

# Partnerships Queensland

## Overview

Future directions framework for  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Policy in Queensland 2005–10



Queensland Government

## Partnerships Queensland: an introduction

### Vision

**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.**

Queensland is a prosperous and vibrant state whose citizens generally enjoy a good quality of life. This is indicated by a high level of safety, good health and strong family ties as well as the high levels of skills and prosperity afforded by quality education and employment.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring there are no systemic barriers preventing any group of Queenslanders from having an equal share in such prosperity. Where barriers do exist, the Government and communities share responsibility for breaking them down or finding ways to overcome them.

It is critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders share the benefits of the Smart State to the same degree as other citizens. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up around 3.5% of the population, collectively they are the most disadvantaged. They generally live about 20 years less than other Queenslanders and their babies die at a higher rate than the rest of the population. The Government is looking at different ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure they have the same rights and opportunities as other Queenslanders, and enjoy comparable standards of living.





## What makes Partnerships Queensland different?

Queensland has had specific policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since the 1890s. Some of these past government policies have led to present-day social problems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Partnerships Queensland establishes a new way of doing business. There are two crucial factors that make Partnerships Queensland different:

1. It recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, governments at all levels, and the business and non-government sectors must work together to develop and implement solutions to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders' quality of life.
2. It is a complete policy package that aligns all Government activity with the same goals and vision.

The Government has endorsed a suite of reforms under Partnerships Queensland to ensure its success and spell out the responsibilities of

each partner. Partnerships Queensland outlines an agenda for immediate and sustained action. It includes a budget strategy, a performance framework, a blueprint for action, a statewide communication strategy and strict governance arrangements.

Partnerships Queensland acknowledges that the activities of every Government department affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and that there are many successful programs and policies already in place.

Partnerships Queensland integrates all Government activities, drawing them together into a single overarching framework and focusing them on the four key whole-of-government goals — strong families, strong cultures; safe places; healthy living; and skilled and prosperous people and communities. Every Queensland Government action regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will contribute to outcomes under one or more of these goals.

## Solutions developed in partnership

Partnerships Queensland is based on a commitment to reconciliation. It recognises that although the Government can make a significant difference to the quality of life of Queensland citizens, it cannot do it alone — and nor can communities. A combined effort is required from all levels of government, individuals and their communities, as well as business and non-government organisations to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

It is vital to the success of Partnerships Queensland that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples capitalise on the mechanisms that have been established to enable them to influence policy and program decisions at every level of Government decision making.

At the **local** level, these include:

- negotiation tables
- community consultation
- community cabinets.

At the **regional** level, these include:

- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy regional offices
- regional managers coordination networks
- Indigenous initiatives subgroups
- ministerial regional community forums.

At the **central** level, these include:

- ministerial round tables
- the Chief Executive Officers Committee
- the Senior Officers Group.

The Government understands that communities need public resources and support to actively participate in improving their quality of life. For this reason, capacity building for communities and Government agencies is also essential for the success of Partnerships Queensland.

**Negotiation tables** are the main method used in many Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to resolve priority issues at the local level. They involve a sustained process

of consultation, planning and negotiation between community leaders, local, state and federal government agency representatives, and the private and philanthropic sectors.

Partnerships Queensland extends the concept of negotiation tables to additional selected sites throughout the state. This will enable more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to negotiate what services are provided in their communities and how they are provided.

Improved and coordinated service delivery is fundamental to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Closer attention to integrated service delivery at the local level will address the gap between what *should* be and what *is* being provided in communities.

Enhanced arrangements will be developed at the local level by Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy regional staff working with responsible

departments and communities. These enhanced arrangements will identify service delivery problems and initiatives to fix them. This will mean overcoming barriers to implementation and developing solutions at the local community level. Services will be monitored and responsible agencies will report regularly to the Government.

Improvements to community service delivery arrangements will complement **community action plans** and **shared responsibility**

**agreements.** These plans and agreements detail the reciprocal responsibilities of governments and communities regarding issues identified at negotiation tables, such as child safety.

The involvement of all relevant parties in the development of community action plans and shared responsibility agreements will help to ensure that they are realistic and achievable, and that they take account of community obligations and budgetary constraints.

At the central level over the next year, **response plans** will be developed across the Government for each priority action area and each of the overarching risk factors. These response plans will identify the most effective actions and leverage points to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The development of response plans will facilitate greater interaction between agencies and encourage them to consider how their program development and service delivery can improve outcomes previously outside their domain. This will help to ensure that response plans provide a focused, cooperative and cost-effective approach to achieving the Partnerships Queensland vision.

**Service delivery plans** will be developed from the bottom up as a result of negotiation tables. They will operationalise response plans at the local level and, over time, will complement and inform the review of response plans.

The corporate community is increasingly interested in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and Partnerships Queensland provides the platform for greater involvement by business. The Queensland Government is committed to working with the broader business community to facilitate opportunities — particularly in the areas of education, employment, sport and culture — and to support their efforts.





## Performance framework

The Partnerships Queensland Performance Framework takes a life-stage approach to measuring outcomes. It identifies outcome indicators under each of the four goals and lists them under the following **priority action areas**:

- Healthy outcomes for babies (0–12 months)
- Optimal development in early childhood (13 months – 6 years)
- Successful childhood (7–14 years)
- Transition to adulthood (15–24 years)
- Healthy, prosperous and safe adulthood (25 years and over)
- Economic security and employment participation
- Cultural strength.

The performance framework also provides outcome indicators relating to the following **overarching risk factors**, which have been identified as having a significant impact on each of the five life stages noted above:

- Housing, community infrastructure and environmental health
- Crime and violence
- Family and community wellbeing.

The indicators will provide a picture of quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at each phase of their life.

The first performance framework report will establish benchmarks of levels of disadvantage from which trends can be measured. Future reports will demonstrate the success, or otherwise, of the partnerships approach to outcomes in specific areas — for example, preventable disease, employment, crime and violence.

The performance framework provides rigorous and unprecedented performance measurement and reporting. It will establish a stronger evidence base than is currently available. This will enable the Government and communities to see whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' quality of life is improving, and better inform decision making. The framework will also provide the impetus to reconsider strategies, reallocate investment and adjust interventions, where required.

## Budget strategy

Over the first two years, funding for implementation of Partnerships Queensland includes a **\$5 million** incentive pool for innovative and performance-driven initiatives at the local community level. This funding will go towards merit-based initiatives, which are sponsored by a Queensland Government agency and consistent with the

goals of Partnerships Queensland. Any allocation of funding must be matched by the department/ agency seeking financial support. This will effectively increase Queensland Government funding for Partnerships Queensland's specific initiatives significantly.



## 2005-06 State Budget

The 2005-06 State Budget contains a number of practical initiatives that will enhance the introduction of Partnerships Queensland, including:

- **\$24.6 million** through the State Government Financial Aid program to all 32 Aboriginal shire and Island councils to assist with the delivery of local government services and to the Island Coordinating Council to assist with operating costs
- **\$2 million** to Aurukun and Mornington Shire Councils to assist with the delivery of local government services
- **\$20 million** for projects to provide, operate and maintain essential environmental health infrastructure (funded through programs such as the Indigenous Environmental Health Infrastructure Capital Grant Program and the Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program)
- up to **\$100 million** over five years to develop, operate and maintain environmental health infrastructure in mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (contingent on matched Commonwealth funding)
- **\$2.1 million** to employ environmental health workers in all 32 Aboriginal shire and Torres Strait Islander councils, plus Aurukun and Mornington Shire Councils
- **\$12 million** over four years to develop strategies to address the misuse of alcohol and other substances by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- **\$5.6 million** to develop teams to assist homeless (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) people across the state and establish 30 transitory accommodation places for homeless people with a mental illness
- **\$9.4 million** in recurrent funding for new and enhanced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognised Agencies to support the Department of Child Safety in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families
- **\$7.6 million** to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and implement Queensland Health's response to the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- through capital investment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Rental Program:
  - **\$9.6 million** for a construction program to commence 40 new dwellings and complete 20 dwellings, with 15 new buildings to be built to adaptable standards
  - **\$8.3 million** to purchase 28 dwellings for future housing solutions
  - **\$1.6 million** to acquire and improve land for future construction of approximately 10 units of accommodation
  - **\$9 million** to commence general upgrades of approximately 1500 dwellings within the rental program
- **\$9 million** to maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing (\$7 million for the public housing rental program and \$2 million to support environmental health outcomes in discrete communities)
- **\$70.5 million** in grants for the construction and upgrade of housing in the 34 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (providing approximately 124 new houses to replace inappropriate accommodation and reduce overcrowding, and 436 major and medium upgrades to improve the standard of existing dwellings). The allocation includes \$2 million to begin construction of appropriate transportable homes for discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## Blueprint for action

All Queensland Government activity affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be captured under the four goals of Partnerships Queensland. Expanding on this idea, the whole-of-government implementation plan includes a blueprint for action that lists strategic priorities under each goal, and aligns all frameworks, policies and action plans across the Government that support these priorities.

Having identified the supporting policies, the Partnerships Queensland Blueprint for Action then identifies strategic actions to be taken

under these policies and allocates specific actions for 2005–06 to relevant departments.

This process is yet another step in ensuring Government accountability under Partnerships Queensland and steering all activity towards achieving the four major goals.

Importantly, the blueprint assists agencies to identify how their activities improve the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

## Conclusion

No other area of Government policy poses the challenges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. The complexity of the issues, their interdependency and in many instances, the added challenge of geographic isolation mean that it will take a long-term commitment from the Government to ensure meaningful and lasting improvements to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders' quality of life.

Real change cannot happen without genuine partnerships between every level of government, communities and business. Partnerships Queensland provides a detailed and comprehensive suite of measures to pave the way for all of us to work together to ensure

that current and future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders enjoy the same advantages as other Queenslanders.

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# Partnerships Queensland

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Policy in Queensland 2005–10



Queensland Government



# Partnerships Queensland

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## Foreword

Improving social, health and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a priority for the Queensland Government. Progress has been made, but there is more work to be done to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples share the same quality of life as other Queenslanders.

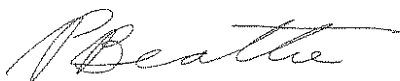
The Government has developed a complete policy package, Partnerships Queensland, to raise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standards of living. The policy will initially run from 2005 to 2010, outlining an agenda for immediate and sustained action.

Partnerships Queensland is an Australian first. It 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 strict governance arrangements.

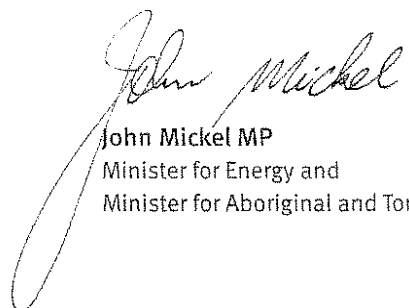
Partnerships Queensland is based on rigorous and unprecedented performance measurement and reporting. Its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standards of living will be monitored through the performance framework. This will clarify who is responsible for what, measure whether key indicators of economic, social and physical quality of life are improving, and identify where future opportunities for substantial improvements lie.

In developing Partnerships Queensland, the Government has acknowledged the need to work in partnership not only with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but also with the Commonwealth Government, local governments, 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 peoples to negotiate what services are provided in their communities and how they are provided.

We know that there are no easy solutions to the problems that have evolved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Partnerships Queensland lifts the bar for community involvement, governance, service provision, accountability, shared responsibility, leadership and capacity building. There must be better performance from Government agencies, communities, business, and service providers (including non-government organisations) if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are to have the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders.



Peter Beattie MP  
Premier and Treasurer



John Mickel MP  
Minister for Energy and  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy

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## VISION

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Partnerships Queensland's 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.

## PROFILE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER QUEENSLANDERS

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*Queensland has two large groups of Indigenous peoples — Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that Queensland's Indigenous population at 30 June 2004 was 134 000, accounting for about 27% of Australia's total Indigenous population. In the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census of Population and Housing, 77% of this group identified as Aboriginal, 15% as Torres Strait Islander, and 8% as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.*

*The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is significantly younger than the rest of the Queensland population. Around 39% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are under the age of 15, and 2.6% are 65 years and over. In comparison, only 21% of other Queenslanders are under 15, and 12% are 65 and over.*

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders live in diverse locations across the state. There are 20% in remote or discrete communities, 19% in other rural and remote locations, 30% in regional centres and 31% in the urban areas of South-East Queensland.*

*On some measures of wellbeing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who do not live in discrete communities are better off than those who do. However, the majority of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population experiences a significantly poorer quality of life and lower levels of social wellbeing than Queensland's population overall.*

*Queensland's policy directions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples recognise that no single approach to engagement, negotiation, policy setting, planning and service delivery can meet the varied needs of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout the state. Therefore, future emphasis will be on finding and driving solutions at the local community level.*

Partnerships Queensland does not replace existing Queensland Government policies; rather, it aligns them under a common set of goals and mechanisms for change. These goals and mechanisms are derived from key policies that have been successfully implemented in certain parts of the state — for example, Cape York Partnerships and Meeting Challenges, Making Choices. Partnerships Queensland draws on and reinforces the success of these policies and others. It also draws on the gains being made through the Council of Australian Governments' Indigenous trial sites initiative which has its Queensland base in the Cape York region.

Partnerships Queensland provides a unifying tool for governments, communities and the business and non-government sectors to work cohesively towards improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is a framework that establishes common goals, incorporates proven strategies for success and provides outcome indicators to measure progress. It will guide and direct all current and future initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and build on the progress that communities, governments, business and non-government organisations have already achieved.

## Goals

Partnerships Queensland draws together the key themes of existing Queensland Government policies and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders under four key goals:

- strong families, strong cultures
- safe places
- healthy living
- skilled and prosperous people and communities.

The tables on pages 6–9 show how major policies and programs across the Government are aligned under the four key goals. The goals are discussed in detail on pages 11–28.

Each of the goals is inextricably linked to one or more of the others. Achieving the goal of healthy living, for example, is dependent on achieving the goal of strong families and cultures. Partnerships Queensland is a holistic framework that recognises the interdependency of these goals.

## Mechanisms for change

Partnerships Queensland introduces a new way of doing business in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This 'new way' is characterised by the following partnership and governance mechanisms that have proved successful in individual Queensland communities:

- community engagement
- improved governance
- better performing and more accountable service providers
- shared responsibility
- capacity building and leadership in both the community and government sectors.

A detailed discussion of these mechanisms is provided on pages 29–39.



## Responsibilities

Successful partnerships require all partners — communities, governments, business, organisations and individuals — to understand and share responsibility for actions and outcomes. Partnerships Queensland sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties and makes each accountable by establishing the reporting requirements and performance measures that will guide future Queensland Government action.

These measures 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 (see page 1).

## A better future

Partnerships Queensland signals a new direction for all partners to work together to achieve a more positive future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The bar is being lifted for community involvement, governance, service provision, accountability, shared responsibility, leadership and capacity building. There must be better performance from Government agencies, communities, business, and service providers (including non-government organisations) if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are to have the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders.

In some areas, urgent action is needed. Of utmost importance is the need to intervene to stabilise those communities where alcohol and other substance abuse is harming individuals and families. In many communities, this is a prerequisite for any further action.



- community involvement
- governance
- service provision
- accountability
- shared responsibility
- leadership and
- capacity building



## Recognising the past, securing the future

The Government has learned from the past and from the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Historically, governments have failed to deliver services that adequately meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rightly expect the same service quality, outcomes and opportunities as other Queenslanders, along with an affirmation of their unique cultural identity as the Indigenous peoples of Queensland. They expect to have the same rights and obligations as all other citizens.

The Queensland Government has already done much to meet the expectations and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Policies and programs developed to improve the quality of life in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities reflect extensive consultation and collaboration at community, regional and state levels. They also reflect a commitment to greater collaboration among Queensland Government agencies and with federal and local government bodies.

The Government is determined to apply these policies and their underlying principles across the state. Partnerships Queensland provides the means for doing this. It builds on the progress already made and provides a clear direction for the future.

### Partnerships Queensland's foundations

Partnerships Queensland is founded on existing Government policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Three key policies that have partnership and community engagement as core features are drawn on in particular. These policies are:

- **Towards a Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ten Year Partnership**  
A long-term strategic policy, planning and performance management framework, the Ten Year Partnership was developed in 2000. It lays the foundation for achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through improving coordination and planning at the central level, and establishing negotiation mechanisms at the regional and local levels. This has given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples direct input into Government programs and services.
- **Cape York Partnerships**  
Initiated in May 2000, Cape York Partnerships is designed to reduce welfare dependency. It is based on forming partnerships to develop viable business activities that lead to improved economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Cape York region. The Government will continue to work closely with Cape York leaders to advance Cape York Partnerships and resolve issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this region.
- **Meeting Challenges, Making Choices**  
Launched in April 2002 in response to the Cape York Justice Study, this policy identifies reforms for reducing the high levels of alcohol abuse and violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, principally in Cape York. It affirms the Government's commitment to better community governance, economic development and improved conditions and services.

As well as emphasising the importance of close partnerships between communities and decision makers, each of these policies recognises that communities are in the best position to identify and prioritise their needs and recommend how governments can best meet those needs. This is the idea behind negotiation tables, which have been successful in many communities.

Negotiation tables are a sustained process of consultation, planning and negotiation between community leaders and representatives, government representatives and other stakeholders to develop a community action plan for dealing with local issues. This process enables communities to identify and present their priorities, and government to respond quickly and in a coordinated way.



## Aligning with Government priorities

Partnerships Queensland draws together the goals of the Ten Year Partnership, Cape York Partnerships and Meeting Challenges, Making Choices and aligns them with Queensland Government priorities. Partnerships Queensland also recognises the priorities of the Council of Australian Governments. Details of these goals and priorities are shown in the following table.

### Alignment of goals and Government priorities

Partnerships Queensland				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting our children and enhancing community safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early childhood development and growth</li> <li>Positive transition to adulthood</li> <li>Functional and resilient families and communities</li> <li>Effective environmental health systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justice</li> <li>Family violence</li> <li>Human services</li> <li>Service delivery</li> <li>Reconciliation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build better family support networks that recognise traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime and justice</li> <li>Children, young people and families</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting the environment for a sustainable future</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased access to and involvement in the management of land and sea country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cape York Land Use Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land and sustainable natural resource management</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation</li> <li>Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early school engagement and performance</li> <li>Economic participation and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community governance</li> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Increased access to and involvement in the management of land and sea country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development — skills and jobs</li> <li>Reach better education outcomes through improved education services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol intervention</li> <li>Education and training</li> <li>Economic development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing urban growth and building Queensland's regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic participation and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community governance</li> <li>Economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Governance</li> <li>Housing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving health care and strengthening services to the community</li> <li>Delivering responsive government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substance use and misuse</li> <li>Functional and resilient families and communities</li> <li>Effective environmental health systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human services</li> <li>Reconciliation</li> <li>Service delivery</li> <li>Community governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve equal life expectancy with the Queensland community</li> <li>Achieve better health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> <li>Education and training</li> <li>Housing</li> </ul>
				<p><b>Safe places</b></p> <p><b>Strong families, strong cultures</b></p> <p><b>Strong families, strong cultures</b></p> <p><b>Skilled and prosperous people and communities</b></p> <p><b>Skilled and prosperous people and communities</b></p> <p><b>Skilled and prosperous people and communities</b></p> <p><b>Healthy living</b></p>

## Integration of policies

The tables below and on the following pages provide examples of how Partnerships Queensland integrates current policies and initiatives under the four key goals — strong families, strong cultures; safe places; healthy living; and skilled and prosperous people and communities. These are just some of the current efforts towards building a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Strong families, strong cultures

- Support families and communities
- Promote and affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

- Create access to and management of land and sea as a base for wellbeing and cultural affirmation
- Encourage stronger involvement in and influence on natural resource management planning and policy

#### By:

- Delivering programs to promote resilience and capacity in families and parents
- Supporting communities to reduce the levels of violence against children, women and men
- Promoting the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people through improved access to safe places and refuges from family violence
- Working with communities to improve responses to stressful, harmful and crisis situations within communities
- Promoting opportunities for social, cultural and emotional healing for families and individuals within communities
- Supporting and enhancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, social and cultural structures and activities
- Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to and management of land and sea country
- Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander influence on broader natural resource planning and policies

#### Through:

- Draft Looking After Country Together strategic partnership framework (DNR&M, EPA) (Ten Year Partnership)
- Reconciliation Business and Leadership Action Plan 2005-2007 (DATSIP, DPC, DSDTI, DOC) (Ten Year Partnership)
- Queensland Families: Future Directions (DOC)
- Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Child Protection 2003-06 (DChS)
- Blueprint for Implementing the Recommendations of the Crime and Misconduct Commission Report *Protecting Children: An Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Foster Care* (DChS)
- Meeting Challenges, Making Choices (including alcohol management plans) (DATSIP)
- Indigenous Arts Export Strategy (DEA and DSDTI)
- Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund (DEA and DSDTI)
- Partners for Success (DEA)
- Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Policy Framework (DSDTI)
- Creative Queensland — Queensland Government Cultural Policy 2002 (DEA)
- Regional plans for sustainable growth and development (DLGPSR)
- Cape York Economic Development Strategy (DSDTI)
- Draft Queensland Indigenous Economic Development and Participation Strategy (DSDTI, DET, DEA, DATSIP)
- Natural resource management plans and regional investment strategies, e.g. Cape York Natural Resource Management Plan and Regional Investment Strategy (DOC, DNR&M, EPA, DPI&F and DATSIP)
- Natural Heritage Trust Extension Regional Natural Resource Management (DNR&M)
- National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (DNR&M)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework (QH)/National Mental Health Strategy
- COAG Reconciliation Framework
- National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians (COAG)
- Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy (QH)
- Volatile Substance Misuse (VSM) Strategy (Safe Places) (DOC, QH, QPS, DPC)
- Draft Queensland Drug Strategy 2005-2010 (QH, DPC)
- Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care (Office of Child Care, DOC)
- Review of Government Service Provision: *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005* (COAG)
- Women in the Smart State Directions Statement 2003-2008 (DLGPSR)
- *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (DNR&M)
- Reconciliation Management Plan 2002-2006 (DPW)
- Australian Transport Council Reconciliation Action Plan (QT, DMR)
- Indigenous Reconciliation Policy and Framework for Action (QT, DMR)
- Draft policy statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence (DOC, DATSIP, DLGPSR) (Ten Year Partnership)

## Safe places

- Support communities to reduce the impacts of alcohol
- Create a fair and equitable criminal justice system
- Reduce the incidence of crime, especially interpersonal violence

- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build their capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from injuries, emergencies and disasters

### By:

- Supporting communities to manage the impacts of alcohol
- Working with communities to develop strategies for dealing with alcohol and substance abuse, including prevention, reduction of associated harm, and treatment
- Working with communities to ensure more effective enforcement of alcohol legislation and regulations
- Promoting the development of community-based approaches to justice issues
- Promoting greater involvement in the administration of justice
- Working with communities to promote leadership and greater community involvement in local crime prevention initiatives

- Supporting and promoting the work of local community justice groups in responding to justice issues
- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to prepare for and build capacity to respond to emergencies and disasters
- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to respond to family violence
- Increase access to support services for women and children experiencing family violence
- Promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through improved access to safe places and refuges from family violence

### Through:

- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement (DJAG, DATSIP, DPC, QPS, DOC, DCS) (Ten Year Partnership)
- Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Child Protection 2003–06 (DCHS)
- Strategic Plan for Indigenous Australians 2005–2008 (DES)
- Meeting Challenges, Making Choices (including alcohol management plans) (DATSIP)
- Integrated Indigenous Strategy (LAQ)
- Queensland Government Coordinated Response to Homelessness 2005–2009 (DATSIP, DCS, DOH, DJAG, DTFTWID, QH, QPS, DOC)

- Safer Communities (DOC)
- Meeting the Challenges of Substance Misuse (DATSIP, QH, DPC)
- Women in the Smart State Directions Statement 2003–2008 (DLGPSR)
- Volatile Substance Misuse (VSM) Strategy (Safe Places) (DOC, QH, QPS, DPC)
- Family Violence Partnership Program (Commonwealth Government)
- Draft policy statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence (DOC, DATSIP, DLGPSR) (Ten Year Partnership)

COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy
DCHS	Department of Child Safety
DCS	Department of Corrective Services
DEA	Department of Education and the Arts
DES	Department of Emergency Services
DET	Department of Employment and Training
DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General

DLGPSR	Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation
DMR	Department of Main Roads
DNR&M	Department of Natural Resources and Mines
DOC	Department of Communities
DOH	Department of Housing
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
DPI&F	Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
DPW	Department of Public Works

DSDTI	Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation
DTFTWID	Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
LAQ	Legal Aid Queensland
QH	Queensland Health
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QT	Queensland Transport
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority

## Healthy living

- Attend to the social, cultural and environmental factors that affect health and wellbeing

- Improve health outcomes through effective health programs and services

### By:

- Improving physical environments, infrastructure and other essentials for health and dealing with the multiple causes of illness, injury and disability
- Improving access to appropriate and affordable housing, and reducing homelessness
- Promoting a whole-of-life approach to health for families and communities
- Providing access to an effective integrated network of programs and services to promote health, maintain wellbeing and prevent, detect and manage illness

- Building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce
- Working in partnership with the community and with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership and the Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership
- Build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to prepare for and respond to accidents, injuries, disasters and emergencies through the provision of first-aid training and first-aid kits

### Through:

- Queensland Government Implementation Plan for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (QH)
- Queensland Health Indigenous Workforce Management Strategy (QH)
- Community Governance Improvement Strategy (DLGPSR)
- Strategic Plan for Indigenous Australians 2005-2008 (DES)
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing and Infrastructure Bilateral Agreements — Mainland and Torres Strait (DOH, DLGPSR, TSRA and Commonwealth Government)
- Meeting Challenges, Making Choices (including alcohol management plans) (DATSIP)
- Healthier People and Communities (QH)
- Indigenous Australian Service Delivery Enhancement Package (DES)
- Australian Housing Ministers Ten-Year Statement of New Directions for Indigenous Housing — Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing 2010 (DOH)

- Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program (Funding Agreement) (environmental health and living standards) (DLGPSR)
- Healthy Weight in Children (QH, DATSIP, DEA, QT, DOC)
- Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership (QH, DATSIP, DPC)
- Child Injury Prevention Project (DES, QH)
- Nutrition Policy for Remote Retail Stores (DATSIP, QH)
- Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001-2006 (QH)
- Meeting the Challenges of Substance Misuse (DATSIP, QH, DPC)
- Review of Government Service Provision: *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005* (COAG)
- Draft Looking After Country Together strategic partnership framework (DNR&M, EPA) (Ten Year Partnership)



## Skilled and prosperous people and communities

- Improve education participation and outcomes
- Promote stronger enterprise cultures and work practices
- Promote accessible and relevant training opportunities

- Create wealth through sustainable employment and diversification of the economic base
- Promote the sustainable use of land- and sea-based resources in ways that optimise returns to local communities

### By:

- Improving a range of education outcomes, e.g. school attendance, literacy, numeracy and levels of completion of Years 10 and 12
- Encouraging schools to work with other agencies to improve learning conditions and foster workforce reform, e.g. increased cultural responsiveness
- Supporting a range of vocational education and training options that are flexible and effective
- Supporting programs and services that assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to obtain and retain jobs, e.g. with business, industry associations and governments
- Promoting vocational training and education to improve employment opportunities and community capital

- Encouraging business organisations to share proven growth strategies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises throughout the state
- Building awareness of options to finance and manage assets
- Developing land tenure arrangements that encourage home ownership and economic development
- Supporting initiatives that lead to the building of business capacity and the establishment of specific enterprises in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Encouraging business partnerships and support and mentoring networks between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and private sector groups

### Through:

- Partners for Success (DEA)
- Indigenous Employment Policy for Queensland Government Building and Construction Projects — IEP (20% Policy) (DET)
- Breaking the Unemployment Cycle (DET)
- Education and Training Reforms for the Future (DEA)
- Cape York Employment and Training Strategy (DET)
- Developing Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy (DSDTI)
- Draft Queensland Indigenous Economic Development and Participation Strategy (DSDTI, DET, DEA, DATSIP)
- Business round tables and business hubs (Cape York Partnerships)
- Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Policy Framework (DSDTI)
- Draft Looking After Country Together strategic partnership framework (DNR&M, EPA) (Ten Year Partnership)
- Community Governance Improvement Strategy (DLGPSR)

- Cape York Heads of Agreement (DPC, DOC, DNR&M)
- Local Jobs for Local People — Cape York Indigenous Employment Strategy (DET, Commonwealth Government)
- Cape York Economic Development Strategy (DSDTI)
- Women in the Smart State Directions Statement 2003–2008 (DLGPSR)
- Review of Government Service Provision: *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005* (COAG)
- Cape York Natural Resource Management Plan (DOC, DNR&M, EPA, DPI&F, DATSIP)
- Employment and Career Development Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 2003–06 (DPI&F)
- Partnership Commitment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (DPI&F)
- Reconciliation Management Plan 2002–2006 (DPW)
- Smart Directions Statement for Information and Communications Technology within Queensland Government (DPW)



## The three Rs: rights, responsibilities and reconciliation

The Queensland Government recognises the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have the same opportunities and services as those available to other Queenslanders in areas such as health, education and employment. Among other things, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a right to healthy living conditions, quality education and safe communities. They also have the right to aspire to a better future for themselves and their children. These rights are clearly reflected in the goals of Partnerships Queensland.

It is essential that these rights are matched by responsibility. Government has a responsibility for improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and the Queensland Government fully accepts this responsibility. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must also take individual responsibility for the choices they make about their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others in their families and communities. This is part of the long-held principle of reciprocity and mutual obligation that underpins traditional social structures.

Others must also take on their share of the responsibility for achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Real improvement will only occur through a combined effort from governments, communities and private and non-government sectors alike. The negotiation table process, which draws all of these parties together to develop action plans for dealing with local issues, is a good example of how Queensland is leading the way in achieving better social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through shared responsibility.

The Queensland Government's vision of the future includes an ongoing commitment to reconciliation, which will only occur when all Queenslanders are united in their prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life. In the past few years, the Queensland Government's leading role in the reconciliation process has been demonstrated by a number of initiatives:

- an apology to stolen generations
- the payment of reparations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who had their wages and savings controlled under successive state governments between 1897 and 1972
- intervention to stop the devastation caused by alcohol abuse in communities
- substantial support for:
  - access to and management of traditional land and sea country
  - promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.





## Partnerships Queensland's key goals

Partnerships Queensland consolidates the themes of current initiatives under the four key goals of strong families, strong cultures; safe places; healthy living; and skilled and prosperous people and communities.

A common set of goals will provide greater direction and focus for individuals, communities and governments as they work towards creating a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These goals, together with the mechanisms of the new way of doing business, will help all parties make the concerted effort necessary to achieve improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

This section describes how existing initiatives are already contributing to the key goals.

### Strong families, strong cultures

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Strong families and cultures form the backbone of every successful society. They are the foundations for people's effective participation in the civic and economic life of a society.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have histories of strong kinship and cultures that have endured for many thousands of years. Keeping these family and cultural ties strong will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contribute to their own health and prosperity.

The Queensland Government, communities, organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are working to make a difference to those families and communities most at risk. They are also working to maintain and strengthen the spirit and pride that are important features of everyday life for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This spirit lives through the special relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with place, land, waters and seas.

Some of the ways in which the Government is working with families and communities to strengthen and unite them are outlined below.

#### Supporting families and communities

Preventing families from reaching crisis point is vitally important for strengthening families and communities. Through the Queensland Families: Future Directions initiative, the Government is improving the way it helps families before they reach crisis point. Under this initiative, several programs have been introduced to support parents and families so that they can deal with problems and avoid entering the child protection system.

The Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Child Protection 2003-06 also commits the Government to stronger prevention and early intervention measures when it comes to child abuse. Many initiatives aimed at creating safe and healthy environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are now in place, including positive parenting programs, youth development programs and programs to strengthen family and social structures. The Government acknowledges the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system and is committed to developing prevention, intervention and protection measures in collaboration with families and local communities.

Numerous measures are being taken to reduce the levels of violence in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As a result of Meeting Challenges, Making Choices, many Aboriginal communities have developed and implemented alcohol management plans. These plans aim to improve the quality of life of families and communities.

The Queensland Government is committed to strengthening families and keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples safe from violence. Strategies to reduce family violence are being developed under the Ten Year Partnership. They will include:

- establishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection protocols, and safe havens for women and children at risk of violence
- working with communities to improve responses to stressful, harmful and crisis situations within communities
- promoting opportunities for social, cultural and emotional healing for families and individuals within communities
- expanding the range of youth development programs and programs to enhance family and social structures.

### **Affirming cultures**

Promoting and affirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage are central to building stronger families and communities. Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face the challenge of preserving their traditional knowledge and practices and, at the same time, participating fully in a modern economy. This balance, or bicultural competence, is vital to a successful contemporary way of life.

For their part, governments and the broader community must recognise and support the critical role of culture in maintaining vital Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, whether these be people living on country or urban dwellers striving to maintain their community traditions. The Queensland Government recognises the importance of culture in all aspects of life and acknowledges the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It values both contemporary and traditional experiences, and understands that cultural strength is necessary for the resilience and adaptability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In turn, such resilience and adaptability are fundamental to achieving positive social, economic, political and environmental outcomes.

In terms of education and training, the Government is promoting and supporting the development of bicultural competence by simultaneously affirming first cultures and delivering programs that build the skills needed to function effectively in our contemporary economy.

Partners for Success, the Queensland Government's strategy for raising school attendance rates and literacy and numeracy rates among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, is an example of an initiative that focuses on developing skills and promoting and affirming cultures. Important actions under this initiative include fostering productive partnerships between educators and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and developing and providing resource materials that reflect the cultures of students.

The Reconciliation Business and Leadership Action Plan 2005-07 is another means by which the Government is affirming first cultures. A diverse range of initiatives has been introduced under this plan to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders' participation in their traditional cultures and to advance cultural understanding on the part of all Queenslanders. These include education and training initiatives (for example, curriculum coverage of first cultures) and support for arts and cultural events.

A further, critical element in affirming and maintaining first cultures is recognising and honouring the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders as counsellors and leaders in processes for change — for example, in moves to build stronger communities and promote bicultural competence.



## Promoting arts

Cultures are also being strengthened through Government strategies that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts. These include opportunities provided through the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund and other support for the contemporary visual art and craft industries.

This support extends to the development of art business opportunities through the Indigenous Business Development Program, and assistance with marketing and exporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art through the Queensland Indigenous Art Marketing and Export Agency. The creation of this agency is a good example of how strong, long-held traditions can be harnessed to create opportunities for the future, in this case through the export of outstanding Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

A broader Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Industry Development Strategy is also being developed. This will identify priorities to accelerate the growth and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, practitioners and business across the arts sectors.



## Celebrating and promoting culture in the Torres Strait

In April 2005, the people of the Torres Strait celebrated the first anniversary of the Gab Titui Cultural Centre.

Located on Thursday Island, the centre is the first of its kind in the Torres Strait region. Its establishment has met the long-term goal of Torres Strait Islander communities to own and operate a cultural centre that supports and promotes strong families and strong cultures and develops the region's arts and cultural industry.

The cultural centre fulfils a dream for the people of the Torres Strait region, in particular the late Mr Ephraim Bani who is recognised as a visionary behind the centre. Along with a number of other Torres Strait Islanders, Mr Bani lobbied for many years to establish a centre to promote and protect Torres Strait Islander culture and identity.

There was a long period of extensive consultation between Torres Strait Islander communities, the Department of Education and the Arts and the Torres Strait Regional Authority to guide the centre's establishment.


The Department of Education and the Arts and the Torres Strait Regional Authority jointly funded the Gab Titui Cultural Centre through the Queensland Heritage Trails Network.

The name 'Gab Titui' incorporates both the eastern and western languages of the Torres Strait, with the combined name meaning 'journey of the stars'.

The centre includes space for exhibitions, artwork and workshops, with a specialised area to accommodate and display artefacts and cultural heritage items in a climate-controlled environment. The potential role the centre could play in training and employing local people in the collection, storage and preservation of art and artefacts will be assessed in the future, as will its potential as an arts and craft outlet for the contemporary works being produced in the islands.

With funding provided through the national Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, the Department of Education and the Arts has initiated a project in partnership with the Torres Strait Regional Authority to consult on and develop an arts strategy. The strategy will outline ways to position the Gab Titui Cultural Centre as a hub for developing the region's arts industry, supporting arts business across the islands and promoting and marketing Torres Strait Islander arts and craft.

Three Torres Strait Regional Authority trainees employed at the new cultural centre became the first students from the region to begin Certificate III in Tourism (Visitor Services) studies at the Thursday Island Campus of Tropical North Queensland TAFE. The Torres Strait Regional Authority and TAFE collaborated to design and develop the course.



## Accessing and managing land and sea country

To re-establish and maintain their cultures, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders must have greater access to land and sea. Traditional Owners must have stronger involvement in, and influence on, land-use planning and the management of land and sea country.

These are key components of the Looking After Country Together strategic partnership framework which is being developed for application across the state. As part of the Ten Year Partnership, this framework supports the establishment of partnerships with Traditional Owners at local, regional and state levels to extend and build on other partnerships that have been developed during the past ten years. It is based on the concept that country and family/kinship is a key resource in overcoming social problems.

In recognition of the need to preserve cultural heritage, the Queensland Government introduced the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*. These Acts recognise the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders as discrete and unique in Queensland's history and cultural identity. They establish agreed, flexible, workable processes for managing cultural heritage and dealing with the impact of land use clearly and fairly. The Acts also recognise the responsibility of all Queenslanders for doing so.

As a result of the Acts, a cultural heritage database and register have been established. These identify sites, places and objects recognised as having cultural heritage value.

## Community and the Government engage through land management

A land management program at Woorabinda, Central Queensland, has enabled community members and Government service providers to work more confidently together.

The program, which was developed in response to community interest, aimed to enhance the capacity of Indigenous land managers to analyse existing resources and identify opportunities to increase the potential of primary industries in their community.

Participants from the local area included Elders, Traditional Owners, registered native title claimants, council members, other members of the community and representatives of the Woorabinda Pastoral Company. Three Government departments were involved in the program — Primary Industries and Fisheries, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, and State Development, Trade and Innovation.

Crucial to the success of the program was active community participation in all elements of its planning and review. Particular emphasis was placed on involving young people and ensuring Elders took a central role in helping them develop knowledge and skills. The way in which Government agencies cooperated and matched their strategies and actions to community needs was also a key factor in the success of the program.

The program focused on natural resource management and enterprise analysis and development. Learning activities were based in the field and were conducted in a practical, hands-on manner supported by theoretical learning.

There was a deliberate decision by all parties working on the program not to promote activities through the media. Previous experience showed that this type of exposure raised expectations and placed pressure on participants in relation to outcomes. As an alternative and a more effective way to promote their work, program participants gave community presentations at relevant forums.

The Woorabinda Land Management Program emphasised community ownership of planning processes and subsequent economic development ventures. Agencies acted as facilitators, with community members driving the outcomes.

Investing substantial time in consultation and communication led to greater understanding between community members and Government employees as each learned more about how the other group worked. The program has paved the way for ongoing engagement between community and the Government. It has also forged strong interagency partnerships that have the flexibility to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Central Queensland.



## Safe places

All people have the right to live in safety, particularly in their own homes and communities. Safety from harm to themselves and their property is a fundamental right and an important precondition for maintaining health, participating in education and contributing to economic development.

To increase levels of safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Queensland Government policies are targeting seven key areas — child protection, early intervention and support for children, community-based approaches to law and justice, crime prevention, alcohol management, homelessness, and prevention of and response to emergencies.

### Child protection

When children experience harm, it can have significant and lasting effects on their health and wellbeing in later life. The Queensland Government is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring they have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The 2004 Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) report *Protecting Children: An Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Foster Care* stated that an effective child protection system needed to support the development of all children, as well as identify vulnerable families for targeted interventions on behalf of at-risk children. The Government's commitment to providing an effective and responsive child protection system is demonstrated in the Blueprint for Implementing the Recommendations of the CMC Report. The centrepiece of the reform strategy was the establishment of the Department of Child Safety to focus exclusively on child protection functions and to act as lead agency in facilitating a whole-of-government response to child protection issues.

The Department of Child Safety, in collaboration with key stakeholders, is leading the revision of the Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Child Protection 2003–06 and the accompanying action plan. The purpose is to ensure these documents reflect the Government's undertaking to fully implement the CMC's recommendations and provide an effective policy framework to guide a whole-of-government response to supporting children and young people and their families.

The vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to substance misuse, exploitation and violence is compounded by intergenerational trauma. This has resulted in the breakup of families, difficulties in relationships between children and parents, violence, and systemic discrimination in social, cultural, economic, legal and political matters. In Queensland during 2004–05, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people accounted for approximately 22.6% of all children and young people on protective orders.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that child protection and family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and carers are culturally appropriate, accessible and responsive to their individual needs. A number of steps have been taken to provide a coordinated and focused response to child protection issues including:

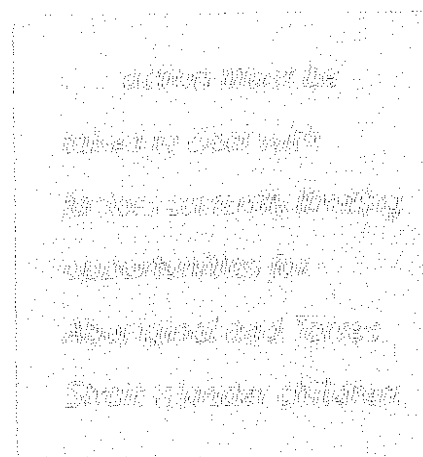
- the establishment of a Directors-General Coordinating Committee to oversee the implementation of child protection services
- the appointment of directors of child safety in ten Government agencies to take responsibility for the operational delivery of their specific agency's child safety services and the coordination of those responsibilities with other agencies
- an increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognised Agencies to deliver a range of support services
- the development of a cluster service delivery model in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The model incorporates a main service delivery hub that is linked to a number of secondary service delivery points. Main service delivery hubs have been established at Weipa, Cooktown, Mornington Island, Normanton, Thursday Island and Palm Island.
- the inclusion of child safety as a mandatory agenda item at all negotiation tables
- the recruitment of additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child safety officers to provide high-quality culturally appropriate child protection services and advice to departmental officers



- the establishment of an Indigenous Support and Development Branch in Cairns (Department of Child Safety) to provide:
  - advice on the delivery of culturally appropriate child protection services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families
  - necessary support and resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognised Agencies so that they can deliver effective child protection services
- provision of Indigenous cultural competence training for Department of Child Safety staff
- the implementation of a new SCAN system which includes a representative from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognised Agency, as a core member, in relation to all child protection matters regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.

### Early intervention and support for children

The opportunities and support that children receive in the early childhood years are crucial to many aspects of their future development, including their health, education and social prospects. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, many children are born to teenage parents. These young people often lack the skills and family or community support to recognise their children's needs and adequately provide for these — for example, health and nutrition, emotional support and safe home environments.



Young parents who themselves struggle with issues of alcohol or substance abuse, family violence, overcrowded or substandard housing, poverty or unemployment have little hope of providing opportunities for their children. In such environments, research has demonstrated that children may suffer poor nutrition, attachment disorders, learning difficulties and social dysfunction.

The Queensland Government recognises that action must be taken to deal with factors currently limiting opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Such action includes intervention and support for children in the first months and years of life and for their parents, particularly when the latter are young people and where family and community support services have failed. Under the Queensland Families: Future Directions initiative, significant additional resources are being provided for prevention and early intervention services to improve the quality of life of vulnerable children and their families.

Research has demonstrated that intervention in the first months and years of a child's life may help to overcome inadequacies in a child's physical and emotional support, and influence their later physical, emotional and social development and opportunities. Successful intervention may take the form of direct support services (in some cases to replace family support systems that have failed) or referral to appropriate services through a third party, such as a case worker, who has a meaningful relationship with the parent and family.

Community support workers can develop important relationships with young parents who do not have family or community support. In doing so, they can identify health, nutrition, safety and personal issues as they arise and initiate appropriate preventive action. The Government also recognises the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognised Agencies and their need for appropriate support and resources. The Government will continue to work with key community and policy stakeholders to research and identify the most appropriate early intervention strategies.

### Community-based approaches to law and justice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely than other Queenslanders to come into contact with the criminal justice system. They make up about 3.5% of the total population but account for more than 20% of adults in prison and almost 17% of adults on community-based orders. Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are over 20 times more likely than other young Queenslanders to be in a detention centre. The Queensland Government recognises the seriousness of the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and children in the justice system and is working to improve this situation.



In particular, the Government has organised an independent evaluation of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement to identify ways of increasing its effectiveness. This agreement, which was developed under the Ten Year Partnership, aims to reduce incarceration rates and achieve better justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Associated with the agreement is the Local Justice Initiatives Program which funds community justice groups to develop community-based strategies for dealing with justice issues. Strategies to reduce crime levels include diversion, responding to public drunkenness by way of night patrols in communities, and mediation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women play a key role in developing and supporting such strategies and in the overall operation of community justice groups.

Members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are also being trained to convene regular Justice of the Peace Magistrates Courts. In Brisbane, the Murri Court is a Magistrates Court that deals with sentencing adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders in a unique way. The Murri Court takes into account cultural issues by providing a forum where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have input into the sentencing process. The Murri Court is also held in Rockhampton, Mount Isa and the Brisbane Children's Court.

The Safer Communities strategy is another initiative focusing on justice issues. The strategy aims to improve law and order and provide safer environments for children by increasing police capability in communities and establishing night patrols and safe places to get children off the streets and into safe environments. Under the strategy, training and development initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community police officers are ongoing.

Youth justice conferencing, which has been introduced statewide, is also contributing to better justice outcomes for young offenders and for victims of crime. Conferencing brings young offenders together with victims, support people, Queensland police representatives and other relevant people to discuss the offending behaviour and determine an appropriate penalty.

In other moves, the drug court for adult offenders has been expanded to North Queensland, and justice negotiation tables are being convened in the Torres Strait during 2005 to develop a Torres Strait regional justice agreement.

#### CASE STUDY

### Local Justices of the Peace empower remote communities

Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are managing justice issues with increased autonomy through the convening of Magistrates Courts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justices of the Peace (JPs). Communities have enthusiastically embraced opportunities to undertake special training offered by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. This training enables two or more JPs to constitute a local Magistrates Court to deal with breaches of the law in a manner that maintains community trust and cohesion. These Magistrates Courts deal with simple offences, domestic violence applications, breaches of community by-laws, traffic matters, bail applications and remands.

This approach empowers remote communities, gives them a greater sense of responsibility and enables them to effectively manage breaches of the law. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JPs are able to speak to defendants in their traditional language so they have a clear understanding of proceedings. The specially trained JPs also play an important role in helping their communities with basic legal procedures and passing on an understanding of the justice system.

The training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JPs to constitute Magistrates Courts is one of the key strategies of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement. By the end of 2004, Magistrates Courts constituted by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JPs had been established and conducted regularly at Woorabinda, Pormpuraaw, Badu Island, Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal, Kowanyama, Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Aurukun, Napranum, Mapoon, Lockhart River, Palm Island, Thursday Island, Bamaga and Mornington Island. There are currently more than 170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JPs (Magistrates Court). The training program is being expanded in 2005 to include Doomadgee, Yam Island, Moa Island and Mer Island.

## Crime prevention

Crime prevention strategies are important in improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

One such initiative is the Police Liaison Officer scheme. This scheme fosters communication, trust and understanding between the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the Queensland Police Service and members of the broader community in order to reduce and prevent crime. Crime prevention manuals and posters tailored specifically for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are also being provided.

Another initiative is the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Police Program. This program is assisting police at Badu Island, Yarrabah and Woorabinda to enforce community by-laws.

## Alcohol management

In Meeting Challenges, Making Choices, the Queensland Government made a commitment to work with communities to overcome the destructive effects of alcohol on individuals, families and communities. Alcohol management plans are in place in 18 communities. Initial results have been most encouraging, with a reduced incidence of injury from violence already apparent.

Meeting Challenges, Making Choices also provides for statutory community justice groups to be formed under legislation (initially in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities). These groups have implemented alcohol management plans in their local communities. A review of alcohol management restrictions is currently being undertaken to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

To better enforce alcohol laws and regulations, the Queensland Government is improving training and support for liquor licensing officers and police officers. New conditions are also being placed on the licences of some liquor outlets surrounding remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This will help stamp out the 'sly grog' trade. These enforcement strategies are designed to ensure compliance with the new liquor regulations and to reduce the illicit supply of alcohol to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As an additional measure, the Government has introduced legislation to support communities wishing to ban home brew.


Finding the Balance: the Queensland Alcohol Action Plan 2003-04 to 2006-07 promotes community-based approaches to the issues surrounding alcohol misuse. These focus on strengthening prevention activities and building individual resilience. The success of the plan will rely on strong partnerships between local governments, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## Homelessness

The Queensland Government Coordinated Response to Homelessness 2005-2009 aims to provide a range of better coordinated, regional responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness. The Government is trialling new ways of responding to homelessness and taking a practical and collaborative approach to dealing with the problem.

## Preventing and responding to emergencies and disasters

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have a high level of need for pre-hospital care services as a result of relatively high injury rates. The geographic isolation, tropical climate and limited community infrastructure of many of these communities make them especially vulnerable



in times of emergencies and disasters. Under the Department of Emergency Services Indigenous Australian Service Delivery Enhancement Package, Queensland Ambulance Service field officers have been employed at Coen, Kowanyama, Horn Island and Cooktown. In addition, first-aid training and emergency response equipment have been provided to rural and remote communities and outstations, and a coordinated emergency services facility is being established on Palm Island.

Further initiatives to build safer communities are included in the Strategic Plan for Indigenous Australians 2005–2008. The plan promotes the development of flexible, innovative and culturally appropriate service delivery models (for example, through community-based multi-agency action plans) and builds the capacity of the community to create safer environments. It focuses on both service delivery and employment opportunities.

In many rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, emergency and disaster relief is provided through a range of volunteer services. These services are provided by permanent staff working alongside, and supporting, volunteers in organisations such as the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Australian Volunteer Coastguard and Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland. Because the Department of Emergency Services is represented in every community in Queensland, it is ideally situated to tap into the considerable knowledge and expertise in communities, and has developed positive partnerships at the local level, particularly with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

#### CASE STUDY

### **Government and community talking and working together at Mornington Island**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in the Mornington Island region now have access to improved and affordable telecommunications services as a result of a joint project between community members, the Mornington Shire Council and the Queensland Government.

The aim of the Mornington Island Project, also known as Kanyamari, which in the local Lardil language means 'to talk to someone', was to provide affordable, accessible and high-quality telecommunications access for local communities and outstations on Mornington, Bentick and Forsythe Islands. The Mornington Shire Council and local community identified the need for improved public telephone access to increase public safety and to provide better access to health services and other key services that are vital in supporting and strengthening local families.

The council and the former Department of Innovation and Information Economy's Infrastructure Development Branch (now part of the Department of Public Works) collaborated to develop a Networking the Nation funding submission to the Commonwealth Government. The submission was successful, with the council securing funding to introduce a mobile telephony network; enhance the community VHF two-way radio network for Mornington Island communities and outstations, and communities at Bentick and Forsythe Islands; and reinstate basic telephone services to the Gununa community on Mornington Island.

The Mornington Shire Council and the Department of Public Works collaborated to successfully develop and implement the project.

The project was recently completed, and residents on Mornington, Bentick and Forsythe Islands now have access to improved and affordable telecommunications services to support social, economic and cultural activities in the region.

## Healthy living

The inequity in the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders compared to most other Queenslanders is evident in their health status. Average life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is around 20 years less than the Queensland average. Rates of illness and injury are similarly disproportionate.

A small but significant proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live long and healthy lives, indicating that much of this inequality in health status can be prevented.

The Queensland Government recognises that to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it must reduce some health risks that are beyond the traditional boundaries of the health sector and ensure that the essentials for health are accessible. This requires a strong, integrated health system coordinated across governments.

### Holistic health

The Government is committed to implementing the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. This framework conceptualises health in its broadest social, cultural and spiritual contexts, and recognises their impact on social and emotional wellbeing and health. The Queensland Government's implementation plan deals with health needs across the life span, from preconception, pregnancy, birth, infancy, childhood and adolescence through to adulthood and old age.

The plan identifies five priority action areas:

- strengthening responses for prevention of, and early intervention in, chronic disease
- supporting healthy and safe children, young people and families
- strengthening responses to alcohol and substance misuse
- improving environmental health
- improving data, research and evidence.

The overall aim is to deliver effective primary health-care services that are essential to health protection, early detection and treatment of illnesses, and disease management.

### Children's health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have significant and persistent differentials in their health compared to other children and young people. These include maternal and infant mortality; low birthweight; rheumatic heart disease; and ear, respiratory and skin infections. Such preventable conditions contribute to poor health and social outcomes in both the short and long terms.

Reducing this health inequality is a priority for the Queensland Government. Queensland Health is currently developing a strategic policy specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people's health, which focuses on health promotion; prevention; early detection of conditions; and intervention. The Government will continue to work in partnership with communities and the private, public and non-government sectors to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people — for example, through strategies to promote healthy lifestyles, increase protective factors and reduce risk factors.

Recent research indicates that maximum health gains can be achieved by investing in:

- an evidence-based system and key developmental life-stage strategies in primary prevention, early intervention and quality treatment and care
- social and environmental determinants of health
- access to skilled and appropriate health care.



## Alcohol and drug abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse poses serious health threats in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Through Meeting Challenges, Making Choices, the Queensland Government and communities are working together to curb alcohol-related crime and violence and thus improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A number of other initiatives complement Meeting Challenges, Making Choices including:

- drug, alcohol and tobacco management programs
- the Queensland Mental Health Policy Statement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which outlines guidelines and protocols for mental health practitioners and emergency departments
- the Growth Assessment and Action in Early Childhood Program in North Queensland. This includes Growing Strong: Feeding You and Your Baby, a project that aims to enhance the nutritional status of mothers and the growth of children.

Meeting the Challenges of Substance Misuse also provides strategies to deal with the demand for alcohol and other substances in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This initiative aims to build and support — in a spirit of shared responsibility and reciprocity — strong families and community environments where alcohol and substance abuse is 'not on'. It builds on the significant progress of Meeting Challenges, Making Choices and positions the Queensland Government to achieve more, in partnership with other governments, the business sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## Collaboration on video about volatile substance misuse

The Inala Community Justice Group and state and local government agencies were becoming increasingly concerned about the growing incidence of paint sniffing by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in the Inala area of South-East Queensland. This practice was having a detrimental impact on local families, culture and the health of young people.

Young people in the area who had been involved in paint sniffing, and many members of the Inala community, also recognised its harmful physical and social effects and wanted to prevent other young people from engaging in the practice.

In February 2004, the Inala Community Justice Group (CJG) convened a one-day workshop for State Government agencies, the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and key community-based organisations to develop joint responses to paint sniffing. As a result of the workshop, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy worked in partnership with the Inala CJG and their youth group to secure the support of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Creative Industries Faculty to produce a short video with a preventive message about paint sniffing.

The video was made by and for local youth. Its aim is to promote strong families, strong cultures and healthy living by curbing the incidence of paint sniffing by local youth.

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy supported the Inala CJG and QUT production team to negotiate local cultural protocols, shared responsibilities, roles of all stakeholders and agreement on the message of the video.

QUT students worked collaboratively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth during the filming, editing and production of the video to share video production skills. Several of the young people involved in the project are now keen to undertake formal studies in video production and obtain employment in this field.

The video was completed in July 2004 and has been viewed by respected members of the community. It will be screened at local health and medical service providers' offices, youth group meetings, Inala CJG meetings and other community events, in accordance with community protocols.

This initiative has led the Inala CJG and QUT to identify and agree on future collaborative video productions to promote the work of the group to the local community and other stakeholders.





## Primary health care

The sustained delivery of comprehensive primary health care is fundamental to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health recognises that in most cases the broad range of services incorporated in primary health care will be delivered by a range of health-care providers. The Queensland Government is working to fulfil its obligations in primary health-care delivery by providing clinical services; public health programs in areas such as immunisation, nutrition and social and emotional wellbeing; and support for communities to deal with local health issues.

The effectiveness of all of these services and programs is being bolstered through ongoing efforts to enhance the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce. Already, environmental health workers have been trained and employed in Cape York.

## Preventive health

The delivery of programs to prevent chronic disease is an important precursor to successful primary health care. Such programs focus on people's fundamental requirements — for example, nutritious food, physical exercise, clean drinking water, functional housing, and clean, liveable and sustainable physical environments. All are prerequisites for good health.

The Queensland Government is working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and the Commonwealth Government to provide for these health needs. For example, housing is being upgraded and constructed in accordance with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing and Infrastructure Bilateral Agreements. As a complement to this, the Government is committed to exploring options for home ownership in discrete communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have a higher birth rate than other Queensland women and are likely to give birth at a younger age. In 2000 the mortality rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies was three times above the national average. The Queensland Government is dealing with this serious inequity through maternal and child health initiatives for pregnant women and their children. In the long term, such initiatives will help to prevent chronic disease in adults.

Health Promotion Queensland is also working to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Current projects include improving access to health information for people in Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama, Lockhart River and Napranum; a food and nutrition project at Yarrabah; and statewide research into cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption by young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, particularly those who are pregnant or caring for very young children.

Preventive health is also a focus of the Department of Emergency Services' model for pre-hospital care in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The model involves the establishment of Queensland Ambulance Service field offices staffed by permanent field officers. These officers provide training to community members in injury prevention and first aid, and training to primary health-care workers in the use of emergency equipment such as defibrillators.

## Environmental health

Environmental hazards such as high dust and pest levels and inadequate sewerage infrastructure are obstacles to maintaining healthy communities. A range of interagency initiatives is in place to overcome environmental health problems in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, the Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001-2006 includes initiatives to assist communities to identify their specific environmental health needs.

The Queensland Government recognises the need for a holistic, coordinated and collaborative response across Government to environmental health, including identifying and managing hazards in communities. To this end, the Government will develop a response plan covering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing, community infrastructure and environmental health.



## Improving emergency services through community engagement

The Department of Emergency Services is working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make their communities safer places to live.

This partnership, which developed in response to locally identified needs, has resulted in a range of services and programs that ensure people in Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait receive assistance in times of accidents, emergencies and disasters. It also involves collaborative work on building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to prepare for, prevent and respond to emergency situations.

Community engagement has been a key feature of the development and provision of these services. Thanks to extensive local input, service delivery models and safety programs are innovative, flexible, and effective in meeting the unique needs of each community. As part of its commitment to community engagement, the department has also implemented an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and training program to ensure it is more representative of the communities it serves.

One of the major initiatives undertaken has been the Queensland Ambulance Service's provision of much-needed pre-hospital care in isolated communities in Cape York and the Torres Strait. Services are based on an innovative model which integrates pre-hospital care with primary health-care systems. This model ensures services are tailored to the specific health and cultural needs of individual communities.

As part of this initiative, the department has appointed field officers whose roles include:

- working with councils, health-care centres, health workers, volunteers from the State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire Service (RFS), and staff from other services to improve pre-hospital emergency care and non-emergency health-care transport
- providing training and development in pre-hospital emergency care to health employees, security officers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health-care workers, SES and RFS volunteers and other nominated members of the community
- working with communities to increase their capacity to respond effectively to emergencies and injuries — for example, through ongoing training in basic and advanced first aid; injury prevention; and basic life support
- assisting with responses to pre-hospital care emergencies
- assisting with health promotion and health education programs.

Community engagement processes have led to the development of community action plans detailing the commitments of the communities and the department.

## Sport and recreation

Participating in sport and recreation has both direct and indirect health benefits. The Government recognises that sport and active recreation help to maintain fitness and wellbeing, and provide diversionary, esteem-building experiences that enhance the overall wellbeing of individuals and the community. In keeping with its commitment to healthy living, the Government has developed infrastructure and employed recreation officers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly as part of its strategy to reduce alcohol and substance abuse.

Other activities under way include training and mentoring by industry leaders, and special support for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clubs and organisations. School children are also encouraged to participate in a range of sporting activities through the leadership of elite athletes. These athletes teach basic skills to children and impart nutrition information, and coaching and mentoring skills to local community leaders.

## Skilled and prosperous people and communities

Education and training are the basis for sustainable employment, economic development and successful participation in the modern economy. If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are to have the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders, they must achieve similar education outcomes and have the same training opportunities.

The Queensland Government recognises the critical need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their challenge to achieve bicultural competence. This ability to participate successfully both in their first cultures and in the contemporary economy is crucial to increased prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. In response to these needs, the Government is providing tailored education programs; vocational education, employment and training; business opportunities; and support for economic development.



## Bridge project links Government and community

The Georgina River Bridge project at Camooweal in north-west Queensland grew out of the need for local Aboriginal communities and the wider community to have continuous access to the Barkly Highway.

Community members and travellers were frequently cut off from the Barkly Highway and key services when the former Georgina River Bridge was flooded. Continuous access to the highway through a new bridge was needed to ensure personal safety and maintain access to health and other services.

Rebuilding the bridge was a successful partnership based on shared responsibility and reciprocity between local Aboriginal groups (represented by the Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation), the Department of Main Roads, Barclay Mowlem Construction Ltd and RoadTek, resulting in the Georgina River Alliance.

In replacing the bridge, the alliance recognised the need to provide training and employment opportunities for local Aboriginal community members and to catalogue and preserve important artefacts from the construction site dating back thousands of years.

More than 17 000 artefacts of local, national and international archaeological significance were excavated during the construction phase. The focus on cultural respect and understanding resulted in the project winning a special award for Queensland in the cultural heritage category of the 2003 Case Earth Awards.

During the construction phase, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples comprised more than half of the crew employed on the project.

Through effective community engagement and shared responsibility, the Georgina River Alliance was able to meet the employment, training and cultural needs of the local Aboriginal communities while ensuring year-round access to the Barkly Highway for local people and travellers.

The Georgina River Alliance won the Department of Employment and Training Indigenous Peoples' Training Initiative Award in the 2003 Queensland Training Awards. The initiative also won an award in the Joint Venture (Medium Business) category of the 2003 Queensland Government Reconciliation Awards.



## Leadership and capacity building

The key to effective community development is to draw on the capacities, skills and assets of the communities themselves. Harnessing these abilities and assets presents a capacity-building challenge and requires a commitment from the Government and communities to an appropriate balance between Government-delivered services and services delivered by the community. The Queensland Government recognises the commitment this requires to building greater organisational capacity both in Government agencies and in communities.

The Government also recognises that organisational capacity is inextricably linked to leadership. Communities have demonstrated that they need to be able to make decisions for themselves if they are to achieve social and economic growth. This will not happen without strong local leadership.

The Government has made a significant investment in leadership initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. These include the Community Governance Improvement Strategy, the Cape York Strategic Leaders Program, the Indigenous Business Development Program's business capacity-building initiatives, and the establishment of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. However, a greater commitment is required from agencies if the leadership and governance capacity of communities is to be improved and sustained.

The Department of Communities has completed an initial mapping of capacity-building initiatives across Queensland Government agencies. Under Partnerships Queensland, it is recommended that a percentage of any community funding be allocated to training and development. This will focus on building the capacity of individuals, families and non-profit organisations to contribute to the development of their communities.

## Promoting the sustainable use of land and sea

Access to and management of traditional land and sea are integral to maintaining the social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. Land and sea country are also resources through which many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals can create wealth.

The draft Looking After Country Together strategic partnership framework aims to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders' access to and management of land and sea country. This initiative should contribute significantly to the economic and social wellbeing of communities.

## Improving participation and outcomes in education

One of the major initiatives for improving education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is the Partners for Success strategy implemented by the Department of Education and the Arts. This initiative recognises that education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are influenced by cultural factors.

Partners for Success promotes closer partnerships between parents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other agencies to increase school attendance rates, improve literacy and numeracy levels, and encourage students to stay at school to Year 12. It also fosters leadership and employment opportunities to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and employees with better life chances. Partners for Success has been implemented across the state since 2004 and is ongoing.

## Western Cape College — the first three years

Over the past three years, Western Cape College has improved education outcomes for students in Cape York by improving pathways to further education and training, and providing facilities, support and options to meet students' needs.

Established in 2002, the college caters for students from preschool through to Year 12 at campuses in Mapoon, Weipa, Napranum and Aurukun.

The Aurukun and Weipa campuses offer academic and vocational programs to students in the post-compulsory years of schooling. Western Cape College is making significant gains in this stage of schooling.

The college's 2003 Year 12 destination survey showed that 96% of all students and 88% of all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students who completed Year 12 were in either full-time employment or full-time study. All local Aboriginal students (that is, students who are members of the Traditional Owner groups acknowledged under the Western Cape Co-existence Agreement) who completed Year 12 in 2003 were in either full-time employment or study.

Students at the college's Weipa campus have benefited from recent curriculum reforms in much the same way as other students across the state. Data from 2004 show that the college's students are performing at or above the state average for the New Basics approach to curriculum.

As a result of the college's success, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the Weipa campus rose from 272 in 2001 to 431 in 2004. Years 6 and 7 students from Napranum were transferred to the Weipa campus in 2002 to give them a more challenging learning environment, and several children from other year levels transferred to the campus voluntarily. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in Years 11 and 12 have also increased.

The college has formed partnerships with local organisations and businesses to provide students with education and training programs and opportunities that meet their needs and interests. Together, the college, Albatross Resort and Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility (a training centre, school hostel and accommodation and catering facility) have formed Western Cape Artists, a training and enterprise incubation program and gallery for young people and adults.

The college also participates in the Aurukun Arts Strategy which was developed to promote and market local arts and crafts. As part of this strategy, teachers are employed at the Aurukun campus to teach arts and crafts, artists from the Aurukun Arts Centre provide mentoring, and students work on arts enterprise projects. During 2005, the college has played a key role in expanding the strategy by developing stronger links and further partnerships with Arts Queensland, TAFE and local councils. Through these partnerships, the college will be able to offer online certificate programs in art in conjunction with Cairns School of Distance Education and Trinity Bay State High School.

In line with the senior schooling component of Education and Training Reforms for the Future, the college has formalised partnerships with Tropical North Queensland TAFE, the Department of Employment and Training, Comalco, Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility and local communities.

A TAFE manager has been appointed to the college to incorporate TAFE programs into senior schooling and make these programs more readily available to adults, trainees and apprentices in the Western Cape. A training manager, funded by the Department of Employment and Training, has also been appointed to develop employment strategies in Mapoon, Weipa, Napranum and Aurukun.

In conjunction with Comalco, the college is developing a database to match young people past the age of compulsory schooling with training and employment opportunities.

The Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility plays an important role in planning and running many of the college's senior schooling programs. Through this facility, students are studying programs in hospitality, horticulture, arts, child care, retail, work readiness, driver training, health, business, literacy and basic trade skills.



## Promoting accessible and relevant training opportunities

Vocational education and training for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are being promoted through a number of Government programs and strategies.

School-based apprenticeships are one strategy used in Partners for Success to train young people for employment. Training and employment opportunities are also available through other agencies. For example, apprenticeships are provided through the QBuild Indigenous Training and Employment Program, and traineeships through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing in the Department of Housing.

In addition, communities and the Government are forming partnerships to achieve better training and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through a range of initiatives implemented by the Department of Employment and Training. These are provided under SmartVET — Skilling for the Smart State.

## Creating wealth through sustainable employment and diversification of the economic base

Achieving the goal of 'skilled and prosperous people and communities' requires a commitment to increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In keeping with this commitment, the Queensland Government has extended the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative to 2006–07. This initiative provides disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers with access to work experience, skills development, apprenticeships and traineeships. It also gives them intensive support to progress to further education and training and into sustainable employment.

As part of this initiative, the Government provides tailored assistance to increase and support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. For example, funding is provided for employment and training support officers and managers to develop specific employment and training strategies and plans. These build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by providing culturally appropriate support and mentoring aimed at increasing the retention and completion rates of apprentices, trainees and vocational students.

The strategies and plans also support the implementation of the Indigenous Employment Policy for Queensland Government Building and Civil Construction Projects — IEP (20% Policy). This policy aims to employ local Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in designated communities.

Queensland Government agencies are working towards increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in line with equal employment opportunity policy targets. The Department of Employment and Training's Wal-Meta Unit (meaning 'learn and grow') works with agencies through a range of strategies to increase their employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples — for example, by providing cultural awareness training.

In Queensland, there is also a strong emphasis on TAFE as a pathway to personal development, employment and economic development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through enhanced participation, completion and achievement rates in higher-level certificate courses and transition to employment.

The Government will continue its support for economic development and business opportunities through initiatives such as the proposed Queensland Indigenous Economic Development and Participation Strategy. The Cape York Partnerships Economic Development Policy Framework forms part of this strategy.

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In addition, the Government has established the Indigenous Business Development program, which includes grants programs for business capacity building and the establishment of businesses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A range of initiatives can be funded through these programs, including business plans, feasibility studies and capital for business start-up for projects that have the potential to be commercially viable.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are receiving assistance to establish viable art enterprises and develop export markets for their artwork through the Indigenous Arts Export Strategy and the Queensland Indigenous Art Marketing and Export Agency. Two initiatives — the development and launch of the 'Virtual Gatherings' website and an international exhibition in Berlin — have helped increase international exposure for the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry and individual artists. The Queensland Indigenous Art Marketing and Export Agency will continue to promote Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks throughout the world.

Strong community governance is the key to economic development and prosperity. New laws have been enacted to give former Aboriginal community councils the same authority and status as all other councils. These laws require Aboriginal shire councils to achieve the same standards of governance as those set for other local governments in Queensland. The intent of these laws is supported by the Community Governance Improvement Strategy, which will ensure that councils have the capacity and the tools they need for effective and accountable community governance.

### **Mapoon community commercial fishing enterprise**

A small-scale fishing enterprise, initially focused on crabbing, has been operating in Mapoon since January 2003 with considerable success. The enterprise was conceived by the community with initial business planning done by the Balkanu Development Corporation and Westpac Banking Corporation as partners.

Operations are a joint venture between Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council and a private company, utilising the Community General Fisheries Permit and the commercial licence of the private company. The Commonwealth and Queensland Governments provided funding for the enterprise as part of their commitment to the Cape York Partnerships strategy. Primary objectives of the project are to provide opportunities for employment and skill development in the community, while building technical capacity for future business expansion. Operations have expanded to include gill netting, mainly for barramundi.

The transfer of skills resulting from the joint venture with an experienced partner has been a major benefit for the community. For example, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to undertake training to be eligible for a commercial fisher licence. Many have also gained full-time or part-time employment and traineeships. Trainees gain accredited sea time logged towards a coxswain's licence, along with industry exposure and on-the-job practical training in areas such as small engine repairs and maintenance, product handling, marketing, and species targeting.

The success of the enterprise has exceeded targets, leading to accelerated progress through the first and second phases of business development. Product sales volumes are driving increases in operational capacity that will support moves in the longer term to buy out the non-Indigenous partner once full business capacity is developed.

In recognition of the benefits it has brought the community, the Mapoon fishing enterprise received a Highly Commended award in the 2004 Queensland Government Reconciliation Awards for Business.



## The way ahead

Partnerships Queensland provides a clear direction for current and future efforts to achieve the vision of a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders — a future in which they have their cultures affirmed, heritage sustained and the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders.

In establishing a higher level of policy integration and cohesion than ever before, Partnerships Queensland lifts the bar for the actions of all parties — for the Government, both in individual agency performance and in interagency cooperation, and for communities, individuals, non-government service providers and the private sector.

In this new strategic environment, business will be done in a new way through mechanisms that have proved most successful under current key policies. These mechanisms are:

- community engagement
- improved governance
- better performing and more accountable service providers
- shared responsibility
- capacity building and leadership in both the community and the government sectors.

To maximise the effectiveness of these mechanisms, all parties need to focus on outcomes. Continuous monitoring of these outcomes will help to ensure real progress is made in creating a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

There is no single way to meet the varied needs of diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Government recognises that systems must be in place to identify and respond effectively to the needs of each community. Whatever the context, however, the underlying principles of Partnerships Queensland — equity, transparency and accountability — need to be applied and maintained by all partners.

## Community engagement

Community engagement is fundamental to the Queensland Government's new way of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is also an approach that the Government is currently employing successfully in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### Current processes

Partnerships Queensland will incorporate and build on current processes and arrangements for community engagement. These include:

- negotiation tables
- Government champions
- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy regional offices
- regional advisory bodies.



### Negotiation tables

Negotiation tables are the main method used in many Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to resolve priority issues at the local level. They involve a sustained process of consultation, planning and negotiation between community leaders and local, state and federal government agency representatives. In some cases Government champions lead this process (see opposite page).

Negotiation tables draw together the efforts and contributions of all parties — government agencies; national, regional and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations; community groups; and the private and philanthropic sectors — to improve the quality of life of community members.

There are six main steps in the negotiation table process:

1. identification of community needs
2. creation of a whole-of-community plan that identifies community needs and aspirations
3. response from the Government at the negotiation table
4. development of a mutually agreed community action plan and shared responsibility agreement that clearly define the commitments of all participants
5. development of Government service delivery responses
6. performance measurement and reporting.

Negotiation tables have been held in many communities under Meeting Challenges, Making Choices and other initiatives. Under Partnerships Queensland, the Government is committed to extending the negotiation table process beyond designated communities to embrace communities in regional, urban, rural and remote areas with demonstrated need.

The negotiation table process is founded on principles of reciprocity, and mutual responsibility and accountability for resolving issues. It recognises that improvements in the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are most likely to occur when governments and citizens share responsibility for achieving agreed outcomes. Negotiation tables are most effective when they are driven by a philosophy of co-production: communities drive the agenda and the Government responds by negotiating coordinated resources for improved services and service delivery.

Improvements to community service delivery arrangements will complement community action plans and shared responsibility agreements. These plans and agreements detail the reciprocal responsibilities of governments and communities regarding issues identified at negotiation tables, such as child safety.

The involvement of all relevant parties in the development of community action plans and shared responsibility agreements will help to ensure that they are realistic and achievable, and that they take account of community obligations and budgetary constraints.

At the central level over the next year, a range of response plans will be developed across the Government. These response plans will identify the most effective actions and leverage points to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The development of response plans will facilitate greater interaction between agencies and encourage them to consider how their program development and service delivery can improve outcomes previously outside their domain. This will help to ensure that response plans provide a focused, cooperative and cost-effective approach to achieving the Partnerships Queensland vision.



Service delivery plans will be developed from the bottom up as a result of negotiation tables. They will operationalise response plans at the local level and, over time, will complement and inform the review of response plans.

Depending on circumstances, negotiation tables may be locally or regionally (cluster) oriented. They may also be issues-based. A cluster negotiation table may be convened when a group of communities has identified a common issue and agreed that there would be advantages in negotiating cross-community resolutions. It applies the same process as a community negotiation table, but with a focus on issues that affect several communities — for example, land issues that transcend community boundaries and are more aligned with the boundaries of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.

- The private sector is recognised in the negotiation table process as a valuable partner in the community. Negotiation tables and community action planning bring government, community and business together to plan and deliver services jointly. This enables communities to build on private sector support and expertise to advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development. It also expands the workforce potentially available to the private sector.
- The Commonwealth Government is a key partner in the negotiation table process. The Queensland Government hopes to strengthen its collaboration with the Commonwealth as part of its commitment to the Council of Australian Governments Reconciliation Framework. This framework specifically seeks to improve all government efforts to provide a better quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Negotiation tables bring Commonwealth agencies together with other levels of government to advance cooperation and collaboration at the local level and maximise efforts to meet locally identified needs.

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### ***Government champions***

Government champions are chief executive officers (directors-general) of Queensland Government agencies who are assigned to a number of remote communities to represent the Government in planning and delivering community-specific services. The role requires them to support communities in developing solutions and responding to issues of community concern. In Meeting Challenges, Making Choices communities, Government champions are playing an important role in negotiation tables.

Government champions also monitor the quality of the relationships between partners, including the Commonwealth Government, to ensure a sound basis for ongoing sustainable partnerships. They offer communities a partner with the capacity to harness combined agency resources so that governments deliver their part of agreed actions.

### ***Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy regional offices***

The regional offices of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy provide a link between government agencies and communities. Their charter is to facilitate government engagement with communities and coordinate united efforts, not only across Queensland Government agencies but also between tiers of government. The regional offices have a pivotal role in building relationships of trust between the community and government.

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy's regional directors support and advise the Government champions. They also monitor performance on agreed actions in community action plans and shared responsibility agreements developed through negotiation tables. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy also provides government participants with advice and support on protocols that build good relationships with each community.

### Advisory arrangements

In June 2004, the Queensland Government launched a package of new arrangements for engagement and coordination within regional Queensland. These arrangements include:

- a new model for regional managers forums, to be called regional managers coordination networks, with a mandate to assist agencies achieve their outcomes through better regional engagement and coordination
- a new model for ministerial regional community forums that retains four forums each year with ministerial attendance, enabling better consideration of regional issues and a clearer focus on delivering local outcomes.

To further ensure responsiveness, strategic policy setting and Government priority setting, it is important that members of the Government meet regularly with representatives of peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and stakeholders. Community cabinets and ministerial regional community forums also bring these parties together in various locations.

The new way of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders involves broadening arrangements for receiving their advice. A combination of advisory mechanisms will be used to maximise local and regional input and to ensure services and initiatives are tailored to the needs of particular stakeholders and particular issues. The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will continue to engage with other leaders and host specialist forums to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs and aspirations are heard and acted on.

The Queensland Government will continue to work in partnership with peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. The current cooperative relationship between the Queensland Government and the Torres Strait Regional Authority will be maintained.

Planning undertaken by the previously existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission regional councils will help inform Queensland Government activity at the local level. The Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government's new Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination. The aim of this office is to improve whole-of-government service delivery among Commonwealth agencies through the Indigenous coordination centres that have replaced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services regional offices. The centres will be modelled on the Council of Australian Governments' trial sites initiative and, as such, will aim to build local and regional partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Community engagement into the future

Partnerships Queensland provides opportunities for enhancing community engagement and maximising its effectiveness as a mechanism for the new way of doing business. Primarily, this involves:

- the expansion of the negotiation table process
- the establishment of ministerial round tables.

These moves will also ensure processes for community engagement operationalise the National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (see page 1) and assist communities to engage the private and philanthropic sectors.



### *Expansion of negotiation tables*

To date, negotiation tables have taken place in a number of discrete communities. Through Partnerships Queensland, negotiation tables will be expanded across the state and be the main means of achieving outcomes at the community level.

Under each key goal, there is an opportunity for a range of negotiation table processes — whether regional, cluster, urban or issues-based — to be trialled and, where successful, implemented to resolve issues as they relate to appropriate groups of communities. The expansion of the negotiation table process is based on a commitment to assess learnings from negotiation tables held to date.

Where appropriate, negotiation tables will link communities — whether urban, regional or remote — to government programs and processes that can assist them achieve local outcomes. The Department of Housing's Community Renewal Program is a good example. Through this program, the department works with other Government agencies, local governments and communities to develop initiatives in targeted areas in response to locally identified needs — for example, to deliver services, develop infrastructure or amenities, or build community capacity. 'Seed funding' is also provided for initiatives developed under the program.

### *Ministerial round tables*

A new process of ministerial round tables hosted by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy potentially offers further opportunities for community engagement. These round tables will initiate high-level discussions about social, economic, environmental and justice issues and lead to initiatives aimed at achieving real change at the community level. The outcomes, which will need to be negotiated and formally agreed to by all parties, will be based on partnerships between the Government, communities and members of the business and non-government sectors.

The round tables will be facilitated by appropriate public figures and include representatives of various interest groups, invited by the Minister. Participants will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and members of the wider community from a range of areas — for example, business, government, academia and the non-government sector. It is envisaged that four round tables will be held each year, with each one focusing on a different Partnerships Queensland goal.

The outcomes of the round tables will feed into and inform regional and local mechanisms including regional managers coordination networks, Indigenous initiatives subgroups of these networks (see page 35) and negotiation tables. A report on outcomes of each ministerial round table will be provided to the Partnerships Queensland Chief Executive Officers Committee and Senior Officers Group for information, advice and action across the Government.

## Improved governance

To attain the levels of service and performance expected under Partnerships Queensland, and to reach the bar that has been set for improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Government and communities must each establish and maintain high standards of governance. This will provide a firm foundation for economic development and the enhanced opportunities it will generate. This, in turn, depends on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples making land and waters work for them, and achieving sound levels of education and good health.

### Communities

Much of the work undertaken to achieve the goals of Partnerships Queensland — and the better future it offers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples — will be based on negotiated partnerships between communities and the Government. Action and engagement at the local level are necessary for the success of these partnerships. This commitment can bring the community and the relevant authorities together and ensure the necessary follow-through on actions decided at negotiation tables.

The South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026, which builds on existing Government achievements and develops strategies for emerging regional issues, is a good example of the commitment to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. An engagement officer has been employed and has established a working group to ensure the plan accommodates the needs of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

The Government has enacted new legislation to prepare the way for improved governance in Aboriginal communities. Previously, most Deed of Grant in Trust communities operated under a separate governance framework from the one applied to other local governments in Queensland. After a transition period, the new legislation will end this differentiation between Aboriginal communities and other communities. Importantly, it will ensure Aboriginal shire councils have the same authority and status as other councils throughout the state.

Those who have felt stigmatised and marginalised by 'living under a separate Act' have welcomed this move. Councils in Deed of Grant in Trust communities will now be expected, by the Government and by the people they serve, to achieve the same standards of good governance as other local governments.

At the same time, the best-practice local government model is being applied to Aboriginal shire councils in a way that takes account of the unique circumstances and governance challenges of these communities. The new legislation makes allowance for some flexibility in the way Aboriginal communities elect their councils. It also gives councils the scope to devolve their many and varied responsibilities to community decision-making committees.

The changes will improve current practices and accountability in community governance and enable councils to restructure their local arrangements to better meet community needs. Being able to establish committees, and thus spread their current burden of decision making, will allow councils to focus more closely on core local government responsibilities. This move will also encourage community members to become more involved in governance and service delivery.

For the new community governance arrangements to be successful, local councils must increase their capacity to meet the standards expected of them. To achieve this goal, the Government has initiated a comprehensive Community Governance Improvement Strategy. This four-year program will provide training for elected councillors and cover the important areas of corporate governance and leadership. Other matters to be covered include alternative service-delivery models; support services to councils; strategic partnerships with peak industry bodies and the private sector; staff attraction and retention; and efficient use of council funding.



Legislation applying to the governance of Torres Strait Islander communities is currently being reviewed.

All of these measures refocus community governance on the central concerns of improving local government service delivery and achieving better outcomes for residents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## Government

To meet community needs and expectations, the Government must reach high standards in individual agency performance and in interagency cooperation. Partnerships Queensland introduces new governance arrangements that will lift whole-of-government performance to these standards.

At the central level, the new arrangements will enable a complementary structure of both strategic and operational planning. At the local and regional levels, these arrangements will assist a place-management focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and enable devolved decision making.

Under these arrangements, Government agencies will be collectively accountable to the Government for the performance outcomes of Partnerships Queensland. Integral to this collective responsibility is the guidance of the Government champions and the Partnerships Queensland Chief Executive Officers Committee. Chief executive officers will be able to share experience and information gained from individual community visits and to use this as a basis for whole-of-government consolidated action.

Government champions will regularly discuss progress towards community goals identified in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and submit a biannual report to the Government through the Partnerships Queensland Chief Executive Officers Committee. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will coordinate reporting.

Government champions will also develop policy responses and provide whole-of-government coordination within the public sector in accordance with Government priorities. They will be supported in this by the Partnerships Queensland Senior Officers Group that will simultaneously advise and act on the direction of the chief executive officers.

The Partnerships Queensland Chief Executive Officers Committee will oversee the Senior Officers Group and associated working groups on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy issues, some of which have been established and operational for some time in advancing particular key goals. The Partnerships Queensland Chief Executive Officers Committee will support the implementation of Partnerships Queensland across the Government and be responsible for providing leadership, fostering a shareholder-model approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs and overseeing the coordination and strategic policy direction of Partnerships Queensland.

It is envisaged that the Chief Executive Officers Committee will link with the Commonwealth Government's Secretaries Group on Indigenous Affairs through the Commonwealth representative on the committee. The Meeting Challenges, Making Choices strategy will remain a key priority of both the Chief Executive Officers Committee and the Senior Officers Group.

In regions with large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, Indigenous initiatives subgroups will be established under the regional managers coordination networks. These subgroups will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to achieve improved outcomes. Respective regional priorities will determine the agency membership, and the focus of the Indigenous initiatives subgroups.

Representatives of the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments will meet regularly to ensure state initiatives align with directions agreed federally through the Council of Australian Governments and the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. They will

provide high-level advice to governments on achieving strategic and sustainable partnerships between government, community and business sectors; identify key and emerging issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and propose innovative solutions developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to resolve these issues.

Furthermore, to effectively monitor whole-of-government progress towards achieving the goals of Partnerships Queensland, Queensland Government agencies will be required to report to the Government through the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy on:

- service delivery (every six months)
- progress under the outcome indicators of the Partnerships Queensland performance framework (every twelve months).

## Better performing and more accountable service providers

Partnerships Queensland recognises that real improvements in the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will only occur when there are real improvements in services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must have access to the same standard and range of services — in health, education, justice, housing and employment — as other Queenslanders. It is recognised, however, that community capacity building and high-quality service provision will evolve and require medium- to long-term investment strategies.

A key strategy in the Government's new way of doing business is to ensure service providers perform better and are more accountable to the communities they serve. In other words, they must raise the standard of services provided and continue to ensure these services meet their clients' needs. A key factor in meeting clients' needs will be ensuring services are responsive and sensitive to cultural considerations as well as social and economic considerations.

The community engagement and governance arrangements outlined earlier will help to achieve higher standards by devolving service delivery as much as possible to the local level. The increased emphasis on these arrangements will ensure more communities have a greater say in the type of services they receive, how these services are provided and how they can be made more responsive to local needs.

Those responsible for services at the local level include Commonwealth and Queensland Government agencies, local councils, non-government organisations and privately operated businesses. Improved governance and community engagement will increase the effectiveness of all these partners. Under the new way of doing business, they will also be encouraged to establish service contracts with local providers to ensure best-practice, outcomes-focused and performance-based arrangements for quality and standards. In time, the Government will move to a mode of service delivery in which performance agreements are the norm.

To minimise the administrative burden resulting from the generation of agencies' service contracts, it will be important to simplify and integrate paperwork as much as possible. One way of achieving this is by establishing, where possible and practicable, single service agreements between the Government and service providers.

As part of its strategy to improve services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Government will continue to devolve services as much as possible to the local level and encourage holistic approaches to service delivery. This involves putting combined services into the communities of clients, rather than in distant regional centres. Although it may take time to fully shift to this model of service delivery, interim steps can be taken. For example, if communities lack capable service providers and professional support, the Government can move services closer by clustering them in nearby towns or centres.

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Agencies will be encouraged to co-locate in service delivery hubs where the cost of resources is shared and service delivery is streamlined, coordinated and better performing. Single service agreements between the Government and these hubs will be based on a one-community – one-provider model, which will reduce reporting requirements and free up community capacity.

For devolved service delivery to be truly effective, and to shift capability to the local level as soon as possible, government and non-government agencies must 'invest locally' — that is, they must train and support people in the community to provide services. Under the new way of doing business, services will only be delivered on a regional basis where there is a lack of local capability or for reasons of economic scale.

## Shared responsibility

The new way of doing business is founded on shared responsibility. Engaging the community, improving governance and delivering better services depend on all parties understanding and meeting their responsibilities, both individually and collectively. Their full commitment and best efforts are crucial to building a future in which 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.

### Communities

Communities are responsible for:

- encouraging citizens to participate in community planning and decision making
- governing effectively
- communicating needs
- pursuing local solutions to local problems
- monitoring the effectiveness of services within the community.

### Government agencies

Queensland Government agencies are responsible for:

- developing and implementing strategies that align with the objectives of Partnerships Queensland
- ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives feature in departmental strategic and operational plans
- providing services at the local level wherever possible (or if this is not feasible, clustering services in nearby towns or regional centres)
- ensuring service levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders match those expected by all Queenslanders
- participating in negotiation tables to ensure efforts target needs
- participating in coordinating forums such as the Chief Executive Officers Committee, Senior Officers Group and regional managers coordination networks
- working effectively with other agencies to streamline and strengthen services
- participating in Queensland Government initiatives (for example, the development of reconciliation action plans) that promote agencies' accountability for service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- working in partnership with the Commonwealth Government to support the Council of Australian Governments' trial site in Cape York in order to:
  - establish a more coordinated approach to identifying community needs at the local level
  - implement public sector reform based on a whole-of-government, collaborative approach to developing more flexible programs and services based on each community's priorities
- reporting every six months to the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy on service delivery, which in turn reports every twelve months under the outcome indicators to the Queensland Government on whole-of-government progress towards achieving the goals of Partnerships Queensland.



## Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy is responsible for:

- leading and coordinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy across the state on behalf of the Queensland Government
- coordinating the whole-of-government development of processes and strategies that will lead to outcomes-focused and streamlined service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
- providing a coherent strategic policy framework within which Government agencies respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
- monitoring progress and reporting to the Government on behalf of all Queensland Government agencies
- supporting and improving community governance
- facilitating public sector reform to improve planning and service delivery at the local level
- assisting Queensland Government agencies to work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- providing secretariat services to the Chief Executive Officers Committee and Senior Officers Group
- supporting regional managers coordination networks.

## Service providers

Those delivering services are responsible for:

- high-quality and responsive service delivery
- transparent and equitable service provision
- accountable and efficient corporate governance.

All parties — communities, Government agencies and service providers — are responsible for maintaining a focus on outcomes.

## Capacity building and leadership in the community and government sectors

Capacity building in the community and government sectors must be a priority if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are to have improved opportunities and prospects.

Strong communities have the capacity to accommodate change, resolve problems, mobilise local people and resources, communicate widely, think strategically and make informed decisions. These are the skills that Partnerships Queensland aims to develop in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through capacity-building initiatives. Capacity building is necessary for communities to develop effective governance structures, gain political recognition, improve status, and participate in decision making that will have an impact on quality of life.

Strong leadership and greater community capacity go hand-in-hand. Strong leadership has a 'ripple' effect that builds the capacity of the whole community.

The development of strong, positive community leadership will not occur without deliberate action by individuals, communities and governments. Current leaders must be supported, and a greater number of community members must be encouraged and supported to develop leadership skills and take on leadership roles.

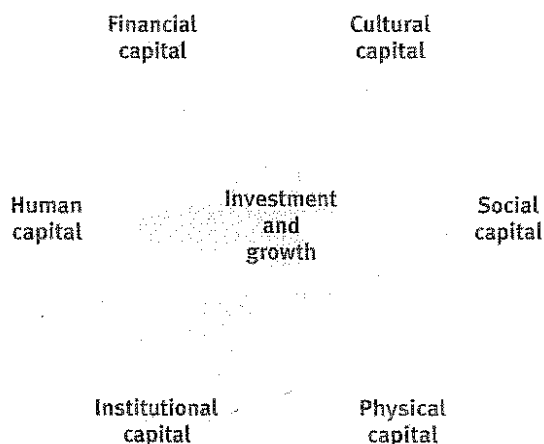
Community capacity-building and leadership development must be an integral part of a planned approach to involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and organisations in making decisions that affect their communities. Many individuals and organisations already have the skills and knowledge required to take on leadership roles. Government agencies need

to recognise, respect and build on what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to offer and ensure they all have the opportunity to participate fully in their local community and the wider society.

A commitment to community development must be backed up by balanced capital investment. As shown in the diagram below, six capital elements are essential, each of which must interlink:

- *cultural capital* that results in resilience and adaptability through affirming and sustaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and heritage
- *social capital* that results in greater community participation, responsibility, business–community partnerships, social cohesion and trust
- *physical capital* that results in essential community infrastructure, such as roads, buildings, water and sewerage
- *institutional capital* that results in law and order, appropriate governance structures and integrated planning, all of which optimise community participation
- *human capital* that results in high-performing people through investment in education and training, and health and social services
- *financial capital* that results in the economic growth and social wellbeing of communities through private and public sector employment, performance contracts and subsidy payments.

#### Balanced capital investment



Balanced capital investment will support the development of the partnership and governance mechanisms that are the basis for improved outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Government agencies have a major role to play in fostering and supporting community development. To fulfil this role, they must build the capacity of their own organisations to engage communities, support community leaders and coordinate their approaches to service delivery and funding. Partnerships Queensland provides the framework for capacity building in these areas across the Government.



## How do we know we are successful?

We will know we have been successful when we see sustained improvements in the major indicators of social and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. These improvements will be demonstrated by:

- reduced levels of violence against children, women and men in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- improved access to safe places and refuges from violence for women, children and young people
- improved responses to stressful, harmful and crisis situations in communities
- reduced rates of contact with the criminal justice system
- improved community participation in the administration of justice and in justice issues
- improved health outcomes and quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- improved health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- improved education and training qualifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the workforce, business sector and broader economy.

## Partnerships Queensland Performance Framework

The Partnerships Queensland Performance Framework will monitor the effectiveness of whole-of-government performance in achieving the vision that all 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.

### Indicators of success

The framework is based on a number of headline and supporting outcome indicators for monitoring how the Government's actions are making a difference towards achieving the goals of strong families, strong cultures; safe places; healthy living; and skilled and prosperous people and communities. The headline indicators are aligned in principle with the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Reporting Framework. They also align closely with the National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians.

Monitoring will involve measuring agencies' achievements in their delivery of programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes. The results of monitoring will form the basis of response plans that will guide collaborative strategic thinking across the Government and be comprehensively reviewed every three years.

Reported improvements in the outcome indicators will reflect the extent to which outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have improved in comparison to those for all other Queenslanders. If there have been effective policies in place, it is envisaged that improvements will be seen to occur over the medium to long term.

The performance framework is based on the premise that no single Government agency is solely responsible for improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Rather, agencies must accept joint responsibility. For example, although the Department of Education and the Arts is responsible for education outcomes in schools, these outcomes may be affected by factors outside the department's domain, such as overcrowded housing, hearing difficulties or poor nutrition. Other agencies are responsible for providing services and programs to meet children's needs in these areas and thus support their learning and development.

The following table indicates how the Government will measure its success and how the outcomes are interconnected: improvements which help to meet any one goal will positively affect results towards achieving other goals.

### Measuring success under Partnerships Queensland


What will we do?	How do we know we are successful?	Outcomes that we expect?
<b>Strong families, strong cultures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support families and communities</li> <li>• Promote and affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures</li> <li>• Create access to and management of land and sea country as a base for wellbeing and cultural affirmation</li> <li>• Encourage stronger involvement in and influence on natural resource management planning and policy</li> </ul>	Families and cultures will be stronger when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the level of violence against children, women and men in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is reduced</li> <li>• women, children and young people have improved access to safe places and refuges from violence</li> <li>• responses to stressful, harmful and crisis situations within communities are improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantiated child protection notifications, out-of-home care placements, re-substantiations, and placements in accordance with the Indigenous child placement principle</li> <li>• Family violence</li> <li>• Experience of discrimination and racism</li> <li>• Sustainable good governance and effective service delivery</li> <li>• Recognition of and access to homelands and valuing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by all Queenslanders</li> </ul>
<b>Safe places</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support communities to reduce the impacts of alcohol</li> <li>• Create a fair and equitable criminal justice system</li> <li>• Reduce the incidence of crime, especially interpersonal violence</li> <li>• Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build their capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from injuries, emergencies and disasters</li> </ul>	Safe places will exist when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland peoples' contact with the Queensland criminal justice system is reduced</li> <li>• management of justice issues is improved, including increased community involvement in local crime prevention initiatives and increased community support for community justice groups</li> <li>• Increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are provided with training in CPR, first aid, disaster management and rural fire management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsafe out-of-home care</li> <li>• Family violence</li> <li>• Contact with juvenile and adult justice systems (diversions, court appearances, court outcomes and detentions) and progression from the juvenile system to the adult system</li> <li>• Re-offending</li> <li>• Deaths in custody</li> <li>• Sustainable good governance and effective service delivery</li> </ul>

Goal	Priority Action Areas	Indicators
<b>Healthy living</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend to the social, cultural and environmental factors that affect health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Improve health outcomes through effective health programs and services</li> </ul>	Healthy living standards will be in place when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health outcomes and quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are improved</li> <li>• access to health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant and premature mortality</li> <li>• Low birthweight and achievement of developmental milestones</li> <li>• Preventable disability</li> <li>• Overcrowding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households</li> <li>• Environmental health, including safe and reliable water, functional sewerage and waste management systems in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities</li> <li>• Sustainable good governance and effective service delivery</li> </ul>
<b>Skilled and prosperous people and communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve education participation and outcomes</li> <li>• Promote stronger enterprise cultures and work practices</li> <li>• Promote accessible and relevant training opportunities</li> <li>• Create wealth through sustainable employment and diversification of the economic base</li> <li>• Promote the sustainable use of land- and sea-based resources in ways that optimise returns to local communities</li> </ul>	People and communities will be skilled and prosperous when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the education and training qualifications of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are improved</li> <li>• economic development and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities are improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School attendance, achievement and completion</li> <li>• Tertiary education and vocational training</li> <li>• Labour force participation, employment and unemployment</li> <li>• Benefit dependence, including families with dependent children on benefits</li> <li>• Skilled (managerial or professional) training and employment</li> <li>• Reduction in income differentials</li> <li>• Home ownership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</li> <li>• Early engagement in education</li> </ul>

\* Headline indicator areas are aligned with the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Reporting Framework (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision).

The Partnerships Queensland Performance Framework takes a life-stage approach to measuring outcomes. It identifies outcome indicators under each of the four goals and lists them under the following priority action areas:

- Healthy outcomes for babies (0-12 months)
- Optimal development in early childhood (13 months - 6 years)
- Successful childhood (7-14 years)
- Transition to adulthood (15-24 years)
- Healthy, prosperous and safe adulthood (25 years and over)
- Economic security and employment participation
- Cultural strength.



The performance framework also provides outcome indicators relating to the following overarching risk factors, which have been identified as having a significant impact on each of the five life stages listed on the previous page:

- Housing, community infrastructure and environmental health
- Crime and violence
- Family and community wellbeing.

The indicators will provide a picture of quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at each phase of their life. Response plans will be developed for each priority action area and each of the overarching risk factors.

The first performance framework report will establish benchmarks of levels of disadvantage from which trends can be measured. Future reports will demonstrate the success, or otherwise, of the partnerships approach to outcomes in specific areas — for example, preventable disease, employment, crime and violence.

The performance framework provides rigorous and unprecedented performance measurement and reporting. It will establish a stronger evidence base than is currently available. This will enable the Government and communities to see whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' quality of life is improving and better inform decision making. The framework will also provide the impetus to reconsider strategies, reallocate investment and adjust interventions, where required.

## Reporting

Partnerships Queensland's streamlined performance framework for monitoring progress towards its four goals requires that agencies report to the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy every six months on service delivery, and twelve months on their progress under the outcome indicators. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, in turn, will report to the Queensland Government. This whole-of-government reporting mechanism will be used to report to the Council of Australian Governments and the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, and on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Agencies will report against specific agreed outcome indicators that support the key goals of Partnerships Queensland. They will also provide supporting information on the effectiveness of agency-specific and whole-of-government actions towards achieving these goals.

The Partnerships Queensland Chief Executive Officers Committee, with support from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, will monitor, evaluate and make recommendations for change. This process will be ongoing.