

# Remote Service Delivery

## National Partnership

### Agreement

Annual Report to COAG

2010-11



Remote  
Service  
Delivery

**Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement: 2010-11 Annual  
Report to COAG**

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*Please be aware that this document may contain the images and names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.*

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## **Executive Summary**

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### **About this report**

This is the second report to the Council of Australian Governments required of the Commonwealth under Clause 25 of the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement ('the Agreement').

This report covers the year to 30 June 2011.

### **Overview of progress**

The Agreement is making progress towards closing the gap in outcomes for Indigenous Australians through equity of access to services and building community strength and resilience.

The inaugural report focussed on the breadth of activities required in the establishment phase of the Agreement:

- development of Bilateral Plans
- development of Local Implementation Plans
- baseline mapping
- establishing a Single Government Interface supported by Regional Operations Centres and jurisdictional governance mechanisms.

This second report reflects a shift from establishment to delivery. The significant work undertaken in the last twelve months to build on the achievements of the establishment phase has included:

- defining, giving effect to and monitoring commitments made in Local Implementation Plans
- implementing measures to support equity of access to services across key areas of health, education, housing and community safety
- establishing the reporting and evaluation framework for the Agreement – including the approach to annual and final evaluations.

### **Major Achievements**

Key achievements and a high level summary of progress to date are as follows:

#### ***Improved Engagement***

- Bilateral Plans have been agreed in all jurisdictions and are reviewed annually.
- A Single Government Interface (including a Government Business Manager and Indigenous Engagement Officer) operates in each priority location. This is supported by six Regional Operations Centres, staffed by Commonwealth and

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State/Territory officers. Corporate and other governance support is provided by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

- State/Territory Boards of Management (referred to as the State Management Committee in New South Wales and the State Operations Committee in Western Australia), comprising senior State/Territory and Australian Government Officials, have been established as the primary jurisdictional governance arrangements for implementing the Agreement. These meet approximately six-weekly in all jurisdictions. In the Northern Territory and Western Australia, the Board of Management includes local government representatives. At the local level, communities are making an important contribution to the development and implementation of the Local Implementation Plans through Local Reference Groups, community working parties or similar.
- A feasibility study for a National Framework for Indigenous Interpreters was completed in March 2011 and consultation has commenced on the elements proposed for the National Framework.
- *RSD ROCS*, FaHCSIA's bi-monthly newsletter, shares good practice within the government sector.
- A Local Community Awareness Program and Kit the aim to improve the capacity of government officers working in remote communities to engage effectively with Indigenous people.

### **Better Service Systems**

- The Commonwealth, working with the States and Northern Territory, has collected comprehensive baseline information for a baseline mapping report for each of the 29 communities.
- The Commonwealth has established a special account known as the Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Special Account. This account allows the Commonwealth to respond flexibly and expeditiously to community needs identified in Local Implementation Plans where those needs cannot otherwise be met through existing programs.
- The development of Local Implementation Plans has been a significant exercise and involved a considerable level of engagement with communities. Local Implementation Plans have been developed for all 29 Remote Service Delivery locations and 23 communities have formally signed-off on their Plans: Amata and Mimili in South Australia; Doomadgee and Mornington Island in Queensland; Walgett and Wilcannia in New South Wales, Bardi Jawi (formerly referred to as Ardyaloon), Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Beagle Bay in Western Australia; Angurugu, Gunbalanya, Umbakumba, Gapuwiyak, Galiwin'ku, Lajamanu, Milingimbi, Ngukurr, Ntaria, Numbulwar, Wadeye, Yuendumu and Yirkala in the Northern Territory.

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- *LIPtracker*, a shared multi-governments system tracks progress of actions in Local Implementation Plans.
- Of the 3,013 deliverable actions contained in Local Implementation Plans across the 29 priority communities, as at 30 June 2011 52 per cent of actions have either been completed or work is underway.

Examples of projects funded or underway as part of the Remote Service Delivery implementation process<sup>1</sup>:

- In Mornington Island in Queensland, an Innovative Learning and Young Mothers Centre has been established to deliver programs and support vocational training opportunities for school aged mothers that have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from learning and susceptible to substance abuse.
- In Coen in Queensland, upgrades have been completed to the Coen Aerodrome runway to help ensure regular provision of services and supplies to Coen township as well as the ability to travel to and from the community.
- Community driven action planning activities have been funded including suicide prevention planning and environmental health action plans in the Kimberley in Western Australia and community safety planning in Wilcannia in New South Wales.
- In the Bardi Jawi region of the West Kimberley, a community based gardening and healthy eating project has been established. It involves the creation and maintenance of local community gardens, and education workshops about nutrition and food hygiene.
- In Wadeye in the Northern Territory, the Youth Drop-In Centre is being refurbished to provide recreation activities/programs for young people.
- In the APY Lands in South Australia, construction workers completed an innovative housing training and employment project, which included travel to Adelaide to inspect housing construction at the manufacturer's site.
- In Doomadgee in Queensland, local community members are being supported to become teachers through the new Remote Area Teacher Education Program that allows people to remain in their communities while studying.
- Indigenous Parenting Support Services are now operating in priority communities across Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Queensland.

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<sup>1</sup> These projects include examples of those funded by the Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Special Account.

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- In Angurugu, Northern Territory, a mentor tutor support program has been established to work with parents, carers and community members to teach foundational pre literacy and language to support early learning.
- In Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia, a school breakfast and lunch program has commenced for students to encourage school attendance.

### **Stronger Communities**

- Governance and leadership training has been offered and delivered in communities. This has been tailored to meet local requirements and needs, as advised by Regional Operations Centre managers and agreed with communities.
- Consultations on a National Leadership and Governance Framework have commenced. The Australian and State/Territory Governments are making a significant investment to focus government efforts on supporting governance, leadership and capacity building, facilitating coordination, avoiding duplication and sharing information.

### **Evaluation, oversight and review**

- A Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services was appointed in 2009. The Coordinator-General has presented three statutory reports to the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Whole-of-government responses to the recommendations in these reports have been agreed and implementation of agreed actions is underway. A fourth report, which includes an assessment of progress with implementing previous recommendations, was presented on 30 September 2011.
- A *Remote Service Delivery Evaluation, Performance Indicators and Reporting Strategic Framework* has been developed and agreed by all parties through a cross agency and jurisdictional working group. The Framework outlines how the evaluation and performance reporting requirements of the Agreement will be fulfilled and work is underway on delivery.

### **Comparable service delivery**

Significant progress continues to be made towards achieving equity of access to services across the priority communities. For example:

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, significant progress has been made in closing the gap in housing, with 430 new houses built and 978 refurbishments across the 29 priority communities over the past two years;
- Eighty-seven per cent of Indigenous children in remote locations are enrolled in preschool, compared with 70 per cent of all children nationally. Some innovative approaches to engaging parents and improving school attendance are being trialled. Steps have been taken to accelerate the

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rollout of Trade Training Centres and funds set aside to prioritise construction of facilities in the priority communities.

- The Australian Government Remote Participation and Employment Services Review is underway.
- Through the Health and Hospitals Fund, the Australian Government is providing significant funding to increase access to primary health care services to many priority communities. This includes the construction of new primary health care clinics at Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Galiwinku and Ntaria, with a major upgrade of the existing health clinic at Maningrida in the Northern Territory. In addition, funding has been announced for the expansion of renal infrastructure, dialysis and support services in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, including the provision of patient accommodation to enable renal dialysis, renal support services and training for home haemodialysis patients.

### Challenges experienced

While implementation work on the Agreement has moved, over the last year, from the establishment to the delivery phase, some challenges were experienced including:

- Baseline mapping was delayed and did not fully inform the development of the initial Local Implementation Plans.
- Achieving agreed strategies and modalities for the delivery of governance and leadership programs has proved to be an ongoing challenge.
- The first tranche of Local Implementation Plans took longer than expected to develop. The requirements for specific funding amounts (where applicable) and performance indicators for agreed actions will be included in later iterations of these Plans.
- Securing land tenure remains challenging and is a key priority to underpin investment, particularly for social housing, the continuation of property and tenancy management reforms, and to provide security for Commonwealth assets (including staff housing, a key pressure point). Secure tenure also provides an important foundation for economic development.

### Looking Ahead

In the next twelve months, effort will focus on addressing the ongoing challenges and consolidating achievements to date including:

- Continuing to deliver on commitments in Local Implementation Plans, while finalising and achieving commitments on the remaining Local Implementation Plans in the six priority communities yet to formally sign-off.
- Working closely with communities to review, revise and build on the Local Implementation Plans, including ensuring there is a strong focus on identifying gaps in service delivery and developing strategies to address these gaps.

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- Reviewing and strengthening governance arrangements to ensure these support the delivery phase of implementation.
- Sharpening the focus on service delivery to make services in the priority communities comparable with those in non-Indigenous communities of a similar size, in similar locations, with similar levels of need.
- Communicating and sharing good practice to inform better implementation.
- Analysing and evaluating performance.
- Document the new Remote Service Delivery methodology as required by clause 17(a) of the Agreement. This methodology will clearly describe the new methods and approaches to delivering services in the priority communities adopted across all levels of government, and will help guide delivery of the strategy over the delivery phase of the agreement.

## **1. Introduction**

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### **About this report**

This is the second report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) required of the Commonwealth under Clause 25 of the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement ('the Agreement').

Under Clause 25 'the Commonwealth will monitor the overall implementation of the Agreement, including the Bilateral Plans and Local Implementation Plans. The Commonwealth will report annually to COAG on implementation of the Agreement'.

### **Scope of the Report**

This report covers implementation of the specific Remote Service Delivery outputs detailed in Clause 17 of the Agreement (see *Appendix A*) for the 12 month period to 30 June 2011.

It also includes other reporting required of the parties to the Agreement, specifically:

- feedback from the States and the Northern Territory which meets the report card requirements of Clause 26 of the Agreement
- a progress report on the annual evaluation process required by Clause 28.

### **The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery: a new model**

The Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory signed the five year National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery in January 2009.

The Agreement establishes a new remote service delivery model to fundamentally change the way governments deliver vital services and infrastructure to ensure that Indigenous Australians living in 29 selected priority communities<sup>2</sup> receive and actively participate in services to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

A key objective of the Agreement is to improve access to services in these priority communities and to raise the standard and range of services delivered to be broadly consistent with those provided to other Australian communities of a similar size, in similar locations, with similar levels of need.

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<sup>2</sup> The 29 priority communities are: Amata and Mimili in South Australia; Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Aurukun, Mossman Gorge, Coen and Hope Vale in Queensland; Walgett and Wilcannia in New South Wales, Ardyaloon (Bardi Jawi), Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Beagle Bay in Western Australia; Angurugu, Gunbalanya, Gapuwiyak, Galiwin'ku, Lajamanu, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Ngukurr, Ntaria, Numbulwar, Wurrumiyanga, Umbakumba, Wadeye, Yuendumu and Yirkala in the Northern Territory. The total Indigenous population of these selected communities is about 25,000 people, which represents about 5% of the total Aboriginal population in Australia.

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A further component of the Remote Service Delivery approach focuses on community development. Through this, the Agreement is seeking to promote personal responsibility and positive social norms, improve the governance and leadership in communities, and increase social and economic participation across the community.

The Remote Service Delivery model is introducing a place-based approach to service design and delivery in the priority communities. Integral to the new approach is the concept of partnership. The model involves cooperation between and across multiple Government organisations and across six jurisdictions, who share a common vision and protocol of operation. A central aspect of the Remote Service Delivery system design is the Single Government Interface, which is working to improve government and community engagement and to facilitate a partnership approach at the community level.

### Remote Service Delivery: the focus of implementation

A high-level logic for the Agreement has been developed and agreed across all jurisdictions. This logic is informing the evaluation strategy for the Agreement. It comprises three broad areas of activity that provide a focus for the Agreement implementation process:

- Improved engagement
- Better service systems
- Stronger communities

An important objective of the implementation approach is to change the way governments and communities work together - it is about doing things differently. This reform to *how* governments and communities work together is as important as *what* is delivered. Progressing reform to how all the partners work together to plan for and deliver services is being guided by the National Indigenous Reform Agreement's service delivery principles<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> *Priority principle*: Programs and services should contribute to Closing the Gap by meeting the targets endorsed by COAG while being appropriate to local community needs.

*Indigenous engagement principle*: Engagement with Indigenous men, women and children and communities should be central to the design and delivery of programs and services.

*Sustainability principle*: Programs and services should be directed and resourced over an adequate period of time to meet the COAG targets.

*Access Principle*: Programs and services should be physically and culturally accessible to Indigenous people recognising the diversity of urban, regional and remote needs.

*Integration principle*: There should be collaboration between and within Governments at all levels and their agencies to effectively coordinate programs and services.

### **The Closing the Gap targets**

Implementation of the Agreement is intended to contribute to addressing the following six Closing the Gap targets in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement across the priority locations:

1. Close the life-expectancy gap within a generation
2. Halve the mortality rate for Indigenous children under 5 within a decade
3. Ensure all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years
4. Halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade
5. Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020
6. Halve the gap in Indigenous employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade

To ensure Local Implementation Plans support the Closing the Gap agenda, the actions agreed in these plans are aligned with the seven COAG Building Blocks: Early Childhood; Economic Participation; Governance and Leadership; Health; Healthy Homes; Safe Communities; and Schooling. Performance indicators and benchmarks are currently being developed as part of the Local Implementation Planning process in each priority community. In order to measure contributions made towards the Closing the Gap targets, each set of indicators will include at least one health, education and employment indicator. Baseline mapping reports, which were prepared having regard to the seven COAG Building Blocks and the Closing the Gap targets, are also being used to develop the performance indicators for Local Implementation Plans. (More detail about this process is in Section 3 of this report.)

## 2. Remote Service Delivery Outputs: Progress Reports



### Introduction

This section of the report provides an update on progress in delivering the Remote Service Delivery outputs specified in Clause 17 of the Agreement and is structured under the following themes:

- Establishment
- Early Engagement and Initial Planning
- Leadership, Governance and Cultural Competence
- Enablers.

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### ESTABLISHMENT

#### Integrated Planning and Service Delivery and a Single Government Interface

A large part of the initial implementation effort by governments has been invested in establishing the foundations for the new Remote Service Delivery model. This establishment phase focussed on:

- establishing a new service planning capacity across the 29 priority locations (which included establishing a Single Government Interface in each location supported by a Regional Operations Centre, the staffing for these structures, and related corporate and governance support);
- collaborative trust-based partnerships with Indigenous communities (including the development of Local Implementation Plans); and
- developing new mechanisms for cooperation across government agencies and across governments (these include the jurisdictional Boards of Management).

#### Bilateral Plans

Under Clause 17 (e) of the Agreement, an agreed Bilateral Plan was to be completed at the outset of the Agreement for each jurisdiction that is a party to the Agreement. The Bilateral Plans, which were developed between the Commonwealth and New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, are published on the website of the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations: <http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au>.

The plans are reviewed annually, as required under Clause 24 of the Agreement.

**Table 1: Bilateral Plans: Review status as at 30 June 2011**

State	Date of initial agreement	2010-11 Review	Planned 2011-12 Review
NSW	Agreed in September 2009. Formal NSW Ministerial correspondence signed in March 2010.	Review completed in October 2010. No changes made.	Timing to be advised
NT	3 August 2009	A revised Bilateral Plan was agreed in July 2010.	2011 review commenced June 2011.
QLD	13 August 2009	Review completed 8 August 2010. No changes made.	Timing to be advised.

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State	Date of initial agreement	2010-11 Review	Planned 2011-12 Review
<b>SA</b>	7 September 2009	Review completed in October 2010. No changes made.	November-December 2011
<b>WA</b>	24 August 2009	A revised Bilateral Plan was agreed in April 2011.	March-April 2012

The review processes have recognised the evolution of the Agreement; that many strategies in the initial Bilateral Plans involved 'developing' or 'establishing' processes which are now in place and being implemented. The focus in reviews of the various Plans is on the change of focus to the implementation phase of the Agreement.

### EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND INITIAL PLANNING

#### Local Implementation Plans

##### Background

The National Partnership Agreement requires the development of Local Implementation Plans in each of the priority remote communities. The Agreement describes these as '*Plans developed for each location arising from the baseline mapping and in consultation with local community members and other parties.*'

Local Implementation Plans are essentially negotiated agreements between Indigenous communities and all levels of government. As a product, they are important because they include clear commitments to action on the part of governments and communities, and therefore provide an important accountability mechanism.

Local Implementation Plans (the Plans) have been developed in all 29 priority communities. Equally important as the initial development of Plans is the *process* for developing and continuing to build on them. Significant effort has been invested in this process, which has involved the development of genuine collaborative trust-based partnerships with local community representatives, and sectors within communities. The investment in trust-based relationships is central to the success of the Agreement.

For many communities, the Local Implementation Planning process has opened-up new opportunities for positive, forward-looking dialogue with governments. Regional Operations Centres have reported significant levels of local participation and positive engagement in the Local Implementation Planning process. This level of positive participation is already making a difference in many priority communities. For example, in Galiwin'ku, all 16 clan groups with interests on Elcho Island attended the

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Local Implementation Plan signing ceremony on 9 March 2011. The case study in the South Australia jurisdiction chapter of this report, describing a June 2011 workshop in Amata, illustrates the genuine progress made in building a stronger community capability for driving local planning processes.

To ensure the Plans contribute to the Closing the Gap agenda, government parties agreed in 2009 that they be structured around the seven COAG Building Blocks. However, consistent with the NIRA service delivery principles, and the methodological intent of the Agreement, governments have approached the process of engagement sensitively, taking on board local circumstances, concerns and existing effort on the ground. As a result, Local Implementation Plans have evolved differently across the jurisdictions, for example:

- In Umbakumba and Angurugu on Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory, the Local Implementation Plans are Schedules to the existing Regional Partnership Agreement.
- In New South Wales, the community consultation structures established to support the Murdi Paaki Regional Partnership Agreement have been adopted as part of the Local Implementation Planning process.
- In the Queensland Cape York communities, the Regional Operations Centre has been working with stakeholders to ensure the Remote Service Delivery effort takes account of and aligns with the existing Cape York Welfare Reform effort; and the Cape York Institute and other stakeholders have been included in the Local Implementation Planning processes.
- In Western Australia an additional building block of *Land, Language and Culture* was included in the Local Implementation Plans for Halls Creek and Beagle Bay at the request of those communities.

The timing of Plan development and subsequent formal signature has been dependent on the complexity of local issues; the history of community engagement with government; and the capacity of communities to participate in the development process. As at 30 June 2011, 23 communities had formally signed off on their Plans. Work continues on the Plans for the remaining communities in the Northern Territory (two) and Queensland (four).

All Plans with a formal signature can be found on the website of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/communities/lips/Pages/default.aspx>

**Table 2: Local Implementation Plan Implementation Status as at 30 June 2011**

State/Community	Formal Signature Date
<b>New South Wales</b>	
Walgett	17 August 2010
Wilcannia	20 August 2010

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State/Community	Formal Signature Date
<b>Northern Territory</b>	
Angurugu	3 December 2010
Galiwin'ku	9 March 2011
Gapuwiyak	14 March 2011
Gunbalanya	10 November 2010
Lajamanu	17 March 2011
Maningrida	-
Milingimbi	11 March 2011
Ngukurr	21 April 2011
Ntaria (Hermannsburg)	2 March 2011
Numbulwar	3 March 2011
Umbakumba	3 December 2010
Wadeye	10 June 2011
Wurrumiyanga (Nguju)	-
Yirkala	8 December 2010
Yuendumu	10 February 2011
<b>Queensland</b>	
Aurukun <sup>4</sup>	-
Coen	-
Doomadgee	26 July 2010
Hope Vale	-
Mornington Island	28 July 2010
Mossman Gorge	-
<b>South Australia</b>	
Amata	30 June 2010
Mimili	1 July 2010
<b>Western Australia</b>	
Bardi Jawi	8 November 2010
Beagle Bay	19 September 2010
Fitzroy Crossing	15 September 2010
Halls Creek	27 October 2010

## Baseline Mapping

### Background

Baseline mapping under the Agreement included the identification in reports of 'current government expenditure/investment in each selected location, encompassing existing service delivery and supporting infrastructure'. Drafts of these

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<sup>4</sup> An Aurukun Interim Accord was signed by all three levels of government on 17 November 2011. This Accord is in the same format as a Local Implementation Plan action plan and implementation is in progress.

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reports informed the development of the first round of Local Implementation Plans. They also provide an evidence base to assist with measuring progress in each community.

The baseline mapping reports also describe the social and economic profiles of Remote Service Delivery communities. The key issues for each community are publicly available on the Australian Parliament House website:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac\\_ctte/estimates/add\\_1011/cross/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/estimates/add_1011/cross/index.htm). (See item 220 at this link.)

### **Baseline mapping – key issues, and social and economic profiles**

There is generally a limited range of commercial services and facilities in the priority communities. Housing is a significant issue, which has been recognised by COAG and is being addressed through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The National Audit of Municipal and Essential Services, which provided data for the Baseline Mapping reports, showed some gaps in the level and reliability of municipal and essential service delivery and infrastructure in comparison to comparable non-Indigenous communities.

Some shortfalls exist because of an historical legacy of under-investment in community housing, inadequate maintenance of community housing and other municipal infrastructure, an absence of normalised service delivery arrangements or some key municipal and essential services providers, the very remote locations of the communities and unique cultural or other contextual factors.

Some actions in the Local Implementation Plans have addressed specific needs as identified in the baseline mapping process. Reviewing and considering shortfalls will form part of the process for the next Local Implementation Plan iterations.

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### Identification of priority local infrastructure gaps

Clause 17(i) of the Agreement requires the identification of gaps in priority local infrastructure. A national municipal and essential services audit<sup>5</sup> (the audit) was agreed by the Commonwealth, States and the Northern Territory under the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing in November 2008. The key objective of the audit was to assess the level and need for municipal and essential services in remote Indigenous communities.

The physical audits of a selection of remote Indigenous communities were undertaken during 2009-2010. This focused on the 29 priority communities identified under the Agreement and a representative sample of 43 Indigenous communities in which the Commonwealth currently funds directly or indirectly municipal and essential services.

Audit reports for each community were finalised during 2010-11, with reports on all 29 priority communities endorsed by jurisdictions and included in the baseline mapping reports.

As at 30 June 2011, a report on the audit outcomes in each jurisdiction was being negotiated bilaterally and will inform a final report to COAG on the national audit outcomes, including a proposal for revised and reformed arrangements for the funding and delivery of municipal and essential services.

As iterative tools the Local Implementation Plans will continue to review and address infrastructure and service gaps over the life of the Agreement.

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<sup>5</sup> The audit was principally based on observation and professional judgement of the auditors and did not extend to design, analysis or detailed condition assessments – i.e. it is a summary audit of what services and infrastructure are provided in the community and what condition it generally appears to be in. More detailed planning studies (incorporating asset management and system capacity issues) is required to fully scope and cost required future works. The Base Level Standards are based on existing regulatory standards and frameworks on municipal and essential services and related infrastructure requirements. To inform a nationally consistent approach, these standards and frameworks have been drawn from national agreed standards and guidelines where possible. Individual jurisdictional standards, guidelines and/or regulations have been used where appropriate and as agreed by jurisdictions. The studies are also framed in terms of meeting the needs of the community at the commencement of the Agreement. They did not factor in an analysis of need should the communities continue to grow.

## **LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

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### **Community leadership skills program delivery**

Clause 17 (h) of the Agreement requires delivery of community leadership skills programs. The Australian Government is continuing to work with the Regional Operations Centres to develop and deliver engagement workshops for staff working with Remote Service Delivery communities. The content of workshops varies and is dependent on the needs of Centres. Workshop programs are delivered within a cultural competency framework.

There has been a concerted effort to enhance the leadership capabilities of Indigenous community members in the priority communities. In 2010-11, workshops were held in seven communities in the Northern Territory and one community in South Australia.

These three day workshops were lead by experienced facilitators and included some modules from the National Indigenous Leadership Program, presentations on the Government's reform agenda and other leadership and governance issues as outlined in the Local Implementation Plan for that community.

Further support has been provided to the Indigenous Engagement Officers who participated in a development workshop in Canberra in December 2010. They attended a forum in March 2011 to prepare to lead the delivery of community based leadership workshops.

### **Delivery of cultural competency measures**

Clause 17 (k) of the Agreement requires the delivery of cultural competence measures for all government employees involved with identified communities.

During 2010-11, the Australian Government also developed the Local Community Awareness Program , a simple engagement tool to assist Regional Operations Centre staff to improve their cultural competence in order to engage more effectively with local communities. The Program, produced in a 'toolkit' format, provides a framework for facilitated discussions between government staff and Remote Service Delivery community members. It focuses on four key themes - the Past; Who We Are; Culture and Identity; and Working with Government; to explore the broad physical, historical and cultural factors that government staff and indeed service providers, need to take into account when engaging with the community. The testimonies of local people will be used to explore how the combination of culture, history and government policies shape the way people view themselves and how they frame the community's relationship with government, government authorities and the wider community.

The Local Community Awareness Program will be rolled our progressively across all six Regional Operations Centres during 2011-12.

## **ENABLERS**

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### **Changes to land tenure and administration**

#### **Overview**

Under clause 20(d) of the Agreement, the States and Northern Territory are responsible for delivering land tenure reform. However, the Commonwealth has direct responsibility for some legislation governing land tenure arrangements, particularly in the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth also administers the *Native Title Act 1993*.

The Commonwealth is encouraging the resolution of land tenure arrangements in the priority locations to enable the development of commercial properties and service hubs. This includes application of a 'secure tenure' policy by Commonwealth agencies that fund capital works in priority locations.

There is considerable cross-over between the tenure requirements under the Agreement and those under the Remote Indigenous Housing (RIH) National Partnership Agreement. The progress of broader reforms are required to be reported upon by the States and the Northern Territory under the RIH Agreement. Those reforms will also be variously dealt with in Local Implementation Plans.

In 2010, the Commonwealth amended the *Native Title Act 1993* to provide for targeted and streamlined native title processes in relation to public housing and other public facilities in Indigenous communities.

The following is a summary of the actions being undertaken to address land tenure issues in each jurisdiction:

#### **Northern Territory**

The Commonwealth is responsible for the administration of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA). All current priority communities in the Northern Territory are located on Aboriginal land under the ALRA.

Four Land Councils (independent Commonwealth statutory authorities) have responsibilities under the ALRA including in relation to the granting of lease interests in Aboriginal land under sections 19 and 19A. Commercial lease or sub-lease interests can be granted under both section 19 and section 19A of the ALRA. A Land Council can only direct an Aboriginal Land Trust to grant an interest in Aboriginal land if it is satisfied that the terms and conditions of the proposed grant are reasonable, that the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land in question understand the nature and purpose of the proposed grant and consent to the granting of the interest as a group and that any Aboriginal community or group that may be affected by the proposed grant has been consulted and has had adequate opportunity to express its views.

The ALRA also establishes the Executive Director of Township Leasing (EDTL). The EDTL is an independent statutory officer who holds head-leases over whole townships on Aboriginal land granted under s19A, and who has responsibilities in relation to the granting of sub-leasing interests pursuant to the terms of s19A head-leases. It remains

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open to the Northern Territory Government to also establish an approved entity to hold and administer s19A leases.

To support economic development and to secure Commonwealth interests on Aboriginal land in larger towns, the Commonwealth is promoting long term whole-of-township head-leases under s19A.

To date, s19A head-leases have been granted in the Remote Service Delivery communities of Wurrumiyanga on the Tiwi Islands, and in Angurugu and Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt<sup>6</sup>.

The Northern Territory Government (NTG) has also adopted a policy that its interests on Aboriginal land should be secured by appropriate long-term leases granted under s19 or s19A of the ALRA.

The NTG's Service Delivery Coordination Unit (SDCU) is a central coordination point for the negotiation of long-term leases on behalf of all NTG agencies to secure government assets on Aboriginal land and promote private sector development in remote towns.

The NTG has worked with the Australian Government to negotiate the roll out of the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) and the securing of public housing at Nguui, Angurugu, Umbakumba, Gunbalanya, Wadeye, Maningrida, Galiwinku, Gapuwiyak, Milingimbi, Ngukurr, Hermannsburg and Lajamanu to enable new housing construction to proceed under the SIHIP. Additionally, a lease to secure SIHIP work at Numbulwar was announced on September 21st 2011. Work to secure NTG assets, and roll out new infrastructure, is continuing through negotiations with each Land Council, as well as the EDTL, to ensure that communities receive vital infrastructure upgrades and services.

The negotiation of long-term township leases with traditional Aboriginal owners can be complex and sensitive, and this can result in lengthy negotiation processes.

### **New South Wales**

In New South Wales Aboriginal Land Councils hold their land under alienable freehold title. The underlying tenure of Aboriginal Land Councils' land holdings permits their participation in commercial leases and other forms of commercial joint ventures, at the direction of their members and subject to the approval of the peak NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

On 31 March 2010 the NSW Government commenced the operation of significant amendments to the NSW *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* which provide a clearer regime by which Local Aboriginal Land Councils obtain approvals for land dealings from the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. The amendments introduced greater regulation of the legal relationships created when Land Councils and third parties are

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<sup>6</sup> The Groote Eylandt s19A head-lease also includes the community of Milyakburra.

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negotiating property development, including commercial leasing or disposals of property.

The 2010 amendments complement amendments to the Land Rights Act in 2007, which strengthened the administration of Aboriginal Land Councils, introducing elected Boards and a 'separation of powers' governance model which has increased transparency and accountability. The 2007 amendments also introduced provision for Local Aboriginal Land Councils, with the approval of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, to establish, or participate in the establishment of, trusts for the purpose of providing community benefits.

### Queensland

The current legislative framework generally allows for leases to be granted in support of the development of commercial properties and service hubs. However the legislative framework is new and is yet to be utilised, and development processes can be lengthy.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Amendment Act 2008* was proclaimed on 17 July 2008 providing for long-term residential and commercial leasing on communal land to encourage home ownership, social housing, commercial development and community infrastructure – new legislative provisions included:

- long-term leases of 99 years for residential purposes previously limited to 30 years on Deed of Grant in Trust land and Indigenous reserves;
- long-term leases of up to 99 years for commercial development in specific circumstances, provided certain criteria are met;
- the State to hold long-term leases of up to 99 years for public infrastructure purposes or for a purpose under the Housing Act 2003. The Australian Government and a local authority can also be granted long-term leases to provide public infrastructure;
- leases can be renewed, previously leases could not be renewed and a new lease had to be applied for;
- Indigenous land now subject to the same compulsory acquisition process as native title and ordinary freehold properties in Queensland;
- a series of information manuals have been designed by the Department of Environment and Resource Management to help Indigenous people in Queensland with leasing community land on community land - progressively developed since July 2009;
- a new multi-agency office established in Cairns in July 2009 to deal with land use and infrastructure planning issues across all discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office (Department of Communities) opened in Cairns in 2009 to deal with land use and infrastructure planning issues across all discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It draws on expertise from a range of different areas, including Department of Infrastructure and Planning,

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Department of Environment and Resource Management, Department of Communities (Housing) and Department of Public Works; and

- the Program Office employs 21 full time staff – 20 based in Cairns and one based in Townsville - the total Queensland Government investment is \$32.389 million over 5 years.

Over the next five years the Office will work to:

- ensure timely delivery of well-planned serviced land to support urgently needed infrastructure such as social housing, community services, cultural and recreational facilities as well as home ownership, and commercial and small business opportunities;
- ensure each community has an adequate survey network and a land use planning scheme which is compliant with appropriate planning Acts; and
- address native title, cultural heritage and any outstanding leasing or tenure issues in a way that respects existing interests and supports social and economic development within townships.

To date, the Program Office has developed Remote Land and Infrastructure Plans for all 16 discrete Indigenous councils in Queensland and has secured in-principle agreements for social housing leases with each of the 14 councils where it is required, noting that such agreement is not applicable in the cases of Cherbourg and Yarrabah.

### South Australia

Leases have been achieved to secure community housing investment in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. The APY Lands' permit system was changed on 2 September 2010 with the introduction of a by-law that provides public servants and contractors with certainty of access. This reform to the permit system will improve service delivery.

### Western Australia

The WA Government has committed to undertake a review and reform process to address land tenure issues over the next two years. This will occur in two stages:

Stage 1 has been completed:

- The *Aboriginal Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2009* has been enacted by the WA Parliament.
- The legislation amended the Housing Act to enable the Housing Authority to manage housing on Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) and Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (AAPA) land, as well as on non-ALT or AAPA land in which an Aboriginal Corporation holds an interest, while ensuring minimal effects on native title rights or ownership.
- The key feature of the legislation is the operation of Housing Management Agreements (HMAs), which enables the following:

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- On ALT land with no lease or AAPA land, the Housing Authority can enter into an HMA with the ALT or AAPA.
- On leased ALT or AAPA land or land held by an Aboriginal corporation, the Housing Authority can enter into an HMA with the Aboriginal corporation.
- The HMA gives the Housing Authority (on behalf of the Aboriginal entity) the control and management of the letting and leasing of the housing on nominated lots on the community layout plan.
- HMAs are voluntary and negotiated on a case by case basis. HMAs are not leases.

The legislation also amended the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 to confirm that lease can be granted over the AAPA and ALT land. This removed any perceived ambiguity in interpreting the AAPA Act.

Stage 2: (This stage of the land tenure reform is still under way.)

- Implementing mechanisms to facilitate housing management on other forms of land tenure.
- An examination of relevant State legislation to work towards allowing maximum transferability of individual titles to facilitate home ownership and commercial use of Aboriginal land.

### **Commonwealth – sharing of land tenure information**

Currently, there is no national framework for land tenure and each State and Territory has its own classification system. Following the 2008 Review of Native Title Funding, the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) established a cross-agency working group (which includes the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. This Group) is to pursue agreements between State and Territory governments to share land tenure information with the NNTT and other native title claim parties, and explore ways in which State and Territory land tenure information can be updated, analysed and more readily accessed for native title matters. As part of this work, the Public Sector Mapping Agency Australia has agreed to create a national land tenure information framework as a commercial product.

### **Strengthened interpreting and translation services**

Clause 17(j) of the Agreement, requires strengthening of interpreting and translation services in response to local needs.

Each jurisdiction is taking steps to ensure that community members are able to effectively participate in discussions about their Local Implementation Plans. This has included the use of interpreters in community meetings and formal community reference group meetings where appropriate, as well as using translators and interpreters in the production of a range of culturally appropriate communication products such as local radio broadcasts, banners, posters and fact sheets.

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The Regional Operations Centres have adopted different strategies according to the specific needs of the communities. Where interpreters are required both external providers and internal resources are used as appropriate.

Interpreters were used in the negotiation of many Local Implementation Plans. Extensive use of interpreters has been made in the Northern Territory. Local Implementation Plan processes and interpreters have also been used in South Australian and Western Australian negotiations. In Western Australia, the Kimberley Interpreting Service has also been supported to increase its service delivery in the Remote Service Delivery locations, including specialised training for interpreters in the languages commonly spoken in those locations. Indigenous Engagement Officers have also been used to assist communities to participate in the Local Implementation Plan processes in all priority communities, and at times provide assistance using community languages.

### Sharing of best practice

Clause 17(g) of the Agreement, requires the sharing of best practice. This is being achieved through a variety of means, including:

- regular training and discussion workshops for Government Business Managers, Indigenous Engagement Officers and community representatives at both a State/Territory and national level
- the Coordinator-General, through his bi-annual reports and community visits
- the internet based information sharing system for Remote Service Delivery stakeholders, ROCface
- a bi-monthly national newsletter, *RSD ROCS*, launched in June 2011
- the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse provides access to a collection of quality information on what works to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. This will provide policy makers and program managers with an evidence base for achieving or contributing to the Closing the Gap targets and related Indigenous reforms. The website is <http://www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap/>.

Further mechanisms for sharing best practice will continue to be developed over the life of the Agreement. In particular, the annual formative evaluation process will be used as evidence-base for identifying good/best practice to be shared across the 29 priority locations and in other remote communities.

### Service Delivery Design Improvements

Under Clause 17(d) of the Agreement, implementation of the Agreement is to include improvements in the design and delivery of services, consistent with the Service Delivery Principles at Schedule C to the Agreement.

Long-term improvements in the design and delivery of services are being progressed through Local Implementation Plans in each community and through the improved

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coordination of service delivery being pursued by the jurisdiction based Building Block Working Groups.

The progress reports and case studies in the jurisdiction chapters of this report also provide examples of new and integrated approaches being developed at the jurisdictional level for the delivery of services to remote communities. Some highlights from a national program delivery perspective are described below:

### Improved engagement

- Community consultation and engagement with the priority communities by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing is continuing to show significant improvements. For example aged care consultations during 2010-11 have proven successful in the communities of Galiwin'ku and Gunbalanya as a result of greater collaboration and meaningful engagement between the Department of Health and Ageing, service providers, and existing community stakeholder groups such as the Local Reference Groups. (See *Galiwin'ku Case Study in the Northern Territory Chapter*). Similar strategies are being adopted in neighbouring Ngukurr where the Department and NT Health are working closely with health service providers and the Local Reference Group.
- The Australian Government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is taking a life course approach to policy development and program delivery for the priority communities. This means integrating services and wraparound support across early childhood, education and employment with a particular focus on the key transition points. This is supported by a focus on engaging parents and communities in supporting children and young people to engage in education and build skills for employment.
- In the Northern Territory, the Remote Training Employment and Economic Development Working Group has redefined the approach to economic participation in remote communities. Economic Development Teams have been established in nine priority communities as the operational arm of the work. These field officer level groups work to problem solve and collaborate on the ground in the priority communities to maximise training, employment and business opportunities.
- At Walgett in New South Wales, the Australian Government's Department of Human Services has been working more closely with job services agencies, youth connections, and other agencies and have developed better ways to engage with community members and increase understanding of compliance obligations.
- The Department, through Centrelink, also implemented Local Engagement Officers in the priority sites of Milingimbi, Gunbalanya and Lajamanu (See *Case Study below*). The Engagement Officers have provided an additional point of access into the governance of communities and options for community engagement by remote servicing teams. The initiative has proven an effective way to increase access in the community, identification of issues facing the

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community and access to customers. Ongoing training and support will continue to build their effectiveness.

### **CASE STUDY: Centrelink Local Engagement Officer in Gunbalanya**

2010-11 has seen the Centrelink Local Engagement Officer (Officer) Project flow from concept to fruition and success. One of the success stories has been at Gunbalanya in the Northern Territory.

Centrelink Local Engagement Officers are local Indigenous community members employed as Centrelink staff who provide community engagement, guidance and advice to visiting Remote Service Teams about implementation or payment issues. They are a fully fledged member of the Remote Servicing Team providing the cultural connection, acting as an interface between the team and community. They receive training and support to enhance their skills to build a career within Centrelink.

In Gunbalanya, the role was first introduced to the local community during a Careers Expo facilitated by JobFind, the local Job Service Australia Provider. In addition to explaining the role, community members were invited to apply for the position. There are two Officers at Gunbalanya, one applied on the day of the Careers Expo and the other was identified during a Joint Servicing Initiative interview with JobFind and Centrelink.

The Officers have become familiar with local service providers. They support the visiting Remote Servicing Team staff. A typical week commences with a briefing to introduce new visiting staff and to go over the week's objectives. The Officers assist the team to identify whether those customers who need contact are in the community, assist in interviews to ensure customers' understanding, especially in the Joint Servicing Initiative interviews that are held in the community. The Trip Leader has commented on the success of the Officers. Customers are more willing to discuss their personal situations when the Engagement Officer is present due to the mutual feeling of trust and through the excellent rapport the Officers have with customers. Customers are gaining a better understanding of their obligation and Centrelink and JobFind of the customer's situation.

The Engagement Officers in Gunbalanya have strengthened Centrelink's linkages to the community and supported efforts to provide community focused services responsive to community needs identified in the Local Implementation Plan.

*Economic Participation 1.1.14*—Training delivered meets employment needs and assists community members in gaining employment and advancing their career.

*Economic Participation 1.1.17*—Newstart Allowance recipients will meet their allowance obligations, measured by the increase of the number of people taking up job-readiness programs.

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### **Better service systems**

Examples of activities that are increasing access, effectiveness and quality of services include:

- *Indigenous Parenting Support Services*—The Australian Government, through FaHCSIA is funding Indigenous Parenting Support Services in 23 priority communities. These services are helping Indigenous parents to overcome barriers to good family relationships and support through transitions to child care, pre-school and primary school. They pro-actively address social, cultural, personal, historical, and financial and health factors that can present barriers to effective parenting. Indigenous Parenting Support Services are integrated into existing services with established infrastructure, systems and good working relationships with Indigenous families with young children. These include child care centres, schools, Aboriginal Health Centres and other related services to provide Indigenous families with access to enhanced parenting support.
- *Playgroups for Indigenous Families*—FaHCSIA funds Playgroups for Indigenous Families which are now in place in 20 of the priority communities. The Playgroups involve a gathering of parents/caregivers and their children generally once a week. Playgroups provide an opportunity for parents and caregivers to develop social and support networks to assist with effective parenting skills, confidence and self-esteem. Playgroups also provide an opportunity for children to learn through play and develop their social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.
- *Health Clinics*—Through the Health and Hospitals Fund, the Australian Government is providing significant funding to increase access to primary health care services to many Remote Service Delivery communities. This includes the construction of new primary health care clinics at Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Galiwinku and Ntaria in the Northern Territory, with a major upgrade of the existing health clinic at Maningrida. In addition, funding has been announced for the expansion of renal infrastructure, dialysis and support services in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, including the provision of patient accommodation to enable renal dialysis, renal support services and training for home haemodialysis patients to be delivered closer to home.
- *Early Childhood Network*—The establishment of the Dampier Peninsula Early Years Network in Western Australia has provided an invaluable forum for all early childhood education providers to meet regularly and discuss issues related to a wide range of topics, including staffing, training and development, policy, funding and programming.
- *Employment Retention*—The Employment Retention Strategy funded through DEEWR's Indigenous Employment Program has improved the employment retention rates for Anangu in South Australia. Mentoring is offered until the employee has gained confidence and independence which has resulted in retention rates of 50 per cent in Mimili and 70 per cent in Amata. This has been

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an example of service providers/employers working together to implement effective mentoring support program.

- *Joint Servicing*—The Department of Human Services has implemented the Joint Servicing Initiative in Gunbalanya, Milingimbi, Ngukurr and Yuendumu in the Northern Territory; Doomadgee and Mornington Island in Queensland; plus Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia. Centrelink staff have been working in these specific communities, in conjunction with Job Services Australia, to improve the participation messages to job seekers. Centrelink program staff either travel to communities with the Job Services Australia providers or meet them on location where the Department of Human Services has a permanent presence. Joint visiting in these communities has improved the quality of referrals to services.
- *Remote Service Centres*—Centrelink's Remote Service Centres were expanded during the year to include Angurugu and Galiwin'ku in the Northern Territory, again using local community members to provide a Centrelink service and assist with On Line services.
- *Integrated Service Delivery*—The Northern Territory Government is implementing the Strong Start, Bright Future Program as part of its commitment to Remote Service Delivery. The program uses an integrated service delivery model, involving a birth-to-jobs strategy (including vocational training from year seven) and recognition that nurture and support in the first four years of life is vital to one's future success and welfare. To date the program has started in six regions incorporating the Remote Service Delivery communities of Angurugu, Umbakumba, Yirkala, Gunbalanya, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Lajamanu and Yuendumu. As an example, in Gunbalanya a "3-9 pm" children and parents after school program has commenced to support parents with ongoing involvement with their children's early schooling. Using education facilities outside traditional school hours has a range of benefits, including facilitating adult education. It also develops better relationships and understandings between community as a whole and the education system, reinforcing the school's role as an integral part of the community, rather than a separate and culturally irrelevant entity.

### **CASE STUDY: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrur Mechanical, Technical and Hospitality Trade Training Centre**

The Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrur Mechanical, Technical and Hospitality Trade Training Centre (Centre) is located in Wadeye in the Northern Territory.

The Centre has been built to address skills shortages in the areas of food, industrial and automotive technologies. This project involved the construction of a new building, refurbishment of several buildings and the provision of equipment and was funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program.

The Centre was completed on 31 January 2011. The school's 5 year strategic plan was drafted drawing from the Local Implementation Plan to ensure the Centre

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addresses current and future local needs. In Semester 1 of 2011 Certificate 1 Conservation & Land Management, Certificate 1 Automotive were offered at the Centre. In Semester 2 students are enrolled in training for Certificate 1 Conservation & Land Management, Certificate 1 Automotive, Certificate 1 Hospitality and Certificate 1 Construction



The school has reported an increase in attendance rates and strong student engagement. An average of 10 students has enrolled in each Certificate course and a future long term goal for the Centre includes classes after hours for mature students in the community.

### **LINKAGES**

**Closing the Gap Building Blocks: Schooling**

### **Stronger communities**

- The Department of Human Services, through Centrelink is involved with the Kimberley Interagency Working Group and Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs to provide improved governance in a number of communities. It has been involved in Local Reference Groups at several priority sites including Gunbalanya and Lajamanu In the Northern Territory. Centrelink's involvement in these forums is supported by the presence of Centrelink Indigenous Service Officers to explain and consult on issues with the representative body of the community. In New South Wales, Centrelink is an active member of the Wilcannia Interagency Group of Government and Non-government agencies that provide services to the Wilcannia community.
- FaHCSIA is supporting the Commonwealth Government's commitment to close the gap of Indigenous disadvantage through community-led safety planning and other local capacity building initiatives. The Department integrates its work with the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department and justice agencies in the jurisdictions. Priority communities are being supported to develop Community Safety Plans through this program. To date 20 of the 29 priority communities have identified the development of a community safety plan in their Local Implementation Plans. Six communities have identified alternative, but similar, mechanisms to community safety plans, such as the implementation of identified strategies through community safety committees.

**CASE STUDY: Community safety planning in Doomadgee and Mornington Island**

Both the Mornington Island and Doomadgee communities have agreed that they would like their communities to be safe and their people to be healthy, active and respectful of culture and each other. As a result the Local Implementation Plans for these communities include over 150 actions relating to community safety.

To support the aspirations of the two communities the Mt Isa Regional Operations Centre has been working with a number of key Queensland and Australian Government agencies over the last eight months with an interest in seeing Community Safety Action Plans developed in each community. Funding committed by the Australian Government Attorney General's Department and FaHCSIA has allowed consultants with local participatory research expertise to be engaged to work with the communities, service providers and government to develop these plans. Community based safety planning work is now underway.

The consultants are bringing a strong team of Indigenous researchers who will work with and train a number of community members to conduct the "research" through a community self-assessment and have the "hard yarn" with their own mob that will then be collated, analysed and inform the development of the Community Safety Action Plans. The team also has particular expertise in community safety including an ex-Police officer with a strong history and commitment to working with communities to address issues of domestic and family violence and child safety, and two Indigenous researchers who have worked with other remote Indigenous communities (including Yalata in South Australia) to develop community based action plans and community safety plans.

The Local Indigenous Health Council, the Police and Citizens' Youth Club, Save the Children and the Rangers, have been meeting regularly with the Police and the Regional Operations Centre to discuss issues of concern. In Doomadgee, the Doomadgee Community Forum has taken a proactive interest in promoting community safety and this has resulted in different community groups working together to support positive activities to keep people engaged in making their community a safe and happy one.

**LINKAGES**

**Closing the Gap Building Blocks:** Community Safety, Economic Participation

**CASE STUDY: Commitment to Yuendumu**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has a permanent presence in Yuendumu in the Northern Territory with a Remote Service Centre employing a manager and a small number of employees who are local Indigenous community members. DHS has a continuing commitment to the employment of local Indigenous staff and future employment options.

When the Yuendumu Local Implementation Plan was signed, Centrelink program staff looked to how they could contribute to achieving the goals of the various Building Blocks despite being a Supporting Agency on only one item.

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Centrelink staff worked collaboratively with the Yuendumu Education Centre which had earlier initiated a class for young men. Centrelink assisted the participants to access ABSTUDY payments in a timely manner to avoid a disincentive to further education.

Changes to Income Management in July 2010 meant that some customers could access the initiative voluntarily or exit. Centrelink worked with customers to manage the transition so customers could pay their basic needs either through Voluntary Income Management or Centrepay deductions if this was their choice. This ensured that parents continued to pay fees for the school nutrition programs both in schools and childcare (a positive incentive for school attendance) plus payment of rent to maintain accommodation. These proactive approaches contribute to Local Implementation Plan items under the Building Blocks of Schooling, Health and Healthy Homes.

To strengthen achievements under the Economic Participation Building Block, Centrelink has revamped the manner in which it works in cooperation with other service providers such as Red Cross and ITEC Employment, the Job Services Provider in Yuendumu. This has ensured the sharing of accommodation which has resulted in joint interviewing and cross referrals for a range of services.

The Joint Servicing Initiative between Centrelink and ITEC Employment has seen Newstart Allowance and other payment recipients better understand their obligations, improve their compliance plus being in appropriate programs to aid their future employment options. Improved referrals to Red Cross has meant that community members have accessed budgeting help, assistance to open bank accounts and access a greater range of identification options such as birth certificates.

These options were built from discussions with the local community and governance forums plus the local Government Business Manager. Centrelink continues to recognise that proper community consultative approaches need to be followed to strengthen outcomes for customers.

Centrelink's work in Yuendumu supports the following Local Implementation Plan actions, for which other agencies have lead responsibility:

*Health 1.1.7*—Provide quality nutrition for school students

*Schooling 1.1.4* – Parents and community encourage and support children to go to school

*Economic Participation 1.2.1*—Establish branch of Traditional Credit Union and provide access to banking and financial literacy training.

*Economic Participation 2.1.2*—Deliver Training for Work targeted to meet employment needs, assists community members in gaining employment and advancing their career.

*Economic Participation 2.1.7*—Newstart Allowance recipients will meet their allowance obligations, measured by the increase of the number of people taking up job-readiness programs.

### **3. Performance Review and Evaluation**

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#### **Oversight functions of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services**

The Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services, appointed in 2009, presents regular statutory reports to the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on the development and delivery of government services and facilities in each of the specified remote communities to a standard broadly comparable with that in non-Indigenous communities of similar size, location and needs elsewhere in Australia. To 30 June 2011, three reports had been presented and a fourth report was presented on 30 September 2011. Whole-of-government responses to the 32 recommendations of the first two reports<sup>7</sup> were agreed and implementation of the 36 agreed actions in response to the recommendations has taken place or is underway. Thirteen actions have been completed and a further 15 actions are considered to be ongoing with the Boards of Management monitoring progressive implementation in each jurisdiction.

#### **Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement: Evaluation and review requirements**

##### **Annual Evaluation**

Clause 28 of the Agreement commits jurisdictions to an annual evaluation process shared across all jurisdictions. The following progress has been made with this annual evaluation:

- A *Remote Service Delivery Evaluation, Performance Indicators and Reporting Strategic Framework* has been developed through an inter agency and jurisdictional working group, detailing the approach to the annual evaluations.
- A sub-group of COAG's Working Group on Indigenous Reform, the Remote Service Delivery Evaluation Working Group, endorsed the Framework in March 2011.
- In June 2011, this Working Group also endorsed the Statement of Requirements for the first annual evaluation.
- The first annual evaluation will focus on engagement between the Single Government Interface and Indigenous community representatives. This will include investigating how engagement has occurred and how it can be improved. Subsequent annual evaluations will also be formative, and help the community, the Single Government Interface, and Boards of Management (or their equivalent) to continuously improve.
- The Commonwealth and State and Territories are in the process of developing the specific annual evaluation requirements for each of the six Remote Service Delivery Regional Operations Centres and their communities, and in alignment

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<sup>7</sup> The whole-of-government response to the third report was agreed in September 2011.

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with the national framework. It is expected that the annual evaluation will commence in late 2011-12.

### Performance Indicators for Local Implementation Plans

Under the Agreement, the Commonwealth is responsible for monitoring overall performance and annual reporting to COAG (Clause 25), including progress against indicators (Clause 21(d)(i)). The Agreement requires performance indicators be developed as part of finalising Local Implementation Plans. The following progress has been made in developing these performance indicators:

- The *Remote Service Delivery Evaluation, Performance Indicators and Reporting Strategic Framework* has been developed through an inter agency and jurisdictional working group to outline the approach to developing the indicators and performance reporting.
- A sub-group of COAG's Working Group on Indigenous Reform, the Remote Service Delivery Evaluation Working Group, endorsed the Framework in March 2011.
- The Boards of Management (or their equivalent) in each jurisdiction have, as at 31 August 2011, endorsed their processes for developing the performance indicators with communities in their jurisdiction.
- Performance indicators will measure progress in achieving community priorities, and each Local Implementation Plan will include at least one indicator for each of the Closing the Gap target areas of health, education and employment. Performance indicators have been informed by the Baseline Mapping Reports.
- Regional Operations Centres are working with their communities to select a set of performance indicators for each Plan; this process has been completed in the Northern Territory.

Each jurisdiction's progress with developing performance indicators is provided in their Report Cards later in this report. Once performance indicators have been developed for each Plan, data will be collected against each indicator. The 2011-12 Remote Service Delivery Annual Report to COAG will include performance indicator data.

### Local Implementation Plans: Monitoring progress

A significant initiative in the last 12 months has been the development of an on-line tool called LIPtracker to assist stakeholders in monitoring and implementing the actions contained in Local Implementation Plans. LIPtracker is accessible to State/Territory agencies as well as agencies from across the Commonwealth. As at 30 June 2011 3,817 individual actions were recorded in LIPtracker.

While individual agencies are responsible for up-dating and monitoring the status of their actions in LIPtracker, nationally FaHCSIA hosts the system, and provides agencies with business support as required.

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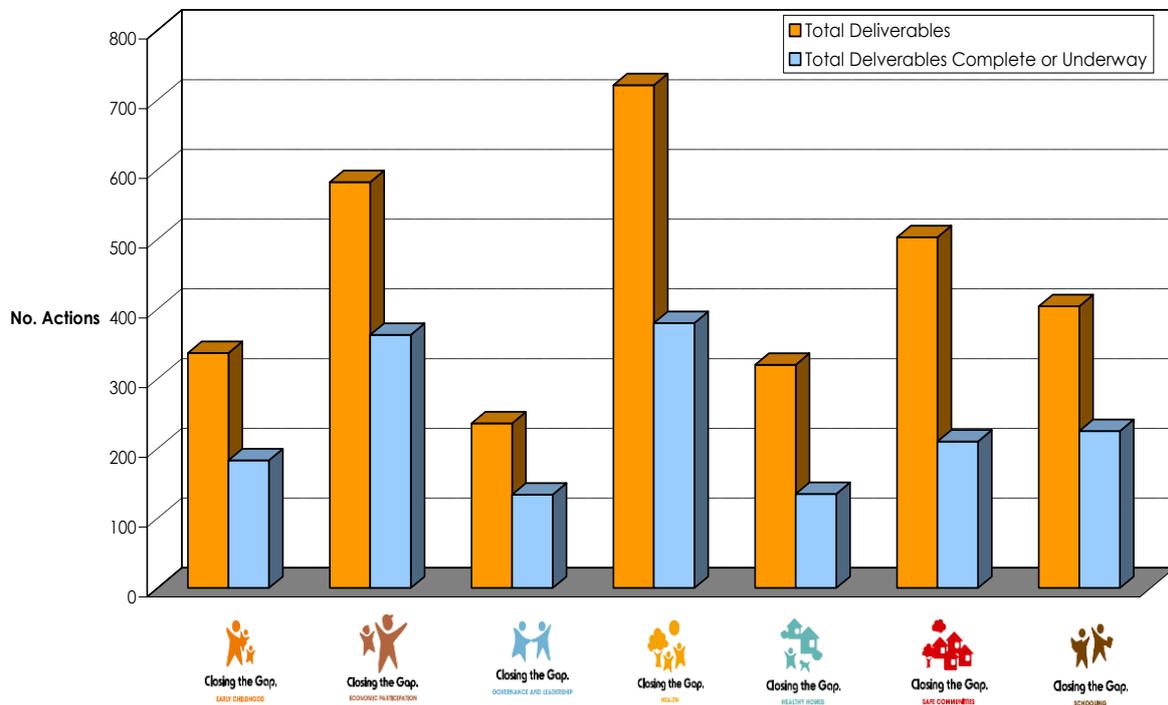
The Local Implementation Plans contain a wide range of actions. As part of the Local Implementation Plan negotiations, a number of actions have been agreed as a sign of good faith to continue work in a community, or to signal commitment to a new way of working together.

Progress monitoring has been focused across the seven COAG building blocks to ensure alignment with the broader Closing the Gap agenda. Actions in local Implementation Plans span a wide range of activity. Whilst there are a number of actions related to processes, rather than concrete deliverables, it is expected that as the Local Implementation Planning process continues to mature, and as the plans are further developed and rearticulated, it is expected there will be a stronger focus on concrete outcomes.

### Local Implementation Plans: National overview of progress

The tables following provide detail on progress and effort at the national level in delivering new actions to communities during the first year of delivery since Local Implementation Plans were agreed. Data includes all agreed deliverable actions (including those of State/Territory Governments), and is at 30 June 2011. Australian Government actions make up 30 per cent of all deliverable actions agreed to in Local Implementation Plans.

### Deliverable LIP Actions



## **4. Looking Ahead:**

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In the next twelve months, effort will focus on addressing the ongoing challenges and consolidating achievements to date including:

- Continuing to deliver on commitments in Local Implementation Plans:
  - Progress in implementing commitments under the Plans will be actively monitored and analysed at the local, regional and national levels.
- Working closely with communities to revise and build on the Local Implementation Plans:
  - The Plans are iterative documents which communities will continue to refine and build on to reflect changing circumstances during the life of the Agreement.
  - Work is already underway in a number of communities to review their Plans.
  - Commonwealth, States and the Northern Territory Governments to work together to progress reform of service delivery arrangements, particularly in relation to key municipal and essential services where access to existing mainstream service provider arrangements, such as through local government, will improve basic service delivery within communities.
- Reviewing and strengthening governance arrangements to ensure these support the delivery phase of implementation:
  - The outcomes of an audit being conducted by the Australian National Audit Office, the report from which is scheduled for delivery in April 2012, will be reviewed and recommendations addressed.
  - Over the past 12 months, the jurisdiction based Boards of Management have developed Building Block Working Groups to support their reform activities. These sub-committees are proving integral to supporting place-based implementation efforts by government agencies and in improving service delivery design. A focus over the next twelve months will be to support and consolidate their activities.
- Sharpening the focus on service delivery to make services in the priority communities comparable with those in non-Indigenous communities of a similar size, in similar locations, with similar levels of need.
- Communicating and sharing good practice to inform better implementation:
  - The results of the formative evaluations will assist stakeholders to continuously improve.
  - A National Remote Service Delivery Implementation Workshop scheduled for late 2011 will include a focus on sharing delivery success stories and good practice.
- Analysing and evaluating performance:

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- Progressing and delivering on the formal evaluation requirements of the Agreement to support and enhance delivery will be a major focus during the next 12 months.
- Articulating the Remote Service Delivery methodology:
  - Documenting the methodology underlying the Remote Service Delivery approach, as required by clause 17(a) of the Agreement, to guide delivery of the new model.

**APPENDIX A—National Partnership Agreement (Clause 17)**

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- (a) a new fully functional integrated service planning and delivery methodology and single government interface;
- (b) the completion of detailed baseline mapping of social and economic indicators, government investments, services and service gaps in each location;
- (c) detailed Local Implementation Plans developed and completed with State and Northern Territory governments and stakeholders in identified locations;
- (d) improvements in the design and delivery of services consistent with the Service Delivery Principles at Schedule C of the RSD NPA;
- (e) an agreed Bilateral Plan completed for each jurisdiction that is party to the Agreement;
- (f) reports as outlined in the reporting section of the RSD NPA;
- (g) the sharing of best practice;
- (h) the delivery of community leadership skills programs;
- (i) the identification of gaps in priority local infrastructure;
- (j) strengthened interpreting and translation services in response to local needs;
- (k) the delivery of cultural competence measures for all government employees involved with identified communities; and,
- (l) changes to land tenure and administration to enable the development of commercial properties and service hubs.