

# ANNUAL SENIOR OFFICIALS' REPORT ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILIATION 2006

## COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

### **1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation**

The Commonwealth's 2006-07 Budget makes the largest investment in Indigenous affairs on record (\$3.3 billion) involving a comprehensive strategy to improve the wellbeing and life opportunities experienced by Indigenous Australians. Specific strategies include:

- significant investment in people by strengthening governance and management of Indigenous organisations and developing local leadership capacity;
- more Indigenous families, including those living on Indigenous land, will have access to the long-term financial security provided by home ownership;
- a network of remote community stores will be set up across Australia to give children a better start in life through healthy and affordable food; and
- young Indigenous Australians will have access to better education through the creation of 20 school-based sports academies.

The Commonwealth's approach is to make mainstream programmes work for Indigenous Australians and place a focus on value for money and practical outcomes as part of Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs).

### **2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

#### **(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

##### ➤ *Indigenous Community Leadership*

The Commonwealth has provided \$23 million over four years from July 2006 to fund additional leadership development for Indigenous people. This includes leadership development for men and young people, advanced leadership opportunities, and targeted leadership support for 10 organisations whose primary focus is women. Facilitators and trainers will be contracted to help Indigenous communities negotiate SRAs and research will be undertaken on the most effective ways to deliver leadership support to Indigenous Australians.

##### ➤ *Indigenous Women's Leadership Programme*

The Commonwealth has also supported 74 women community leaders to participate in the *Indigenous Women's Leadership Programme*. These women undertake extensive leadership development and organise leadership workshops in their communities across Australia. Workshops are focussed on issues of local concern and at least 3,000 women and children will have attended a workshop in 2005-06.

##### ➤ *The Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme*

The *Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme* was introduced through the Commonwealth's *Indigenous Australians – Opportunity and Responsibility* commitment. It is funded until June 2009 with the first young people commencing at the beginning of the 2006 academic year. The Programme will contribute to the pool of future Indigenous leaders through the provision of 250 scholarships for Indigenous

students, mostly from remote areas, to attend high performing schools and universities. Mentor support and leadership development opportunities are core aspects of each participant's engagement.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

➤ ***Sharing Responsibility***

The Commonwealth has been changing the way it develops public policy and programmes. The new arrangements involve a whole-of-government approach and are based on the principles that successful solutions require shared responsibility between governments and Indigenous communities and that interventions need to be tailored to the needs of specific regions and communities.

More than 170 SRAs have been signed with some 140 communities. These demonstrate that the wellbeing of families, children and young people rank highly among the priorities for many Indigenous communities, including measures to address family violence and drug and alcohol dependency. Capacity building, including providing leadership to assist communities to identify their priorities for the future, and measures to help promote economic independence also form an important part of many SRAs.

In February 2006, the Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs agreed an approach of intensive interventions in a small number of Indigenous communities. The Commonwealth is working closely with States and Territories to develop well-coordinated and sequenced strategies for joint interventions by key Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies. Locations identified to date for intensive action include Mornington Island in Queensland; and Galiwin'ku and Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. There has also been a commitment for joint work in Western Australia..

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

➤ ***Indigenous Economic Development Strategy***

The Commonwealth's *Indigenous Economic Development Strategy* is a whole-of-government approach to removing barriers to Indigenous Australians achieving true economic independence so they can make informed choices about their lives and realise their full potential. A number of specific initiatives are underway to implement the Strategy, which focuses on:

- **work:** expanding job opportunities for Indigenous Australians, through direct employment and/or through support for Indigenous business development; and
- **asset and wealth management:** better harnessing of broader economic development opportunities with intergenerational benefits, including through expanded home ownership opportunities, improved land utilisation arrangements and more effective asset and wealth management arrangements.

Effective delivery of the Strategy involves effective engagement of other Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies, as well as the contribution of Indigenous Coordination Centres.

➤ ***Land Reforms***

In October 2005 the Commonwealth announced its intention to amend the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* to make it easier for individuals to own their own home and to develop businesses on land in Aboriginal townships in the Northern Territory. Amendments will streamline and simplify the process of acquiring individual sub-leases over land within townships. Lease holders will be able to mortgage, sell or transfer leases over land, and use them as security to obtain finance for homes or businesses.

In May 2006 the Nguiu township on Bathurst Island became the first Aboriginal township in the Northern Territory to commit to the new arrangements allowing for home ownership and commercial business development. Other communities in the Northern Territory are expected to follow this lead.

Reforms to land tenure are being supported by initiatives to increase home ownership. From 1 July 2006, the Commonwealth is providing \$107.5 million over four years for initiatives to promote Indigenous home ownership on community title land. This will assist Indigenous families living on Indigenous land to obtain affordable home loan finance, discounts on purchase prices of houses and money management training and support. A matched savings programme will encourage and assist families to save a deposit for their own home. An additional 45 houses will be constructed in selected Indigenous communities to increase housing stock available for purchase and provide employment and training opportunities.

These initiatives are complemented by a number of measures to improve the capacities of Indigenous people to manage finances. This includes continuation of funding for the Family Income Management (FIM) programme. The *MoneyBusiness* programme also provides intensive money management training and support to Indigenous people in six communities across Western Australia and the Northern Territory. *MoneyBusiness* is implemented in partnership with the ANZ Bank, which will trial its *SaverPlus* matched savings scheme in three sites.

## **NEW SOUTH WALES**

### **1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation in your jurisdiction.**

➤ ***Local Heroes***

On 3 March 2006, the New South Wales Government unveiled a new recognition and rewards scheme for the unsung heroes of Aboriginal communities across the State. The Local Heroes Recognition Scheme recognises the contribution and positive efforts of Aboriginal people at a local level, working towards improving education, health, wellbeing or general living circumstances of Aboriginal people. Successful nominees receive a certificate of recognition and are able to apply for funding of up to \$5,000 to assist with any relevant projects.

➤ ***Aboriginal Community Languages Assistance Programme***

In April 2006, the New South Wales Government established the Aboriginal Community Languages Assistance Programme. This Programme provides one-off grants between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to Aboriginal community organisations to undertake language revitalisation work. Projects can involve the recording of

language and educational initiatives such as the development of materials for the use or teaching of that language. Items produced through the funded projects will be made freely available on a publicly-accessible New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Database.

➤ ***Hand back of Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks***

On 6 May 2006, the New South Wales Government formally returned to the Aboriginal owners the land covered by Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks, situated on the Far South Coast of New South Wales. The Aboriginal owners have been given freehold title to the land and under an agreement between the New South Wales Government, Aboriginal owners and the Local Aboriginal Land Councils now lease the parks to the New South Wales Government. The parks will be managed by a joint board of management with a majority of Aboriginal Owner representation.

In handing back the lands, the New South Wales Government National Parks recognised the deep spiritual and cultural significance to Aboriginal people of the lands covered by Gulaga and Biamanga, and demonstrated its commitment to work in partnership with the Aboriginal Owners to manage the lands for conservation purposes.

➤ ***Events and Festivals***

The New South Wales Government also provides financial and non-financial support to the Aboriginal community to conduct a variety of significant events and festivals. Many have gained significance as contemporary expressions of reconnecting with extended families and kinship networks. The events also promote healthy lifestyles, educational achievement, employment opportunities, social justice and care for families and communities. Major festivals and events funded this year by the New South Wales Government include:

- *Croc Festival* - the New South Wales Government provided \$140,000 towards the annual national Croc Festival, which is run by a non profit Company, the Indigenous Festivals of Australia Ltd. This Festival engages Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth from primary and secondary schools and community groups in three to four day performing arts festivals across rural and remote communities, providing career information and motivational speakers. In New South Wales, Croc Festival attracts some 2,500 students from about 100 schools across the State; and
- National Sorry Day - the Department of Aboriginal Affairs contributed \$10,600 to hold this year's annual Sorry Day event in New South Wales. National Sorry Day is a positive event for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities who have been affected by past government policies and practices separating children from their families.

**2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

**(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

*Two Ways Together* is the New South Wales Government's 10-year plan to improve the lives of Aboriginal people and their communities through collaboration across governments and in partnership with Aboriginal people. Under the plan, 'Regional Engagement Groups' have been established to assist with implementing *Two Ways*

*Together* at the regional level. These groups provide a formal setting for people in the community to work together to address issues of concern, providing a new avenue for representation by Aboriginal communities following the abolition of ATSIC. The regions covered by these Groups are: South Coast, Bourke, Far North Coast, Hunter, Central Coast, Western Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Mid Western New South Wales, and North Western New South Wales. Coastal Sydney is still being established. The Regional Engagement Groups will provide periodic reports on the profile of Aboriginal communities in the area including the linkages with the seven priority areas, to be used to develop regional action plans under *Two Ways Together*.

The New South Wales Government is also engaging with Aboriginal community representative structures that currently exist, or are being created for the purpose of engaging with governments about service design and delivery, to implement *Two Ways Together* at the local level. These local Aboriginal community representative structures enable Aboriginal people to choose how, and by whom, they wish to be represented at the Regional Engagement Group level.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

Under *Two Ways Together*, the New South Wales Government is seeking to improve the way it works with Aboriginal communities on the ground, to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal people. A priority of the plan is working with communities to combat family violence. The New South Wales Government's \$40 million funding package announced in the 2004 Budget provides funding for a number of programmes including the expansion of initiatives such as the 'Family Violence Programme' in Dubbo, 'Rekindling the Spirit' in Lismore and Tabulam, 'Walking Together' in Newtown/Redfern and the Intensive Family Based Services, which have been expanded to Campbelltown. These programmes include men's-group initiatives focussed on male perpetrators of family violence and men with drug and alcohol issues.

A comprehensive audit is being undertaken in 2006 of Aboriginal specific programmes, services and projects that are administered or funded by the New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments. This audit will form the basis of *Two Ways Together* regional reports, which will influence regional planning and assist in prioritising regional and community actions.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.**

The New South Wales Government is working with the Commonwealth to develop Aboriginal employment agreements in local and regional areas targeting Aboriginal job creation and training. Key representatives from the private sector, industry groups, public sector, local government, chambers of commerce, employee associations and Aboriginal organisations are being brought together to set clear goals around Aboriginal employment, identify opportunities and actions, and set timeframes.

The compacts fit well with the Bilateral on Indigenous Affairs between the New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments, which has established a priority outcome of building Aboriginal wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture, in order to boost economic development, and reduce poverty and dependence on passive welfare. The approach also fits with the work of the intergovernmental *Two Ways*

*Together* Economic Development Cluster Group, which is identifying strategies for improving Aboriginal employment outcomes, including:

- increasing Aboriginal employment in the private and public sector;
- increasing Aboriginal self employment;
- increasing the number of Aboriginal community-owned and privately-owned enterprises; and
- increasing economic utilisation of Aboriginal-owned assets.

## VICTORIA

### **General Comments**

The Victorian Government continues to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to further reconciliation and Aboriginal well-being. The government's social policy statement, *A Fairer Victoria*, launched in May 2006, together with the 2006-07 State Budget, is a blueprint to strengthen the partnership that has developed between the Victorian Government and the Indigenous community over the past five years.

An important focus of *A Fairer Victoria* is building the skills and capacity of Indigenous communities to make real and lasting improvements which break their cycle of disadvantage. This continues the Victorian Government's commitment to work in genuine, respectful and equal partnership with Indigenous communities.

*A Fairer Victoria* has been supported by significantly increased Victorian Government expenditure in Indigenous affairs. The 2006-07 Budget provides a total of \$75 million over four years for new initiatives, the largest single investment in Aboriginal programmes in Victoria's history. These initiatives reflect a new government approach to tackling high levels of disadvantage.

### **1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation in your jurisdiction.**

#### ➤ *Commonwealth Games*

Hosting the Commonwealth Games gave Victoria an opportunity to acknowledge its unique Indigenous cultural heritage and build on Indigenous achievements in business and the arts. The *Respecting Indigenous Communities* initiatives increased the representation and participation of Indigenous Victorians in Games-related activities. Initiatives included accredited tourism training for 10 Indigenous Victorians in time to meet the increased demand for tourist guides, and a successful showcase highlighting Indigenous businesses, artists and performers.

#### ➤ *The Common Ground - Birrarung Wilam*

Birrarung Wilam, meaning "River Camp", is an Indigenous commemorative place on the Yarra River in the heart of Melbourne. It acknowledges Victoria's Indigenous peoples' culture and history. Birrarung Wilam incorporates Indigenous concepts and designs from across Victoria and is a joint project of the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne. Birrarung Wilam was opened on 27 May 2006 as a prominent and lasting symbol of reconciliation.

➤ ***William Barak Bridge***

A new pedestrian bridge linking the central business district to Melbourne's major sport precinct has been named after William Barak, the Wurundjeri diplomat, negotiator and artist. As a child Barak witnessed the signing of the treaty between the local Indigenous nations and Melbourne's founder, John Batman, and later became a powerful leader and advocate for his people. A booklet to commemorate the life of William Barak was launched on 29 May 2006.

**2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

**(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

An important aspect of strengthening communities is building the capacity of individuals to take active leadership roles. The Victorian Government continues to support and fund a number of Indigenous leadership programmes, including the Victorian Indigenous Community Leadership Programme.

The Victorian Government and VicHealth jointly fund and provide project support and advice to seven locally managed leadership projects across Victoria. They are diverse projects that facilitate the development of leadership skills in young Indigenous people. Projects also aim to increase the capacity of individuals and groups to participate in civic life and contribute to the cultural strengths and sustainability of communities and organisations. Approximately 340 Indigenous young people across the state are participating in the programme.

The Victorian Koori Network for the Future is a strategic unit or 'think-tank' component of the Victorian Indigenous Community Leadership Strategy and aims to provide state wide coordination and support functions for Indigenous leadership development in Victoria. It consists of a secretariat and membership from Indigenous community leaders from peak bodies in Indigenous community arts, culture, sport, education, child care, legal, justice, economic development and health.

A partnership has been developed between the Network, Leadership Victoria and the Brotherhood of St Lawrence to assist the Network to establish the Victorian Indigenous Leadership Centre. The Centre will provide further opportunities to develop leadership skills and identify leadership opportunities.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

➤ ***Lake Tyers Community Renewal Project***

The Lake Tyers Community Renewal ten-year programme was developed as a partnership between the Departments of Justice, Victorian Communities, Human Services, and Education and Training. It also provides for coordination with Commonwealth Departments in Lake Tyers developments. An Inter-Departmental Committee chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice is central to this coordinated approach.

Initiatives in the first year of the programme have focussed on building pride and community participation, enhancing the physical environment, reducing crime and promoting health and well-being.

The infrastructure component of the Renewal Programme is progressing well:

- o the Victorian Government and East Gippsland Shire have worked together to enhance community safety by upgrading the road and providing street lighting in the community;
- o a final design of a new community centre has been agreed with the community after several months of working closely with the architect; and
- o work on new basketball courts is due to commence shortly. Once complete a range of sports and recreation programmes can be delivered at Lake Tyers.

The Renewal Programme also supports a broad range of practical initiatives – building skills for future employment, improving governance and local leadership are a particular focus. Residents are and will be trained to undertake urgent works to restore housing and other community infrastructure and to participate in other community projects.

A community run breakfast programme for school children under the Renewal Programme has been successful in improving nutrition standards for Lake Tyers children and attendance rates of school attendance has been improved partly as a result of the Breakfast Programme. Currently four residents are employed in the programme, which has been in operation since August 2005. All four residents have undertaken either the Certificate I or II in Food Safety Handling in order to undertake the job.

Community safety has improved and there has been a full return of government and community service providers to Lake Tyers. There was only one police call out in the month of April.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

➤ ***Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Programme***

The 2005-06 Victorian Budget committed \$9.6 million over three years to establish an Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Programme to develop land for use by Aboriginal people to meet cultural, social, economic and environmental interests.

\$2.65 million allocated this year is supporting the development of sustainable tourism ventures and new business opportunities for Aboriginal people in south west Victoria. The south west — with the attraction of the Great Ocean Road, the 12 Apostles and the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park — provides an excellent opportunity to show case Victoria's unique Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Programme illustrates the commitment of the Victorian Government to work in partnership with Victoria's Aboriginal community to reduce disadvantage and build a positive future.

Projects have been developed in partnership with Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Parks Victoria, the Koori Business Network, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Indigenous Land Corporation and others.

Some of the projects to be funded in Year One include:

- expanded tours of rock art sites and other Aboriginal cultural heritage places in the Grampians National Park offered by Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre;

- development of basic visitor infrastructure at the Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area and Kurtinitj property near Portland managed by Winda Mara Aboriginal Co-operative;
- support to Budj Bim Tours to provide guided tours of the nationally significant Lake Condah area;
- development of a combined gallery and shopfront in Port Fairy for Kaawirn Kuunawaran Hissing Swan Arts, the Tarerer Indigenous Music Festival and Welcome to Country Tours;
- expansion of Worn Gudidj's operations at Tower Hill near Warnambool;
- redevelopment of Bunjils Shelter at the Black Range State Park near Stawell;
- development of a collaborative marketing programme for Aboriginal tourism businesses in south west Victoria; and
- development of a State-wide accredited training programme in land management, tourism and business.

## QUEENSLAND

### **1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation in your jurisdiction.**

In September 2005, the Queensland Government launched *Partnerships Queensland: Future directions framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy in Queensland 2005-2010* (Partnerships Queensland). The Partnerships Queensland vision is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have their cultures affirmed, heritage sustained and the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders.

Partnerships Queensland establishes a new way of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities through collaboration and partnerships at the local, regional and state levels. The four key goals - strong families, strong cultures; safe places; healthy living; and skilled and prosperous people and communities - provide a focus for the government's action in a single overarching framework. It is supported by a budget strategy, a performance framework, a blueprint for action, a statewide communication strategy and clear governance arrangements.

Partnerships Queensland provides a rigorous performance framework to monitor the impact of government intervention on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standards of living. This will clarify who is responsible for what, measure whether key indicators of economic, social and physical quality of life are improving, and identify where future opportunities for substantial improvements lie. The headline indicators under the framework are aligned with the priority areas identified in *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005*. They also align closely with the National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians.

In developing Partnerships Queensland, the Queensland Government acknowledged the need to work in partnership not only with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but also with the Commonwealth Government, local government, non-government agencies and the private sector. Practically, this means governments, organisations, communities, families and individuals all playing their part. The expansion of negotiation tables to selected sites throughout the state will allow more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to negotiate what services are provided to their communities and how they are provided.

Partnerships Queensland will guide and direct all current and future initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and build on the progress that communities, government, business and non-government organisations have already achieved.

## **2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

### **(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

In Queensland funded Indigenous-managed non-government organisations provide a range of valuable services to communities, including childcare, domestic violence prevention services, youth development and justice, homelessness services, family support, disability services, and community support.

In 2005, as part of the Queensland Government's Strengthening Non-government Organisations project, work began which focuses solely on the practical support needs of Indigenous non-government organisations.

Through this, resources are being developed to support the implementation of the broader Strengthening Non-Government Organisations reforms. These reforms include:

- introduction of new standards for community services which set clear expectations for what is expected of funded services; and
- adoption of a new Standard Chart of Accounts, with a standardised financial framework and dictionary of terms, to streamline reporting processes for non-government organisations.

Specifically, a key deliverable in the first phase of the project is a 'virtual-office' CD-ROM administration and management "tool-kit" that will provide easy access to practical administration and management resources for not-for-profit organisations.

The first version of the CD-ROM, scheduled to be launched in early July 2006, comprises nearly 200 resource documents. It will also contain lists of related websites and references for organisations wishing to source more detailed information on specific administration and management functions.

The CD-ROM has been structured around the new standards for community services that will be introduced in 2006-07. In addition to office administration the package focuses on people using the service, people working in the service and governance and accountability.

### **(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

In 2005, the Queensland Government commenced the roll-out of Child Protection Service Delivery Hubs (Hubs) to the remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of north and far north Queensland. Initially implementation has focussed on four communities: Palm Island; Mornington Island; Cooktown; and Thursday Island.

The service delivery model for the Hubs will link a number of localised delivery points to a primary service delivery Child Safety Service Centre and will provide: a

permanent local presence; enhanced alternative care services within the targeted communities, reducing the need to remove children from their community of origin and cultural roots; increased capacity to respond immediately to child protection concerns (including statutory case work); facilitate/undertake community education programmes; and establish a harmonious working relationship with the targeted communities.

Each service Hub will be staffed by professional staff and supported by administration officers. The Hub structure ensures coverage to a number of remote Indigenous communities.

An additional Gulf Child Safety Service Centre will be created in Mount Isa in 2006 to provide focussed service delivery to the remote communities of North West Queensland. This will be supported by localised hubs in Mornington Island (servicing the Wellesley Island Group), Doomadgee (servicing Burketown) and Normanton.

Work is currently underway further to develop the service delivery model and it is estimated that all centres will be fully operational by June 2007.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

In December 2005, the Queensland Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) and National Australia Bank to assist local people to establish their own businesses.

Under the MOU, the three organisations are working in partnership to establish and provide a range of business support, planning and financial advice and mentoring services for individuals and communities in the Torres Strait through the Torres Strait Business Hub.

The prime outcomes to be delivered through this initiative include:

- raising Indigenous stakeholders awareness, knowledge of, and interest in, economic development and business opportunities;
- building Indigenous business capacity and skills;
- developing networks with relevant Indigenous stakeholders; and
- developing broad business mentoring and support networks to support Indigenous business operations.

The MOU includes the secondment of staff from within the National Australia Bank's professional network for periods of one month four times a year. It also includes the provision of general business planning and project assessment support for specific Indigenous projects by the Queensland Government, and overall management and administration of the Hub by the TSRA.

The Queensland Government and TSRA are also working together to consider joint funding opportunities, through Queensland's Indigenous Business Development Grants Scheme, of business proposals that comply with grant funding guidelines and demonstrate commercial potential.

The Queensland Government has established business hubs throughout the state with the aim of increasing the number of Indigenous people establishing and managing

their own business. Besides the Torres Strait, there are hubs in Brisbane, at South Bank, and on Cape York (Weipa, Cooktown and Cairns mobile).

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### **1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation in your jurisdiction.**

#### ➤ *Management and Protection of Aboriginal Heritage and Culture*

The ENRICH (encouraging reconciliation through Indigenous culture and heritage) programme to promote Indigenous heritage and culture and reconciliation has been established through the Department of Indigenous Affairs. ENRICH initiatives include PALS (partnership, acceptance, learning and sharing) School Reconciliation Awards, cultural sponsorships, grants, a planned web portal, and the Swan Walk Trail.

#### ➤ *Repatriation of Indigenous Cultural Property*

The Western Australian Museum is actively involved in the return of Indigenous cultural property, both skeletal and sacred materials. Sixty sets of ancestral remains were returned to the Pilbara Area in November 2005 and 10 sets of secret sacred men's objects were returned to Ngaanyatjarra Lands in November 2005. Negotiations have continued and more ancestral remains and secret sacred objects will be returned to the Kimberley area late in 2006 or early 2007.

#### ➤ *Making a Real Difference in the Lives of Indigenous People by Addressing Social and Economic Disadvantage*

The Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in Western Australia Report (WA OID), based on the COAG Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework was officially released in September 2005. This is a critical first step in making inroads towards making a real difference in the lives of Indigenous Western Australians.

The report aims to provide a guide for coordinated actions towards strategically breaking the cycle of disadvantage and a set of benchmarks against which improvements in the lives of Aboriginal people can be measured.

The WA OID report also presents examples of opportunities for government to partner Indigenous people, the private and non-government sector, and other levels of government. Examples of opportunities for collaborative action included in the report that target the strategic areas for action of the COAG OID framework include:

- community swimming pools and Virtual Infant Parenting programme targeting early child development and growth;
- Rural and Remote Oral Health and Mobile Pre-school targeting early school engagement and performance;
- Happy Kids and WA CALM Bush Rangers targeting positive childhood and transition to adulthood; and
- Street Patrols and Sobering Up Shelters and Remote Policing targeting Substance use and Misuse.

➤ ***Partnerships and Shared Responsibilities with Indigenous Communities***

The Ngaanyatjarra Regional Partnership Agreement is the first Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA) under the new Commonwealth Indigenous Affairs arrangements and was developed for Ngaanyatjarra Lands in the Central Desert region of Western Australia. The Ngaanyatjarra RPA covers a broad range of strategies and issues for Ngaanyatjarra people including the need to improve services, reduce bureaucratic red tape, develop a 20-30 year vision, develop an investment plan for the area and establish meaningful representative arrangements.

Three Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) were also signed to supplement the RPA. The SRAs deal with communities on a case-by-case basis, and cover issues such as municipal services, community stores, and education and training for young people.

➤ ***Programme Flexibility and Coordination with a Focus on Local Communities and Outcomes***

In parallel with its efforts of closely examining programmes and services in response to the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry, the Western Australian Government is conducting Service Mapping and Gap Analysis (MAGA) projects as the basis for developing comprehensive and coordinated plans of action to address identified service needs and priorities and achieve better outcomes in specific local areas. It involves:

- identifying duplications and gaps in services accessed by Indigenous people;
- assessing the level and effectiveness of inter-agency coordination;
- assessing the level and effectiveness of Indigenous engagement in programme development and delivery;
- making recommendations to improve service delivery and coordination; and
- developing a multilateral approach to implementing change.

**2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

**(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

➤ ***Indigenous Community Governance Research Project***

The Western Australian Government is a funding partner, in a project of Reconciliation Australia and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, to undertake research on Indigenous community governance. The aim of the project is to inform directly the work of community-based organisations, leaders and government agencies in their practical efforts to build better governance.

Preliminary findings from four Western Australian case studies, including an overview of the research themes arising from all case studies and their implications for governments have been used to identify a set of actions the Western Australian Government could undertake to progress Indigenous governance development.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

➤ *Continuing the implementation of the Western Australian Government's Response to the Gordon Inquiry*

In response to the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry into child abuse and family violence in Aboriginal Communities, the Western Australian Government closely examined and continues to examine its programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people, and particularly tackle family violence, drug and alcohol dependency and other symptoms of community dysfunction.

The government has invested around \$75 million in its response to the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry. Major initiatives include:

- construction and establishment of new remote policing services in nine identified locations to ensure that all remote Aboriginal communities are within 200km distance of police presence;
- recruitment of 25 additional Child Protection Workers to increase capacity, improve response times and enable work to occur more closely between and amongst the police, other agencies and the communities;
- placement of 10 additional Strong Families Programme Coordinators to bring together family members and officers from different agencies to develop appropriate and unified case plans specific for each client family;
- employment of 14 skilled Aboriginal Support Workers who will provide confidential practical therapeutic support services to Aboriginal children and youth;
- expansion of Sexual Assault Services to increase outreach services in three identified metropolitan areas and nine regional locations including the crisis capacity of the Sexual Assault Resource Centre;
- expansion and relocation of the Child Protection Unit at Princess Margaret Hospital to increase its capacity to provide medical, clinical and counselling services to children who are victims of abuse and strengthen interagency responses around child protection;
- placement of eight Police Domestic Violence Liaison (Specialist Police) Officers in country districts who will coordinate police responses to family violence and contribute to the case management of families at risk;
- proclamation of new domestic violence legislation on 1 December 2004 that provides for new Police Orders that can remove the perpetrator from the home for 24 hours. This is having a marked effect on the community, and the reporting of domestic violence incidents has risen;
- enhancement of programmes for the rehabilitation and monitoring of people who had contact with the criminal justice system, and support for communities in managing these people, including the placement of four programme officers in the Gascoyne, Goldfields, Kimberley and Pilbara; and
- expansion of Aboriginal Sexual Abuse Services across the state.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

➤ ***Indigenous Land Use Agreements***

Recognising land as a potential asset base for furthering Indigenous economic independence and well being, the government has vigorously promoted and sponsored the negotiation of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) in Western Australia. This is consistent with the government's native title policy that is based on the principles of negotiation, not litigation. There are now five ILUAs in Western Australia that have potential for Aboriginal people to share in the benefits from the use of land:

- Airservices Australia – Ngaanyatjarra Indigenous Land Use Agreement;
- Argyle Diamonds;
- Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd – Eastern Guruma;
- Ngaanyatjarra Lands Indigenous Land Use Agreement (Body Corporate Agreement) No 1; and
- Nharnuwangga Wajarri and Ngarlawangga.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation**

During 2005-06, the South Australian Government continued to progress reconciliation through the activities of individual agencies, the coordinating work of the South Australian Government Reconciliation Reference Committee (SAGRRC) and the funding of Reconciliation SA, a not-for-profit organisation promoting reconciliation in South Australia.

In May 2005, Reconciliation SA and SAGRRC worked together to conduct the ministerial launch of the second annual reconciliation report to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, *Reconciliation Matters*.

SAGRRC also promotes the *Long Walk* Reconciliation programme that commemorates the AFL football star Michael Long's walk from Melbourne to Canberra to highlight the issues faced by Aboriginal people. This initiative has strong support from the Victorian Government.

Reconciliation Week 2006 included a community BBQ, cultural performances and the launch of the Aged and Disability Services Memorandum of Understanding.

**2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

**(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

The South Australian Government has supported leadership skills development initiatives across a variety of agencies, including:

- Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) – second year cultural tourism students from Tauondi Aboriginal College at Port Adelaide participated in a series of workshop sessions with DEH staff from the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium. The programme was designed to assist students to gain a better understanding of the role of both organisations and to develop their botanical

background and knowledge of plants used in Indigenous plant use walks in the garden;

- Department of Health – established the Unique Learning Centre at Pika Wiya Health Service in Port Augusta to cater for health and allied health teaching and learning for Aboriginal students enrolled in tertiary sector courses;
- South Australia Police – conducted The One and All Sailing Development Programme, which assisted young Indigenous people from South Australia and Northern Territory to develop leadership and teamwork skills; and
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet – worked closely with the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Council and communities to develop and deliver governance and management training for members of the Executive, community councils and other community organisations.

To support these various training initiatives, the government continues to use its register of providers of Aboriginal cultural awareness programmes, developed in 2005, to source appropriate trainers.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

The South Australian and Commonwealth Governments are working across government, including in partnership with NGOs, to improve service provision and accessibility to services in Indigenous communities, particularly in areas of special need. For example, in the Yalata Community and on the APY Lands this collaborative approach is leading to improved access to youth and family services, including healthcare workers, youth workers and counselling services, as well as the associated facilities.

Specific projects under this collaborative approach:

- the Department of Education and Children’s Services led an initiative to provide advice and support to Second Story Youth Health Services and the Kumangka Aboriginal Youth Service, which was of assistance to them in implementing the Better Health 4 Youth project. The project aims to minimise smoking in disadvantaged and at risk young people through the implementation of education programmes relating to smoking and tobacco use. In 2005, peer leaders and community agencies were identified and targeted to join the project as key drivers in reducing the incidence of smoking in young people; and
- the Department of Health has various initiatives such as:-
  - the Anangu Bibi birthing project, and
  - child and family service planning and initiatives based on the Every Chance for Every Child: A Framework for Early Childhood Services in South Australia 2003-2007. This project includes the allocation of regional network and workforce development grant funding.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

The South Australian and Commonwealth Governments have enhanced support for a variety of Indigenous enterprises around the state in recognition that these ventures are enablers of sustained economic and community growth. Tourist ventures such as Head of Bight on Eyre Peninsula, Iga Warta in the Flinders Ranges and the Coorong Wilderness Lodge on the Limestone Coast are successful Indigenous business ventures that continue to grow in partnership with government.

Also, the Reedy Creek Nursery has been contracted to work with a number of Aboriginal communities in South Australia, including those in the APY Lands, to cultivate Australian native food with the aim of developing small sustainable horticultural enterprises. Food produced through these partnerships is available to the participating communities for consumption, with excess sold back to Reedy Creek for production of commercial relishes and sauces under the Outback Pride label. These community-based programmes involve re-landscaping community areas, incorporating bush food plants to increase the availability of fresh foods to the community, as well as trees to provide shade.

Reedy Creek Nursery, in partnership with Vili's bakery company, recently developed a bush foods and meat pie for commercial sale. The pies are now available, and contain desert raisins, wattle seeds and saltbush leaves harvested from Aboriginal communities. They are being promoted as a healthy bush foods product, high in vitamin C, antioxidants and iron.

**TASMANIA**

**1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation in your jurisdiction.**

The Tasmanian Government recognises that land ownership and addressing matters of critical concern to the Aboriginal community – such as settling the issue of the stolen generation – are critical to achieving reconciliation. They also underpin a broader approach to dealing with the underlying causes of the social dislocation and community despair that leads to family violence and other problems within the Aboriginal community.

➤ ***Land Ownership***

In 2005 the Tasmanian Government passed Legislation to transfer ownership of Cape Barren and Clarke Islands to the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT). Almost 51,000 hectares of land was transferred.

In February 2006, a 40-year lease was granted to the ALCT for Eddystone Point (10.5 hectares) and nine hectares of land on Bruny Island are being granted to the ALCT through the Tasmanian Government's Crown Land Assessment and Classification Project.

The government is continuing to provide support to allow land management and maintenance activities to be undertaken by the Aboriginal community on transferred land.

➤ ***Stolen Generation***

The government is committed to resolving once and for all, in partnership with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, the key question of the stolen generation.

➤ ***Aboriginal Culture and Heritage***

The Tasmanian Government continues to work with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in the area of cultural rights. A cultural practices strategy is being developed which will cover hunting, fishing and gathering activities.

As an interim measure until the cultural practices strategy is finalised, the Tasmanian Government issues permits to Aborigines to take fish and wildlife outside of the normal legislative provisions.

Development of new Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Legislation is underway, aimed at improved protection for Aboriginal heritage in the state. The initiative involves wide consultation and communication with the Aboriginal community, stakeholders, both government and non-government, and with the broader community.

➤ ***Eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Specific Services***

In December 2005, the Tasmanian Government adopted a policy on eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programmes and services. The policy establishes a clear process for determining eligibility for specific programmes and services using the three-part definition of an Aboriginal person rather than relying on self-identification. The Policy will help ensure funds for specific programmes and services are effectively targeted.

**2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

**(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

➤ ***Employment***

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) continues to manage a Structured Training and Employment Project aimed at increasing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders employed in the State Service. The Project includes providing funds for training and development for those employed in the State Service and those wishing to be employed in the State Service.

In 2005-2006 37 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were assisted through the OAA's employment unit in gaining employment with the Tasmanian Government.

A key priority with the training and skills programme is to assist with career development and planning for those employed in the State Service.

The OAA has also developed partnerships focusing on employment with the University of Tasmania and NGO service providers, such as Colony 47.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

➤ ***Cape Barren Island Road Maintenance Contract***

As part of the Cape Barren Island land return, the Tasmanian Government has provided funding to the Cape Barren Islanders Aboriginal Association (CBIAA) for the maintenance of roads on Cape Barren Island – something that was previously the responsibility of the Flinders Council.

The CBIAA will undertake up to \$350,000 in road maintenance and upgrading work annually on a contractual basis to the Department of Energy, Infrastructure and Resources. To assist the CBIAA to take up this role training is being provided to community members and capital funding has been allocated to purchase the necessary road building equipment.

The annual maintenance and upgrade programme will be determined in consultation with the Cape Barren Island community.

The initiative is expected to provide significant employment and training opportunities, as well as a better road network for the Island. This in turn will assist the community in developing tourism and other commercial ventures.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

➤ ***Stamp Duty Assistance for First Home Buyers***

The Tasmanian Government provides funding to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander first home buyers with the payment of stamp duty. First home buyers are able to combine this with the first home owners grant and loan funding from Indigenous Business Australia to make the purchase of their first home much more affordable.

Members of the Aboriginal community have lower home ownership rates than other Australians and this initiative helps to redress this imbalance and provides an avenue for capital accumulation by Aboriginal people. It supports the emphasis currently being given to Aboriginal housing through the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Housing Ministers.

## **AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation in your jurisdiction.**

One of the seven priorities of the *Canberra Social Plan*, which was released in 2004, is 'Respect, Diversity and Human Rights' and the promotion of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Canberrans.

➤ ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation***

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation includes:

- ACT Chief Minister's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultative Council;
- United Ngunnawal Elders Council;
- Aboriginal Justice Centre;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Forum;
- Territory Advisory Committee on Indigenous Housing;
- Support for Healing Camps facilitated through the Journey of Healing (ACT) Inc. (JoHACT) organisation; and
- Indigenous Education Consultative Body.

➤ ***Establishment of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC)***

The UNEC advises on Ngunnawal specific cultural and heritage issues on behalf of the local Ngunnawal people, who are the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which Canberra is built.

➤ ***Acknowledgement of the Ngunnawal people at ACT Government functions & events***

The ACT Government recognises the importance of acknowledging the traditional Aboriginal peoples of this land. All public speeches by representatives of the ACT Government include an acknowledgement of the traditional owners and, depending on the availability of an Indigenous community elder, a formal "Welcome to Country" may be offered.

➤ ***Signage***

The ACT Government has erected entrance and exit signs to the ACT acknowledging the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners of the land on which Canberra is built.

➤ ***Permanent display of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags***

This initiative was first undertaken in NAIDOC Week in 2004. The flags are permanently displayed near the ACT Legislative Assembly.

➤ ***Human Rights Act (2004) and the Human Rights Commission Act (2005)***

The *Human Rights Act 2004* came into force on 1 July 2004. The primary aim of the Act is to establish a 'dialogue model' for the protection of human rights in the ACT. The long-term aim is to build a culture of tolerance and respect for human rights, reflecting the shared values of Canberrans.

➤ ***Negotiation of a Namadgi Special Aboriginal Lease***

The *Agreement between the Territory and ACT Native Title Claim Groups* establishes a cooperative management of Namadgi National Park by way of an Interim Namadgi Advisory Board. The Board consists of five Aboriginal and five non-Aboriginal members. The role of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board is to provide strategic advice to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

➤ **Public Apology**

The ACT Government has publicly said ‘sorry’ to the Stolen Generations in the Legislative Assembly.

**2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

**(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

The ACT Government is working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure that they have the opportunity to be involved in decisions affecting them, through the development of a new representative body. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Consultative Council co-ordinated meetings in the first half of 2006 so that the ACT Indigenous community had the opportunity to express its views on the form this representation should take.

The Consultative Council recently presented the Chief Minister with a report on those community consultations. The report indicated a significant level of agreement within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that the new body should be elected, should be independent of government, and should have a real role in contributing to policy development and monitoring service delivery.

Over the next 12 months the government and the community will work together to determine issues such as the body’s terms of reference and constitution, electoral procedures, its relationship to the traditional owners, and its operating procedures.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

The ACT Government is conscious that improved education outcomes are key to building capacity within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and to overcoming disadvantage. The ACT Government is able to report that the Indigenous Education Unit, established to coordinate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the Territory and to provide Koori preschools with culturally appropriate curricula for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, has achieved the practical outcome that in Canberra it is not possible to distinguish between the literacy rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 3 students. In numeracy the rates are only slightly less than that for non-Indigenous students.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.**

The ACT Government is committed to assisting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to access mainstream business programmes and to be active participants within the mainstream economy through:

- establishing strong networks with Indigenous Business Australia (Business loans/finance) and Indigenous Community Volunteers (Business mentoring/admin assistance);
- promoting business programme material to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on a regular basis via promotional stands and oral presentations;
- negotiating with consultants to provide in-kind contributions to allow businesses to financially access programmes;

- partnering with businesses, like Spotless Services Australia, to develop and promote employment and traineeship opportunities for the Indigenous community in the ACT and region; and
- participating in the Indigenous Student and Friends Reconciliation Celebration Day held on 2 June 2006. A number of traineeships will be on offer for the Indigenous community that will include on and off the job training, mentoring and ongoing support.

## **NORTHERN TERRITORY**

### **1 Highlight successes in promoting reconciliation**

#### ➤ *Agenda for Action*

The government released the *Agenda for Action: A Whole of Government Approach to Indigenous Affairs in the Northern Territory 2005-2009* in May 2006. The *Agenda* reaffirms the importance of a positive Indigenous affairs agenda in building better relationships between Indigenous Territorians and the broader community.

The *Agenda's* six main Indigenous affairs priorities reflect those agreed to in the *Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs*, signed by the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister on 6 April 2005:

- building a whole-of-government approach to Indigenous affairs;
- improving education and health outcomes for young Indigenous Territorians;
- increasing Indigenous employment and economic development opportunities;
- strengthening governance and community capacity;
- improving community housing and infrastructure; and
- making communities safe for residents.

Under the *Agenda* the Northern Territory Government will work to encourage greater understanding in the community of Indigenous Territorians' history and continuing cultural strength. The government agrees to work in partnership with Indigenous people in an environment of mutual respect, recognising that because social, cultural and economic issues facing Indigenous Territorians are interconnected, government agencies must communicate with each other, coordinate policies and work together.

One important initiative under the *Agenda* is the incorporation of formal Indigenous Impact Analysis into the policy development process. In addition, the government will produce a public report every two years from 2007, outlining the government's efforts in Indigenous affairs and detailing outcomes achieved on the ground. This report will be in line with the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments' commitment to monitor the success of efforts against the indicators in the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* framework and under the *Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs*.

#### ➤ *Stronger Sacred Sites Laws*

In December 2005 the Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, further strengthening the protection of sacred sites in the Northern Territory. The Act recognises Aboriginal culture and traditions in the Northern Territory and ensures their preservation and enhancement. Under the Act, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority plays a key role in finding common

ground between Aboriginal custodians and other land users, paving the way for decisions over land development and access.

The key changes made by the amendments were:

- stronger secrecy for the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority's records. It is of utmost importance to Aboriginal custodians that their sacred and secret site information is kept confidential, and only used for the purposes of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. Provisions in the Act prevent this information from being divulged except where necessary to protect a sacred site. In 2003 information of this kind was allowed in evidence during a native title case, following a ruling that the secrecy provisions only protected information from being divulged to persons, and not to courts and tribunals. The 2005 amendments have reversed this decision by clarifying that the prohibition on communication or production of secret and sacred material also extends to courts and tribunals;
- clarification of the Crown's liability to prosecution under the Act. Whereas the primary aim of the Act is the prevention of damage to sacred sites, the ability to prosecute provides the main deterrent against contraventions of the Act. The amendments have clarified that government agencies that are alleged to have damaged sacred sites are liable to prosecution; and
- extension of the time limits for prosecution. Because offences under the Act may not be discovered for some time, and/or an investigation of the offence may be delayed due to the distance involved and the difficulties in locating offenders and witnesses, prosecutions have not been pursued due to the time limitation of six months applied under section 52 of the *Justices Act*. Under the new amendments, the Act provides for an extended period for up to two years after the date of discovery of an alleged offence by the authority in which to bring a prosecution, and also gives the court discretion to allow further time if there is a justified delay due to matters such as the remoteness of the location; the irregularity of visits to the location; the inability to visit the location due to Aboriginal tradition; and any difficulty in locating the alleged offender or witnesses.

## **2 Key achievements against each of the three identified priorities:**

### **(a) Investing in community leadership initiatives**

#### **➤ *Regional Authorities and Development Coordinators***

In the previous *Senior Officials' Report* the Northern Territory included information about the *Building Stronger Regions – Stronger Futures Strategy*, this moves to establish larger local government bodies through the voluntary amalgamation of small councils. These new Regional Authorities aim to foster strong Indigenous representation by effectively combining Indigenous and non-Indigenous governance structures.

Work with Indigenous community leaders on the development of Regional Authorities across the Northern Territory is progressing, with a number of regions making significant moves towards amalgamation in the last year. The regions of Anindilyakwa, Roper-Katherine, Top End Rural Region and Victoria River have all established Steering Committees to manage the regionalisation process. The proposed West Central Arnhem Regional Authority (WCARA) is closest to establishment, with an Interim Council overseeing the final stages of the process. The WCARA Project is supported by a Working Group formed in November 2005 to

coordinate Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government and Local Government Association (LGANT) involvement.

The Northern Territory Government is continuing to support the three existing Regional Authorities (Tiwi, Thamarrurr and Nyirranggulung). A comprehensive evaluation of these three Authorities is underway, with a report due in July 2006. The evaluation will inform the process for establishing future Regional Authorities as well as providing information about the current needs of these Authorities.

Under the Regional Authorities Schedule to the *Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs* the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments agreed to place Development Coordinators in key regional centres. The primary roles of the Coordinators are to build community governance, Indigenous leadership capacity and address local service delivery issues. They will also coordinate Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments and local government initiatives designed to support the establishment and operations of Regional Authorities. Development Coordinators will perform a key role in delivering information to government about the needs of local communities and ensuring that funding and other support is targeted to meet those needs.

As of May 2006, the Northern Territory Government has placed Development Coordinators in the Tiwi, Thamarrurr, East Arnhem, Nyirranggulung, Southern Barkly, Victoria River, Groote Eylandt and Mutitjulu regions. Recruitment is underway for a Development Coordinator to be based in Borroloola.

**(b) Reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people**

➤ *New Moves to Address Alcohol Abuse*

In previous *Senior Officials* reports, the Northern Territory has highlighted its commitment to improving the safety and well-being of families, women, children and young people. The Northern Territory Government is continuing to deliver on these commitments. A key achievement this year was the introduction of new laws aiming to reduce the impact of alcohol-related harm.

Alcohol abuse has a devastating impact on Indigenous families and children. Alcohol-related violence, hospital admissions and anti-social behaviour are at unacceptable levels, and the negative impact on all Territorians is severe. The Northern Territory Government is continuing to deliver on commitments made last year to help Territorians break the cycle of alcohol abuse and incarceration. In February 2006, the Legislative Assembly passed the *Breaking the Cycle* package, introducing a raft of new moves to address problem drinking.

These new moves include:

- the introduction of Alcohol Courts in Darwin and Alice Springs with the power to sentence offenders whose criminal behaviour is linked to alcohol dependence to compulsory treatment and supervision. Orders will be made following expert recommendations about the offender's alcohol dependence and treatment needs. Diversion to the Alcohol Court will only be possible if the offender pleads guilty to an offence normally dealt with by a magistrate's court;
- a boost in rehabilitation services, including extra funding of \$560,000 a year to provide the extra places required for people serving Alcohol Court orders;

- amendments to the *Liquor Act* allowing the Liquor Commission to declare private premises such as homes, shopping centres, churches, schools and hospitals ‘dry areas’, following application by the owner, occupier or their representative or by an interested person. The penalty for contravention of the order is a fine and confiscation of the alcohol, and police will be allowed to search the area without a warrant if they believe that the order has been contravened;
- the introduction of tenancy behaviour agreements, which allow Territory Housing to require public housing tenants who have a history of anti-social behaviour to enter into acceptable behaviour agreements. The agreements may also extend to the behaviour of other people staying at the premises with the tenant’s consent. Repeated or serious breach of a behaviour agreement allows Territory Housing to evict the tenant;
- a fund of \$100,000 a year, from which grants of up to \$5,000 can be made to support alcohol free community events; and
- support for individual communities to develop their own responses to alcohol issues through Regional and Local Alcohol Management Plans.

**(c) Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence**

➤ ***Larrakia Heads of Agreement***

In early September 2005 the Northern Territory Government signed an agreement with organisations representing the Larrakia people to develop the new Darwin suburb of Lyons. The agreement maximises job and business opportunities for Larrakia people during construction of the suburb, in which 700 new houses will be built. During construction, Larrakia workers will be provided with on-the-job training wherever possible. The agreement will raise the commercial profile of the Larrakia and is expected to lead to long-term employment and business opportunities for Darwin’s traditional owners.

Darwin’s Indigenous heritage will also be promoted in Lyons. Streets and parks will be given Larrakia names and art depicting Larrakia stories will be displayed throughout the suburb. The suburb itself is named after senior Larrakia elder Tommy Lyons.

The agreement follows on from the success of an earlier agreement to develop the Palmerston suburb of Darla, and is expected to lead to similar agreements in future.