NT Coordinators General provide me with a direct point of contact with State/NT agencies. I have taken, and intend to continue taking, the opportunity to bring them all together to discuss strategic issues with the implementation of the Remote Service Delivery partnership whenever the opportunity arises. Our team approach in undertaking all the community visits has strengthened our partnership. This interaction has been significant as it has confirmed the serious commitment which has been made by State/NT Governments in bringing about positive changes in remote Indigenous communities and has highlighted the importance of maintaining a cohesive partnership approach as we move forward.

I have also encouraged the establishment of an open and professional working relationship with Commonwealth Government agencies and their respective senior staff. This has been achieved through joint involvement in Remote Service Delivery workshops, regular meetings with departments and participation in high level forums such as the Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs and the Executive Coordination Forum on Indigenous Affairs (which brings together National Coordinators from each Commonwealth agency).

It is important that this relationship exists, as it is essential that we work cooperatively to enable us to address problems as they arise. To ensure that these relationships are effective, I have appointed each of my Senior Advisors as a point of contact with individual commonwealth departments. Our corresponding key point of contact with Commonwealth Government agencies has been with their National Coordinator.

APPENDIX 1 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY VISITS

Date	State / NT	People/organisations
7 – 10 August 2009	NT	<p>Darwin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bob Beadman, NT Coordinator General FaHCSIA NT Executive <p>Nhulunbuy (Garma Festival)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Ryan, Nhulunbuy ICC Manager Klaus Helms, GBM Gunyangara Northern Land Council Central Land Council <p>Yirrkala</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diana Ferry, Yirrkala GBM Marina Wangurra, Yirrkala IEO <p>Nguiu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Ramsay, Nguiu GBM Tiwi Islands Shire Council Centrelink Store Local Police
26 August 2009	NSW	<p>Travelled to community with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jody Broun, NSW State Coordinator-General Thomas Warren, Dubbo ROC Manager Bill Tatnell, NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs <p>Walgett</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men's Health shop front and workshop Walgett Community Working Party Walgett Shire Council Community Meeting
3 September 2009	NSW	<p>Travelled to community with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jody Broun, NSW State Coordinator-General Ingrid Blount, FaHCSIA NSW State Manager Thomas Warren, ROC Manager, Dubbo Bill Tatnell, NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs <p>Wilcannia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Darling Shire Council New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council Wilcannia Community Working Party Wings Drop-in Centre Wilcannia school principal Community members who had attended the Canberra RSD Workshop Open community meeting

Date	State / NT	People/organisations
14 – 18 September 2009	NT	<p>Travelled to communities with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bob Beadman, NT Coordinator-General Alice Kemble, Senior Advisor NT, Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services <p>Wadeye</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonathan McLeod, Wadeye GBM Anne-Marie Nudjulu, Wadeye IEO Victoria Daly Shire Services Manager Members of Thamarrurr Inc Thamarrurr OLSH (Catholic) School Community members who had attended the Canberra RSD Workshop <p>Gunbalunya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Lawler, Gunbalunya GBM Open community meeting <p>Maningrida</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Rotumah, Maningrida GBM Bawanninga Aboriginal Corporation Maningrida Progress Association Malabam Health Board Northern Land Council Members of the Community Reference Group Maningrida Child Education Centre West Arnhem Shire Council <p>Numbulwar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mary English, Numbulwar GBM Community members who had attended the Canberra RSD Workshop Open community meeting including service providers and local police officer <p>Ngukurr</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trish Canty, GBM Ngukurr Yugul Mangi elders group Northern Land Council Rangers Arts Centre Community members who had attended the Canberra RSD Workshop Roper Gulf Shire Council Sunrise Health Clinic Community Store Ngukurr school principal <p>Groote Eylandt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of Anindilyakwa Land Council <p>Umbakumba</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royston Prasad, Umbakumba GBM Community members School principal Shire Services manager <p>Angurugu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jennifer Goolagong, GBM Angurugu Local Government Advisory Board Shire Services manager Aged Care Centre Anindilyakwa Land Council Members of women's group Aged Care Community Reference Group Machado Joseph Disease Foundation <p>Galiwin'ku</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Shoobridge, Galiwin'ku GBM Mavis Danganbar, Galiwin'ku IEO Shepherdson College Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre Incorporated East Arnhem Shire Council Ngalkanbuy Health Centre Police station <p>Gapuwiyak</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helen Westbury and Suzanne Stratton, Gapuwiyak GBM Open community meeting, chaired by Mala Leaders <p>Milingimbi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rob Hathaway, Milingimbi GBM

Date	State / NT	People/organisations
29 - 30 September 2009	WA	<p>Travelled to communities with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patrick Walker, WA State Coordinator-General Jeff Harmer, Secretary of FaHCSIA Andrew Tongue, Deputy Secretary of FaHCSIA Richard Aspinall, Broome ROC Manager Belinda Collins, Senior Advisor WA and SA, Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services <p>Beagle Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tony Familiari A/Local Area Coordinator Beagle Bay Women's Group Billard Community Representatives Beagle Bay Steering Committee <p>Ardyaloon (One Arm Point)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colin Kenworthy A/Local Area Coordinator Community Council members <p>Halls Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halls Creek Better Life Project Community Representatives Shire of Halls Creek CEO <p>Fitzroy Crossing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitzroy Futures Forum Committee Community Town Camps residents
13 - 14 October 2009	QLD	<p>Travelled to communities with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tony Hayes, QLD State Coordinator-General Anne-Marie Roberts, FaHCSIA Acting State Manager Veronica Power, Acting Regional Director ATSI Mount Isa, Department of Communities Jennifer Shortt, Senior Advisor, QLD and NSW, Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services <p>Mornington Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie Sanderson, Government Engagement Coordinator Officer Michael Kinnane, Government Champion Mornington Island Negotiation Table Meeting Mirndiyan Gununa Aboriginal Corporation Local artists and elders Police Citizens Youth Centre Mornington Island State School Mornington Island Hospital QLD Police Mornington Shire Council <p>Doomadgee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Mitchell, Government Engagement Coordination Officer Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council Stakeholders Meeting at Council Chambers Safe House Community meeting Doomadgee State School Doomadgee Hospital and Community Health Centre Doomadgee Aged Care Doomadgee Sports and Recreation & Arts Precinct

Date	State / NT	People/organisations
21 – 23 October 2009	NT	<p>Travelled to communities with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Lye, Deputy Coordinator-General Alice Kemble, Senior Advisor NT, Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services Bob Beadman, NT Coordinator-General <p>Hermannsburg (Ntaria)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of West Aranda Health Aboriginal Corporation McDonnell Shire Ntaria School Tjuwanpa Homelands <p>Lajamanu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open community meeting including service providers Warnayaka Art Centre Katherine West Community Clinic Community Store <p>Yuendumu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Simpson, Yuendumu GBM Central Desert Shire Mt Theo Youth Program Shire Service Manager Women's Centre Yuendumu Social Club Store PAW Media Yuendumu Old People's home Health Centre Warlukurlangu Artists Yuendumu School Local stores Yuendumu Pool
2 – 5 November 2009	QLD	<p>Travelled to communities with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Reddel, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, QLD Department of Communities Mike Fordham, ROC Manager, Cairns Des Lee, Senior Welfare Officer, Cairns ICC Gummi Fridriksson, Director Welfare Reform, Cape York Partnerships Jennifer Shortt, Senior Advisor, QLD and NSW, Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services <p>Aurukun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrew Clarkson, Government Engagement and Coordinator Officer Marnie Wettenhall, ROC, Cairns Community members who had attended the Canberra RSD Workshop Aurukun Shire Council Service providers and community members Wellbeing Centre Family Responsibility Commissioners <p>Coen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Jaffer, Cape York, Welfare Reform Andrew Hewitt, Government Engagement Coordinator Officer (GECO) Coen Indigenous Leadership Group Service providers and community members Providers of Employment Services <p>Hope Vale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharon Monaghan Government Engagement Coordinator Officer (GECO) Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council Service providers and community members Wellbeing Centre Family Responsibility Commissioners <p>Mossman Gorge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bamaga Bubu Ngadimunka Inc Board Members Andrew Morris, Government Engagement Coordinator Officer (GECO) Service providers and community members Community members who had attended the Canberra RSD Workshop Wellbeing Centre

Date	State / NT	People/organisations
9 – 11 November 2009	SA	<p>Travelled to communities with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adrienne Gillam, ROC Manager, Adelaide • Kim Petersen and Nerida Saunders, SA Department of Premier and Cabinet • Belinda Collins, Senior Advisor WA and SA, Office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services <p>Amata</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amata Community Council • Women's forum • Substance Misuse Centre • Community members <p>Mimili</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Weaver, Mimili GBM • Mimili school • Mimili Health Clinic • Mimili Swimming Pool • Mimili Store

MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Date	Organisation	Location
24 July 2009	Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations	Canberra
18 August 2009	CEO & Chair Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre	Canberra
24 August 2009	CEO Reconciliation Australia	Canberra
10 October 2009	Central Darling Shire representatives	Canberra
1 September 2009	CEO Cockatoo Network	Canberra
4 September 2009	CEO Indigenous Community Volunteers	Canberra
9 September 2009	Managing Director, changedrivers	Canberra
16 October 2009	APY Lands representatives	Canberra
21 October 2009	APY Lands representatives	Alice Springs
21 October 2009	MacDonnell Shire representatives	Alice Springs
21 October 2009	Central Desert Shire representatives	Alice Springs
21 October 2009	Central Land Council representatives	Alice Springs
26 October 2009	CEO BoysTown	Canberra
9 November 2009	CEO AP Services	Alice Springs

WORKSHOP/MEETING PARTICIPATION

Date	Meeting/workshop	Location
30 July 2009	Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Cross Agency Meeting	Canberra
31 July 2009	Closing the Gap Committee Meeting	Canberra
4 - 5 August 2009	Indigenous Business Workshop	Adelaide
6 August 2009	Remote Service Delivery Communications and Engagement Workshop	Adelaide
7 August 2009	Northern Territory Board of Management Meeting	Darwin
8 – 9 August 2009	The Garma Festival	Gulkula, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
11 August 2009	Executive Coordination Forum on Indigenous Affairs	Canberra
13 August 2009	Working Group on Indigenous Reform	Canberra
13 August 2009	State/NT Coordinators Meeting	Canberra
18 August 2009	Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs Meeting	Canberra
18 – 20 August 2009	Remote Services Delivery Engagement Workshop	Canberra
28 August 2009	Closing the Gap Committee Meeting	Canberra
10 September 2009	Northern Territory Board of Management Meeting	Darwin (via video conference)
21 September 2009	Closing the Gap Committee Meeting	Canberra
2 October 2009	South Australia Board of Management Meeting	Adelaide
6 October 2009	Executive Coordination Forum on Indigenous Affairs	Canberra
15 October 2009	Queensland Board of Management Meeting	Brisbane
20 – 21 October 2009	Northern Territory Government Business Managers and Indigenous Engagement Officers Workshop	Alice Springs
16 October 2009	Northern Territory Board of Management Meeting	Darwin (via video conference)
27 October 2009	Remote Service Delivery Workshop	Canberra
13 November 2009	Northern Territory Board of Management Meeting	Darwin (via video conference)
25 November 2009	New South Wales Board of Management Meeting	Sydney

APPENDIX 2

ACTIVITY UNDER RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE COORDINATOR-GENERAL FOR REMOTE INDIGENOUS SERVICES ACT 2009

Powers of the Coordinator General

The *Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services Act 2009* (“the Act”) provides the Coordinator-General with the power to do all things necessary or convenient in connection with the performance of his functions.

Pursuant to subsection 9(2) of the Act, this includes, but is not limited to, the following powers:

- (a) the power under section 10 to request persons to produce information and documents to the Coordinator General;
- (b) the power to request persons to attend meetings convened by the Coordinator General;
- (c) the power to request assistance from service agencies;
- (d) the power under section 16 to report failures to comply with requests made by the Coordinator General, including the power to report such failures to the Minister;
- (e) the power under section 14 to comment on Local Implementation Plans;
- (f) the power to do anything incidental to the Coordinator General’s functions;
- (g) any other powers conferred on the Coordinator General by this Act or by any other law.

Request persons to provide information and documents etc.

For the purpose of performing his functions, subsection 10(1) of the Act provides that the Coordinator General may request a person:

- (a) to give the Coordinator General specified information within a specified time; or
- (b) to produce to the Coordinator General specified documents within a specified time; or
- (c) to attend before the Coordinator General to answer questions at a specified place at a specified time.

Discussion

At 13 November 2009, no formal requests to produce information and documents have been made and I have experienced high levels of cooperation by all parties.

I have been greatly assisted by the production of information and documents from Commonwealth and State and Territory officials including:

- existing and planned activity under the COAG National Partnerships from Commonwealth agencies and State and Territory Coordinators General;
- completed Situation Reports from the Remote Service Delivery Group in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and
- the verification of materials used in this report by Commonwealth agencies and State and Territory Coordinators General.

I greatly appreciate the considerable assistance provided by all government service agencies in compiling this report.

APPENDIX 3

GLOSSARY

APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
BOM	Board of Management
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFC	Children and Family Centre
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GBM	Government Business Manager (NSW, NT, SA)
GECO	Government Engagement and Coordination Officer (QLD)
IEO	Indigenous Engagement Officer
LAC	Local Area Coordinator (WA)
LIP	Local Implementation Plan
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTJP	NT Jobs Package
PCYC	Police and Citizens Youth Club
QLD	Queensland
ROC	Regional Operations Centre
SA	South Australia
SIHIP	Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
WA	Western Australia