NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

INQUIRY INTO

THE STRONGER FUTURES IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY BILL 2011

AND TWO RELATED BILLS

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. *The Committee requested copies of the 13 signed off Local Implementation Plans referred to by Minister McCarthy).*

Copies of the Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) have been provided directly to the Committee Secretariat via courier. The LIPs for each town are also available on the Northern Territory Government's (NTG) *Working Future* website http://www.workingfuture.nt.gov.au/growth_towns.html.

2. *The Committee requested the licensing records referred to regarding alcohol related violence and assaults, and reductions of those be provided.*

The NTG has committed $67.5 million over five years to roll out its Enough is Enough alcohol reforms. The attached Progress Reports show that since the reforms were introduced, there has been a reduction in alcohol related violence and assaults in the main centres.

In Tennant Creek, the increase in assaults can be attributed to increased police activity around domestic violence that has resulted in victims and witnesses feeling more confident to report assaults and improved systems to record reports of assaults.

In Nhulunbuy, where the population is very low, statistics can be highly volatile. The latest published crime statistics for Nhulunbuy are provided and demonstrate this volatility clearly.

Even though it is early days, there are very promising signs that the reforms are working and the NTG recommends that the Committee take the time to read the two Enough is Enough Alcohol Reform Progress Reports.

Attachment A Enough is Enough Alcohol Reform Report 20 October 2011.
Attachment B Enough is Enough Alcohol Reform Report July - December 2011.
Attachment C Recorded Crime March Quarter 2011 – Nhulunbuy Assaults (Extract).

3. *The Committee requested data on imprisonment rates under Northern Territory legislation, particularly imprisonment rates for charges relating to smaller amounts of liquor. Both NT and Commonwealth data if possible.*

Attachments D, E F, G and H respectively, contain the number of "Police issued infringement notices", "Apprehensions", "Court outcomes", "Offence List" and "Court Outcomes by Jurisdiction" for alcohol related offences in prescribed areas under section 75 of the *Liquor Act* (NT) and section 12 of the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act* (Cth) (the NTNER Act).

Of the 1635 convictions for 'other' alcohol related offences in Prescribed Areas in 2011, 48, or less than 3 per cent, resulted in imprisonment for smaller amounts of alcohol. An additional factor that needs to be considered when looking at these imprisonment rates is the impact of 'global sentencing', where a magistrate may take into consideration repeat offending or other offences (for example, domestic violence) at the same time.

In comparison, the imprisonment rate for supplying in excess of 1350mls of alcohol in Prescribed Areas was much higher. Eight out of 30 (of 27 per cent) of those who were convicted received an imprisonment sentence.

The number of police issued infringement notices (for possessing or consuming smaller amounts of alcohol) decreased by 21 per cent between 2009 and 2011. Over the same period, the number of apprehensions and subsequent convictions decreased at much higher rates at 63 per cent and 57 per cent respectively.

4. The Committee requested information from the Northern Territory Government about what the processes and penalties are and information about drugs across the Territory.

As with other Australian communities, illicit drug use and the harm associated with it is a significant and ongoing issue in remote communities in the NT. NT Police initiatives aimed at addressing illicit drug use in remote communities include the Remote Community Drug Desk (RCDD), Northern and Southern Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAID) and Dog Operation Units (DOU) in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. The NT Police Remote Community Drug Strategy aims to reduce the incidence of illicit drug use on remote communities and provides for a co-ordinated strategic approach across Commands.

The RCDD, Katherine and Alice Springs SAID teams, officers in remote localities and the DOU work cooperatively to reduce the effect of illicit drugs in remote NT communities. Disruption and detection activities undertaken by these units include:

- conducting road blocks along roads leading into remote communities;
- conducting screening and searches of passengers, luggage and freight at local airports, shipping ports/freight and post offices;
- conducting remote area school visits in relation to education of drugs and alcohol and promotion of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs initiative 'You and Me Keeping it Drug and Alcohol Free';
- identifying and disrupting established networks that transport and distribute drugs into the communities; and
- controlling operations targeting identified persons involved in illicit drug supply and distribution.

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership funding has significantly enhanced NT Police capability in combating illicit drugs in remote communities.

The *Misuse of Drugs Act* (NT) specifically provides for increased penalties for the supply of illicit drugs in an Indigenous community. An Indigenous community, as defined in the Act, includes a prescribed area under section 4 of the NTNER Act.

The *Misuse of Drugs Act* provides a penalty of five years imprisonment for the supply of a Schedule 2 dangerous drug (which includes cannabis) where the quantity is less than a commercial quantity. Where the drug is supplied to a person in an Indigenous community, the maximum penalty is nine years imprisonment (section 4B). The maximum penalty for a similar offence where the quantity is a commercial quantity or where the drug is supplied to a child is 14 years in each case. Actual penalties are as specified by the Courts when sentencing offenders.

Attachments I and J respectively, contain the number of "Court outcomes" and "Apprehensions" for supplying dangerous drugs in Indigenous Communities. The section 4B amendment was enforced in 2008, however, no-one was charged under this section until 2009. The number of apprehensions in 2009, 2010 and 2011 were 1, 53 and 68 respectively. The conviction rate for the offence under section 4B is very low. It can be noted that during this period a high proportion of people were charged under the generic supplying dangerous drug offence(s) rather than under section 4B despite the offence(s) taking place in an Indigenous community.

5. Does every school in the city have an Aboriginal or Islander education worker?

All Government schools in Alice Springs have an Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW). Twenty-one of the 25 Government Schools in Darwin have an AEIW, and 10 of the 16 Government schools in Palmerston have an AIEW.

These allocations are historical and are being reviewed as part of a holistic review of school staffing with a view to increasing the presence of AIEWs in more schools.

6. Cultural engagement issues: requested some material be provided that talks about how long cultural business takes. Does it really take nine weeks? Do the kids have to travel with you? Perhaps there are some papers that you are aware of that deal with those sorts of things.

Many articles have been written on the causes of poor school attendance and many researchers have attempted to detail reasons for the relatively low attendance rates of Indigenous children in remote locations. With the exception of Indigenous mobility, research has been focussed predominantly on school related factors.

Bourke et al[1] refer to mobility associated with social and cultural obligations as a cause of non-attendance. This article also cites examples from other researchers which support this notion. However, these articles may not provide the level of detail the Committee is seeking. There is no definitive information about how long cultural business takes, as this will vary across communities.

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[1] Bourke, CJ Rigby, K and Burden, J *Better Practice in School Attendance: Improving the School Attendance of Indigenous Students* Monash University July 2000.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) prefers to work from an evidence base. An Attendance Diagnostic Tool has been developed that establishes categories for absences. This allows schools to better understand the causes of absences within their Community. Factors over which the Community has significant control or influence, including migratory patterns, time lost to sorry business, and the timing of ceremony and local cultural events is a specific category. In response to this, DET has established a framework for exploring and reducing the impact of cultural business on school attendance. However, this is a complex and sensitive issue for Indigenous people.

Primarily, DET is working to develop School/Community partnerships. In this way, schools establish a relationship with Indigenous Communities so that they can work together to find place-based solutions to better support Indigenous children and young people to improve school attendance, and to provide quality education and learning in a culturally appropriate and relevant context. Where schools have a significant number of absences related to matters which can be controlled by the Community, this becomes a particular focus of the agreement.

To date, 33 School/Community Agreements have been completed, and it is anticipated that a further 22 will be completed by the end of 2012. The foci of these agreements are Attendance, School Readiness and Partnerships.

Agreements will be reviewed, in partnership with all relevant signatories, after six and twelve months to establish if they are on track and if a refocus is necessary.

7. Provide a list of schools that are using a different timetable (flexible arrangements), for want of a better word, and what the differences are?

A number of schools have negotiated flexible arrangements with their Communities to accommodate cultural activities, local circumstances and whole-community attendance at ad hoc, significant events occurring in major regional centres. There are also a number of less formal, flexible arrangements that schools implement in partnership with Communities. Details of these less formal arrangements could be provided with a longer response timeframe.

Community	Flexible arrangement
Angurugu	Angurugu School ran a Saturday class for boys in 2011 and will re-commence this from Term 2, 2012.
Arlparra	Arlparra School negotiates varied hours on an as-needed basis to accommodate sporting and other events occurring in Alice Springs on weekends. For instance, in one week the school worked an extra 30 minutes per day from Monday to Thursday in order to facilitate the community's need to travel to Alice Springs on a particular Friday afternoon to watch an AFL match.

Community	Flexible arrangement
Gunbalanya	Gunbalanya school is trialling a flexible school year – so students are able to attend school when their community is cut off during the wet season and have a longer break in the middle of the year, when they might otherwise be absent from school for cultural reasons. The new school year commenced on 9 January 2012, three weeks ahead of other NT schools.
Jilkminggin	Jilkminggan School trialled a program called "Night School" in 2011. The main aim was to improve attendance by enhancing relationships between teachers and parents and teachers and students by engaging teachers in out of school experiences. "Night School" involved the school opening for an additional three hours every second Monday. Dinner was provided by the school.
Kalkaringi	Kalkaringi School has negotiated to start the school day one hour later and finish one hour later. This allows more time to get to school in the morning and more time for parents to get the younger children ready for school. It will also help to avoid the cold mornings in the dry season and the extreme heat of the build-up and build down by allowing children to stay in the air-conditioned classrooms until 4pm.
Katherine	The Attendance Task Force from Katherine High School worked in town camps and communities for two weeks prior to the start of the 2012 school year to ensure children were ready for school from day one. Next year the school plans to commence its School Ready program two weeks early so targeted young people have a chance to settle in before the rest of the school commences.
Milyakburra	Milyakburra school has implemented a changed school day arrangement to meet community circumstances.
Minyerri	Minyerri School operates an extra 20 mins each Mon – Thurs and then works through lunch on a Friday so students can go home at 1.30pm on the Friday.
Yuendumu	In order to maximise teaching and learning contact time, Yuendumu School has negotiated longer hours for nine days per fortnight and a shorter day on the Friday after fortnightly pay-day because a large proportion of the community leave on that afternoon.

8. *The Committee requested information from the Northern Territory Government regarding consultation processes, particularly the process for homelands.*

<u>Overarching Process</u>

The NTG's online 'Indigenous Communications Toolbox' is available to all NTG Agencies and can be located at http://uluru.nt.gov.au/dcm/external/Indigenous. The Toolbox contains the following key documents:

Indigenous media - and major events
- Indigenous radio stations
- Indigenous press and television
- Festivals and events

Effective communication
- Developing appropriate material
- Checklist for communications

Protocols
- Indigenous artwork
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags
- Using Welcome to Country
- Using Acknowledgement of Country
- Community protocols for death I sorry business

Useful links
- Aboriginal Interpreting Service
- Indigenous language map
- New ABS Indigenous statistics resource
- Working Future
- Northern Land Council
- Central Land Council

Each NTG agency is responsible for establishing frameworks to guide their specific consultation and engagement processes. For example, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services (DHLGRS) has a Community Engagement Charter which outlines how it engages with the community in order to identify views and to assist Government to make informed decisions that involves stakeholders in the process (refer **attachment K.1 - DHLGRS Information Management Community Engagement Charter**).

Outstations and homelands consultations

Over the past five years the NTG has undertaken extensive consultations in this area.

In October 2008, the NTG released an Outstations Policy discussion paper. Forty-three written submissions and 4 video submissions were received in response to the discussion paper.

SOCom and Dodson/ Lane were subsequently commissioned to conduct community engagement sessions in 17 locations in December 2008, including a visit to the homelands of the Utopia region. Five hundred and twenty of the 905 participants taking part in the community engagement sessions identified themselves as homeland residents.

A headline policy was developed with feedback from these consultations which resulted in further extensive community consultation (the Stage 4 consultations) undertaken by the Office of Indigenous Policy and the former Department of Local Government and Housing.

The consultation ran from August 2009 to March 2010 and involved face to face consultations with residents of 342 homelands and outstations.

During 2011, engagement with service providers, land councils, the Aboriginal Benefits Account, and with residents through the LIPs refresh process, have further informed the development of policy and funding disbursement methodology for outstations and homelands.

Key entities such as the Indigenous Affairs Advisory Committee and land councils continue to be engaged in discussions around outstation / homelands policy.

Local Implementation Plan consultations

The development of the LIPs has been guided by the NTG's extensive Consultation and Engagement Framework (refer **attachment K.2 – Remote Service Delivery Engagement Strategy**). In addition to the Framework, each LIPs details the process that was used to form a Local Reference Group for the community and how the broader community was engaged in the process of identifying priorities.

Northern Territory Government

a safe Territory
A Territory Government initiative

Enough Is Enough
Alcohol Reform

Alcohol Reform Report
20 October 2011

Executive Summary

As part of the Territory 2030 commitments, the Northern Territory Government is committed to reducing the Northern Territory's per capita consumption of alcohol, currently the highest in the country, to the National average.

A study led by the Menzies School of Health and Research and undertaken by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, deemed the social harms from alcohol misuse to cost the Territory community $642 million per year.[1]

This equates to $4,197 for every adult Territorian, compared to $944 nationally, and includes costs of:

- hospitalisations for chronic health problems and injuries;
- alcohol-related violence victims and ambulatory costs;
- road accidents;
- policing alcohol-related crime and antisocial behaviour;
- courts and the correctional system; and
- impacts on the workforce such as absenteeism.

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform provides a range of tools and services across the whole of the Northern Territory to improve our relationship with alcohol, and reduce the personal, social and economic costs that the misuse of alcohol brings to the Territory.

People who commit alcohol-related crimes will find they are unable to purchase takeaway alcohol when their ID is scanned at the point of sale (PoS), and will be blocked at the source by the Banned Drinker Register (BDR).

The electronic PoS scanners, operational in 162 licensed takeaway sites in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, as well as other outlets along the

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1 South Australian Centre for Economic Studies "Harm From and Costs of Alcohol Consumption in the Northern Territory" Menzies School of Health Research 2009.

Stuart Highway, strengthen compliance and enforcement capabilities against the BDR and local supply restrictions. This reduces access to alcohol by problem drinkers and the availability of problematic products. The BDR applies across the Territory to prevent problem drinkers from simply moving to the next place in order to access takeaway alcohol.

As at 30 September 2011, 1,576 people were on the BDR and more than 3,500 purchases were declined in the first quarter of its operation.

NT Police are able to issue on–the-spot banning notices to prevent anti-social behaviour and crime within designated precincts, and for alcohol-related offences and infringements. People involved in alcohol related crime and anti social-behaviour will be held accountable for their actions.

People who are not committing a crime, but are repeatedly placed in protective custody for their own safety, will now experience a consequence and be provided with access to treatment and rehabilitation to assist them to break the cycle of alcoholism.

The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Tribunal and the Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment (SMART) Court have been established to direct those into treatment that need it most. They support existing structures, and ensure streamlined and culturally appropriate processing of persons requiring mandated treatment and monitoring.

The SMART Court commenced operation on 1 July 2011. Forty-six people were referred for clinical assessment in the first quarter of the Court's operation, 29 of who have commenced treatment.

The AOD Tribunal Chair has been appointed as well as an Alice Springs based Deputy Chair. From 1 November 2011, the AOD Tribunal will hear self-referrals from those people who wish to place themselves on the BDR voluntarily, and will become fully operational by 1 January 2012.

Significant investment across the spectrum of treatment and rehabilitation services has occurred building their capacity to support the Alcohol Reform.
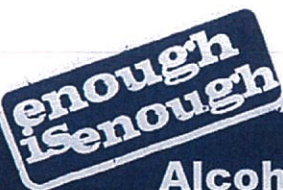
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Fourteen new residential treatment beds in Darwin support existing drug treatment services and increase capacity to meet existing and emerging demands. A further 10 new beds will be brought online in Alice Springs before the end of 2011.

Improved pathways have also been put in place for withdrawal clients from Emergency Departments to ambulatory services and Non-Government agencies. This has resulted in referrals to treatment or withdrawal occurring in less than three hours, where previously, it averaged eight days.

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform addresses the social education, enforcement capability and treatment required to progress towards a healthier and safer Territory. Those who are unable to manage their behaviour when they have been consuming alcohol will be held accountable and directed towards appropriate rehabilitation and treatment.

Only three months in, and with some aspects yet to become fully operational, it is too early to gauge with certainty the success of the Reform. Nonetheless, early indications show promise with preliminary alcohol-related assault data showing a reduction in all major centres except Nhulunbuy.

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform is a long term strategy aimed at breaking the cycle of problem drinking and the issues it creates by moving people into appropriate treatment and rehabilitation. It is in the coming years that the full effect of the Reform will be seen in health and crime data and impact on the Territory's per capita consumption.

Five Point Plan

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform is a whole of government package targeted at problem drinkers, tackling the unacceptable social costs and high levels of alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour in the Northern Territory.

The Alcohol Reform as outlined in the Northern Territory Government's Five-Point Plan includes:

1. Banned problem drinker and mandatory alcohol treatment orders

Banning problem drinkers who cause harm to themselves and others in the community and triaging problem drinkers into appropriate treatment.

2. A Banned Drinker Register

Enforcing bans through a BDR and through electronic scanners at PoS in takeaway outlets NT wide.

3. Alcohol Court reforms

A new Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Tribunal to review and issue bans and treatment orders and a new Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment (SMART) Court, replacing the Alcohol Court, to make orders for people who have been found guilty of a criminal offence related to alcohol or drug misuse.

4. Increased rehabilitation services

Increased treatment services across the Territory, including bed based and outreach rehabilitation services, withdrawal services and services into remote communities.

5. Awareness campaigns

Community education and awareness campaign targeted at helping Territorians to understand the reforms and comply with the requirements of the ID system.

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Alcohol-Related Crime

The Alcohol Reform is targeted at reducing alcohol-related crime.

Preliminary data extracted from PROMIS reports a 15.5% reduction in alcohol-related assaults for the July to September quarter in 2011 compared to the same quarter in 2010.

Recorded Assaults from 1 July to end September Each Year by Region and Alcohol Involvement – PRELIMINARY DATA

		2010-July and September	2011-July and September##	% Change between 2010 and 2011##
Darwin	Alcohol related	247	196	-20.6%
	not - Alcohol related	71	57	-19.7%
	not known	96	95	-1.0%
	total	**414**	**348**	**-15.9%**
Palmerston	Alcohol related	68	52	-23.5%
	not - Alcohol related	19	24	26.3%
	not known	28	20	-28.6%
	total	**115**	**96**	**-16.5%**
Katherine	Alcohol related	114	96	-15.8%
	not - Alcohol related	13	12	-7.7%
	not known	24	14	-41.7%
	total	**151**	**122**	**-19.2%**
Alice Springs	Alcohol related	291	240	-17.5%
	not - Alcohol related	48	40	-16.7%
	not known	62	68	9.7%
	total	**401**	**348**	**-13.2%**
Tennant Creek	Alcohol related	82	66	-19.5%
	not - Alcohol related	8	18	125.0%
	not known	13	13	0.0%
	total	**103**	**97**	**-5.8%**
Nhulunbuy	Alcohol related	18	19	5.6%
	not - Alcohol related	1	1	0.0%
	not known	4	5	25.0%
	total	**23**	**25**	**8.7%**
NT - Balance	Alcohol related	238	225	-5.5%
	not - Alcohol related	154	173	12.3%
	not known	53	67	26.4%
	total	**445**	**465**	**4.5%**
NT - total	Alcohol related	1058	894	-15.5%
	not - Alcohol related	314	325	3.5%
	not known	280	282	0.7%
	total	**1652**	**1501**	**-9.1%**

Extracted from PROMIS on 1 October 2011
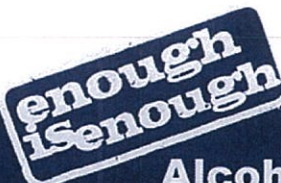
1. Banned problem drinker and mandatory alcohol treatment orders

New legislation commenced on 1 July 2011 that established the structures and processes that underpin the Alcohol Reform

- *Alcohol Reform (Prevention of Alcohol-related Crime and Substance Misuse) Act*

Through this Act, Banning Alcohol and Treatment (BAT) Notices are introduced. The AOD Tribunal is established to make orders aimed at preventing the misuse of drugs and alcohol, and to protect people from the harms that can come from such misuse. This includes creating the capacity for mandatory assessment and appropriate treatment orders to be declared for persons who are misusing alcohol and other substances.

- *Alcohol Reform (Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment Court) Act*

This Act creates a Court with enhanced powers to make orders, including treatment orders for persons who have committed alcohol-related crimes. The SMART Court replaces the former Alcohol Court and has a primary focus to reduce the criminal activity associated with misusing drugs and alcohol, and so increase opportunity for rehabilitation.

- Amendments to the *Liquor Act*.

The Liquor Act amendments complement the other Acts by identifying offences that may lead to a person being banned, and making expectations of liquor licensees clear. It also clarifies offences and introduces penalties that relate to the seriousness of the offence.

This new legislative framework enables the Department of Justice (DoJ) and partner agencies including the Department of Health (DoH) and the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES), to implement significant operational changes to reduce alcohol access for problem drinkers who cause harm to themselves and others in the community, and triaging them into appropriate treatment.

Under the Reform, banning and treatment orders can be applied through:
- Police-issued BAT notices;
- the courts;
- the AOD Tribunal; and
- the SMART Court.

2. A Banned Drinker Register

The BDR is linked Territory wide, preventing the sale of takeaway alcohol to banned persons. In regions such as Katherine and Alice Springs, local product restrictions continue to apply.

The BDR includes real time interfaces with the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) and the Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS). Banned drinkers are uploaded onto the BDR in real time with low levels of administrative burden on Police, Courts and Corrections workers. For the first time, court orders, and prohibition orders (such as those as part of a parole or bail condition) can be enforced at the PoS, and therefore prevent sales of takeaway alcohol to a banned drinker Territory-wide.

The rollout of the BDR commenced in March 2011, and became live on 1 July 2011, with 145 PoS devices installed in 95 takeaway liquor outlets throughout Darwin and Palmerston.

A further 87 PoS devices have been installed in 67 takeaway liquor outlets in Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and smaller premises along the Stuart Highway.

Another 28 sites are on track to have the systems installed in takeaway liquor outlets in remote areas off the Stuart Highway by the end of November 2011.

Areas which currently have electronic permit systems, such as Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt, will be the final premises to have the BDR installed. The current permit systems in use will continue to prevent banned drinkers from accessing takeaway alcohol.

Triggers for a ban and being placed on the BDR include:
- Repeat protective custody incidents (3 times in 3 months);
- High range and repeat drink driving;
- Repeat alcohol infringement notices;
- Alcohol-related offences such as assault;
- Domestic violence order breaches; and
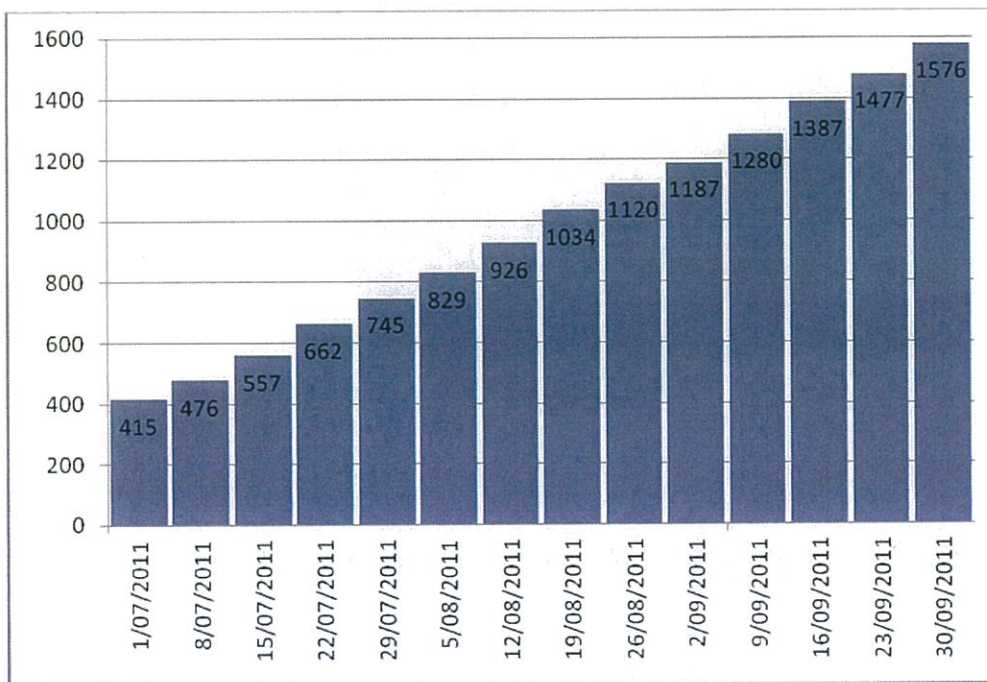- Knowingly supplying alcohol to someone who is already banned (secondary supply).

Figure 1: Persons on the BDR (data extracted from the BDR as at 30 September 2011)

There were 1,576 people on the BDR at the end of the first quarter (Figure 1).
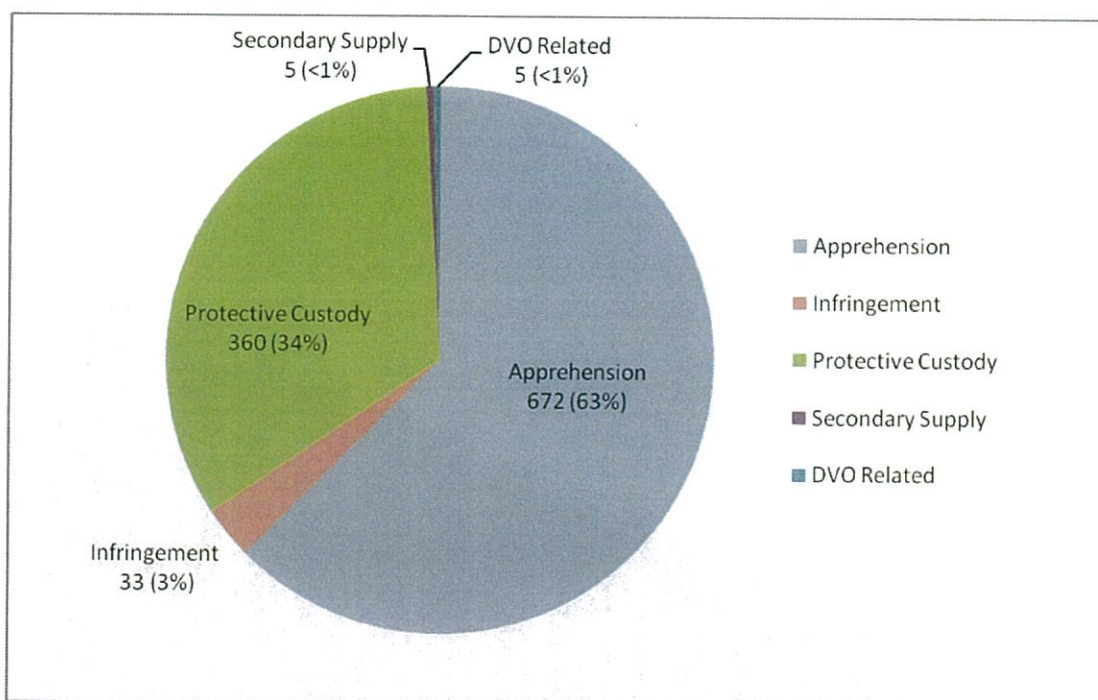
Figure 2: People on the BDR for BAT notices by reason as at end of September 2011
(data extracted from IJIS as at 30 September 2011)

At the end of the first quarter, 1075 people were on the BDR for a BAT Notice. Of these, 672 (63%) people were on the BDR for BAT Notice due to an apprehension for an offence, and 360 (33%) were as a result of protective custody incidents (
Figure 2).

- Of the 1075 on the BDR for a BAT Notice as at 30 September 2011:
- 760 people (71%) had received one BAT Notice;
- 150 (14%) had received two BAT Notices; and
- 165 (15%) of people had received three BAT Notices.

As at the end of September 2011, 104 (63%) people of the 165 in receipt of three BAT Notices had breached their third BAT Notice. The breach of a third BAT Notice results in an automatic trigger of referral to the AOD Tribunal. The AOD Tribunal will begin hearing and assessing referrals from the commencement date of 1 January 2012.

	Darwin	Palmerston	Alice Springs	Katherine	Tennant Creek	Nhulunbuy	NT Balance	Unknown
■ Sep-11	98	63	208	73	74	4	152	0
■ Aug-11	68	53	151	49	49	2	114	1
■ Jul-11	50	30	98	33	19	1	59	1
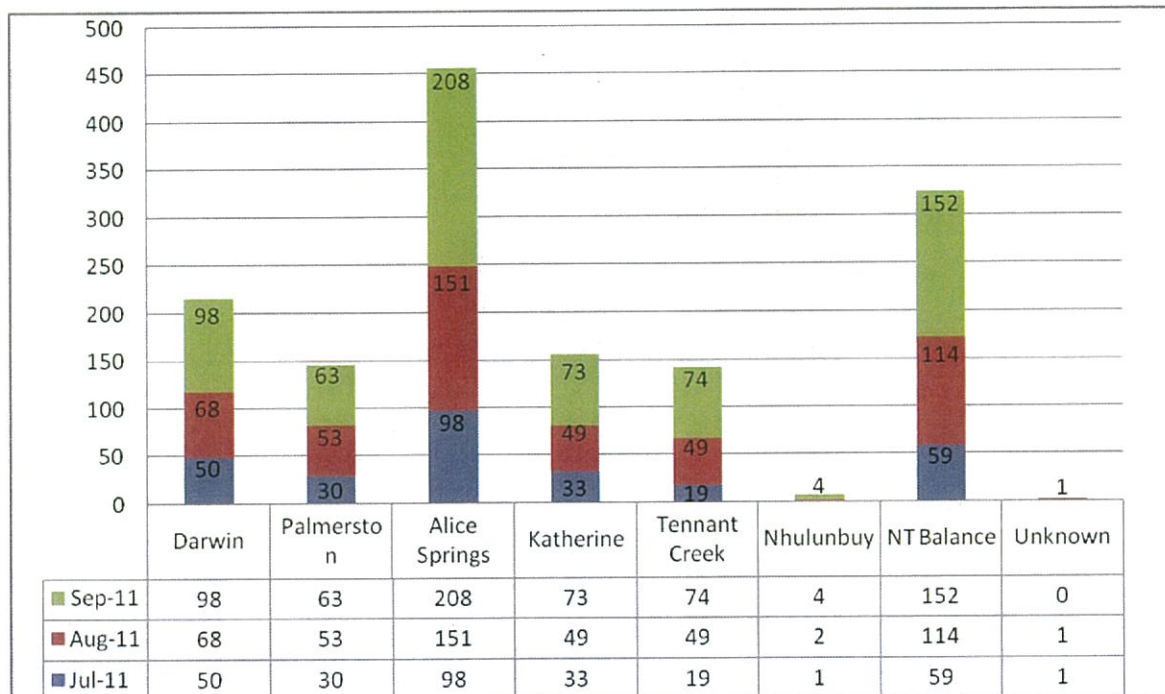
Figure 3: Persons on the BDR for BAT Notices for Apprehensions by Region - cumulative data
(data extracted from IJIS as at 30 September 2011)

At the end of September 2011, 208 (31%) of people on the BDR due to a BAT Notice issued as a result of an apprehension had a principal offence reported at a location in the Alice Springs Region (Figure 3).
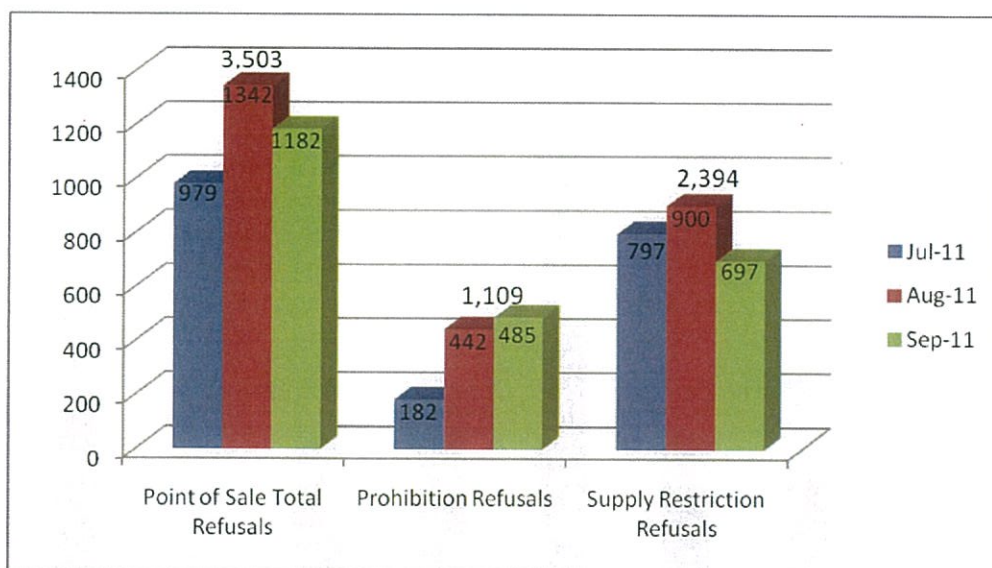
Figure 4: Point of Sale Refusals (data extracted from IJIS as at 30 September 2011)

There were 3,503 PoS refusals during the first quarter. In August 2011, there were 1,342 total PoS refusals, 442 for prohibition because the person was on the BDR, and 900 for attempting to purchase above supply restrictions for particular products. For September 2011, there were 1,182 total PoS refusals with 485 of these being for prohibition and 697 for supply restrictions (Figure 4).

3. Court reforms

The AOD Tribunal and SMART Court are designed to support existing structures, and create new streamlined and culturally appropriate processing of persons requiring mandated treatment and monitoring.

The AOD Tribunal became operational on 1 July 2011 to hear applications for review of BAT Notices and for administrative work around Alcohol Misuse Interventions (AMI).

The Chair of the AOD Tribunal (based in Darwin) has been appointed, and a Deputy Chair (based in Alice Springs) assists in delivering the Tribunal throughout the NT. Tribunal offices opened at Casuarina and work has now been completed for the Tribunal to operate at WestPoint in Alice Springs.

The first round of advertising for clinicians and the second round of recruitment for members to the AOD Tribunal Board has also occurred.

From 1 November 2011, the AOD Tribunal will commence hearing self referral applications from those who wish to place themselves on the BDR voluntarily. The AOD Tribunal will be fully operational from 1 January 2012.

The Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment (SMART) Court commenced operating on 1 July 2011. Forty-six (46) people were referred for clinical assessment in the first quarter, 29 of whom have commenced treatment.

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4. Increased rehabilitation services

The delivery of appropriate treatment and rehabilitiation services is critical to break the cycle for problem drinkers and significant investment in alcohol and other drug treatment services has occurred. This includes:

- Fourteen (14) new residential treatment beds in Darwin to support existing drug treatment services;
- Ten (10) new beds coming online in Alice Springs before the end of 2011;
- Increased capacity to meet existing and emerging demands for residential treatment;
- Improved treatment pathways reducing the time to refer a person to appropriate treatment from in excess of 8 days, down to less than three hours; and
- Increased ambulatory interventions and support services such as case management and therapeutic interventions through the Safe and Sober Program in Alice Springs.

Training has been provided to health care centres throughout the NT to deliver AMIs, expanding the range of service providers able to deliver AMIs to people who have been banned from drinking alcohol.

DrinkLess resource packages have also been provided to 71 primary health care services across the NT.

DoH has also recruited an Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) specialist position to work with Aboriginal Medical Services across the Territory to identify service gaps in remote regions and where new resources for treatment could be allocated.

5. Awareness campaigns

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform is supported by ongoing community education and awareness to promote safe and responsible drinking.

Prior to the introduction of the PoS scanners on 1 July 2011, a comprehensive communication campaign to assist Territorians and visitors understand the Reform was deployed through various media throughout the Territory; including newspapers, radio and television.

Brochures outlining key alcohol laws in the Territory have been distributed to tourism centres including caravan parks, information centres, and hotels/motels. 'Talking posters' aimed at raising awareness of the Reform amongst our remote Indigenous community have been installed in remote police stations, health clinics and shire offices.

Focus on effective communication aimed at increasing awareness for Indigenous communities, continues to be a priority.

Summary

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform is a long term strategy aimed at breaking the cycle of problem drinking and the issues it creates by moving people into appropriate treatment and rehabilitation. It is in the coming years that the full effect of the Reform will be seen in health and crime data and impact on the Territory's per capita consumption. Early indications show promise with preliminary alcohol-related assault data showing a reduction in the number of incidents across the Territory over the first three months of operation.

A whole of Government approach has seen successful implementation of the Reform delivering a comprehensive package across several agencies and Departments, to benefit Territorians. A strategic and combined delivery of enforcement capability, Court and Tribunal structures, health education and treatment efforts, are contributing to positive change in the NT's attitude to and understanding of, the potential harms of alcohol.

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Alcohol abuse causes crime
60% of all assaults are alcohol related.
*Data Source: Issue 31: March Quarter 2010 Northern Territory Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics.

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Northern Territory Government

a safe Territory
A Territory Government initiative

Enough Is Enough

Alcohol Reform Report

July 2011 to December 2011

Executive Summary

In 2011, the Northern Territory Government committed to an historic and comprehensive Alcohol Reform package.

As part of the *Territory 2030* commitments, the Territory Government is dedicated to a healthier and safer Territory and to reducing the per capita consumption of alcohol, currently the highest in the country, to the National average.

A study led by the Menzies School of Health and Research and undertaken by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, deemed the harms from alcohol misuse to cost the Territory community $642 million per year.[1] This equates to $4,197 for every adult Territorian, compared to $944 nationally, and includes costs of:

- hospitalisations for chronic health problems and injuries;
- alcohol-related violence victims and ambulatory costs;
- road accidents;
- policing alcohol-related crime and antisocial behaviour;
- courts and the correctional system; and
- impacts on the workforce such as absenteeism.

In 2011 the Northern Territory Government introduced the 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform to address alcohol misuse. The five-point plan includes:

- New and amended legislation to support the 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform;
- Introduction of the Banned Drinker Register (BDR);
- Alcohol Court Reform and the establishment of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Tribunal (AOD Tribunal);
- Training and resource provision for health care providers across the Territory; and
- Communication and awareness campaigns.

The reform measures provide a health response to ensure chronic drinkers are not criminalised, while also providing sanctions through the BDR and pathways to treatment.

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[1] South Australian Centre for Economic Studies "Harm From and Costs of Alcohol Consumption in the Northern Territory" Menzies School of Health Research 2009.

Alcohol abuse causes crime
60% of all assaults are alcohol related.*
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The measures target people who commit alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour and introduced bans on the purchase, possession and consumption of alcohol for banned problem drinkers.

The BDR applies across the Territory to prevent problem drinkers from simply moving to the next place in order to access takeaway alcohol.

The BDR is now in place at 190 take-away liquor licences across the Territory to enforce the bans at the point of sale.

As at 31 December 2011, 2,195 people were on the BDR and 7,774 alcohol purchases were declined across the Territory.

The implementation of this significant reform has been staged:

Stage 1 implementation from 1 July 2011:

- Progressive roll-out of the BDR in licensed takeaway outlets commencing in Darwin and Palmerston from 1 July with the system in place in 190 outlets by end of 2011;

- Commencement of the new SMART (Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment) Court; and

- Partial commencements of the AOD Tribunal to review Police-issued Banning and Treatment (BAT) Notices.

Stage 2 from 1 January 2012:

The AOD Tribunal commenced full operation from 1 January 2012 to hear applications and make Banning Alcohol and Drug Treatment (BADT) orders, and review banning and treatment orders issued by Police. From 1 November 2011, the AOD Tribunal heard applications from Territorians wishing to place themselves on the BDR voluntarily.

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform is a long-term strategy aimed at breaking the cycle of problem drinking and the issues it creates by moving people into appropriate treatment and rehabilitation.

Table of Contents

This report is the second public report on the 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform.
The Alcohol Reform Progress Report October 2011 can be found at
www.justice.nt.gov.au/justice/alcoholreformnt

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60% of all assaults are alcohol related.
*Data Source: Issue 31: March Quarter 2010 Northern Territory Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics.

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Alcohol-Related Crime

Recorded Assaults from 1 July to end December Each Year by Region and Alcohol Involvement

		2010-July and December	2011-July and December	% Change between 2010 and 2011
Darwin	Alcohol related	480	422	-12.1%
	not - Alcohol related	132	129	-2.3%
	not known	197	191	-3.0%
	total	809	742	-8.3%
Palmerston	Alcohol related	132	115	-12.9%
	not - Alcohol related	45	53	17.8%
	not known	56	47	-16.1%
	total	233	215	-7.7%
Katherine	Alcohol related	239	213	-10.9%
	not - Alcohol related	27	22	-18.5%
	not known	50	32	-36.0%
	total	316	267	-15.5%
Alice Springs	Alcohol related	573	525	-8.4%
	not - Alcohol related	100	86	-14.0%
	not known	153	155	1.3%
	total	826	766	-7.3%
Tennant Creek	Alcohol related	170	192	12.9%
	not - Alcohol related	21	38	81.0%
	not known	26	23	-11.5%
	total	217	253	16.6%
Nhulunbuy	Alcohol related	32	44	37.5%
	not - Alcohol related	5	5	0.0%
	not known	7	9	28.6%
	total	44	58	31.8%
NT - Balance	Alcohol related	479	486	1.5%
	not - Alcohol related	347	451	30.0%
	not known	102	146	43.1%
	total	928	1,083	16.7%
NT - total	Alcohol related	2,105	1,997	-5.1%
	not - Alcohol related	677	784	15.8%
	not known	591	603	2.0%
	total	3,373	3,384	0.3%

Extracted from PROMIS on 1 February 2012

From July 2011 NT Police in Tennant Creek have taken a more proactive approach to DV related matters with several activities likely to have impacted on statistics. Tennant Creek police have been working in conjunction with other key stakeholders such as legal agencies, health and other stakeholders, to raise awareness in the community of DV issues and ensure DV incidents are reported on all occasions and action taken by Police as per legislative requirements. Awareness raising activities have included several media releases, workshops and other DV awareness raising campaigns (such as White Ribbon Day and signing of the 'No Violence' banner). This has resulted in increased confidence in reporting by victims and witnesses, where they previously would have remained silent. In addition, increased quality control of the recording and completion of matters on PROMIS to ensure matters are appropriately recorded as 'DV-related' as per legislative requirements.

Five Point Plan

The Alcohol Reform as outlined in the Northern Territory Government's Five-Point Plan includes:

1. ***Banning problem drinkers and mandatory alcohol treatment orders***

   Banning problem drinkers who cause harm to themselves and others in the community and triaging problem drinkers into appropriate treatment.

2. ***A Banned Drinker Register***

   Enforcing bans through a BDR and through electronic scanners at point of sale in takeaway outlets NT wide.

3. ***Alcohol Court reforms***

   A new AOD Tribunal to review and issue bans and treatment orders and a new Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment (SMART) Court, replacing the Alcohol Court, to make orders for people who have been found guilty of a criminal offence related to alcohol or drug misuse.

4. ***Increased rehabilitation services***

   Increased treatment services across the Territory, including bed based and outreach rehabilitation services, withdrawal services and services into remote communities.

5. ***Awareness campaigns***

   Community education and awareness campaign targeted at helping Territorians to understand the reforms and comply with the requirements of the ID system.

1. Banning problem drinkers and mandatory alcohol treatment orders

Legislation underpinning the Alcohol Reform became fully operational on 1 January 2012.

- *Alcohol Reform (Prevention of Alcohol-related Crime and Substance Misuse) Act*
- *Alcohol Reform (Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment Court) Act*
- Amendments to the *Liquor Act.*

This legislative framework enables DoJ and partner agencies including DoH and the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES), to implement significant operational changes to reduce access to alcohol for problem drinkers who cause harm to themselves and others in the community, and triaging them into appropriate treatment.

Under the Reform, banning and treatment orders can be applied through:

- Police-issued BAT Notices;
- the courts;
- the AOD Tribunal; and
- the SMART Court.

Reasons for Police to issue Banning and Treatment (BAT) Notices include:

- repeat protective custody incidents;
- high range and repeat drink driving;
- repeat alcohol infringement notices;
- alcohol-related offences such as assault;
- domestic violence order breaches; and
- secondary supply (knowingly supplying alcohol to a banned person).

From 1 July 2011 through to 31 December 2011, over 6,300 alcohol bans have been issued. This number includes the issue of First, Second and Third BAT Notices and other alcohol bans.

At the end of December 2011, 1,565 (71%) of people were on the BDR for a BAT Notice issued by Police, while the other 630 (29%) were on the BDR for other types of bans (Court orders, parole or bail conditions). The reason shown for a person being on the BDR is the most current reason at the time of the end of the month.

A person may have received more than one BAT Notice or other type of ban, but such individuals are only counted once at the point in time which data is collected.

People on the BDR at the end of December 2011 by BAT Notice or Order Type

- Other 62 (3%)
- Tribunal Order 1 (<1%)
- Court Orders and Bail *includes SMART Orders 567 (26%)
- First BAT 808 (37%)
- Third BAT 470 (21%)
- Second BAT 287 (13%)
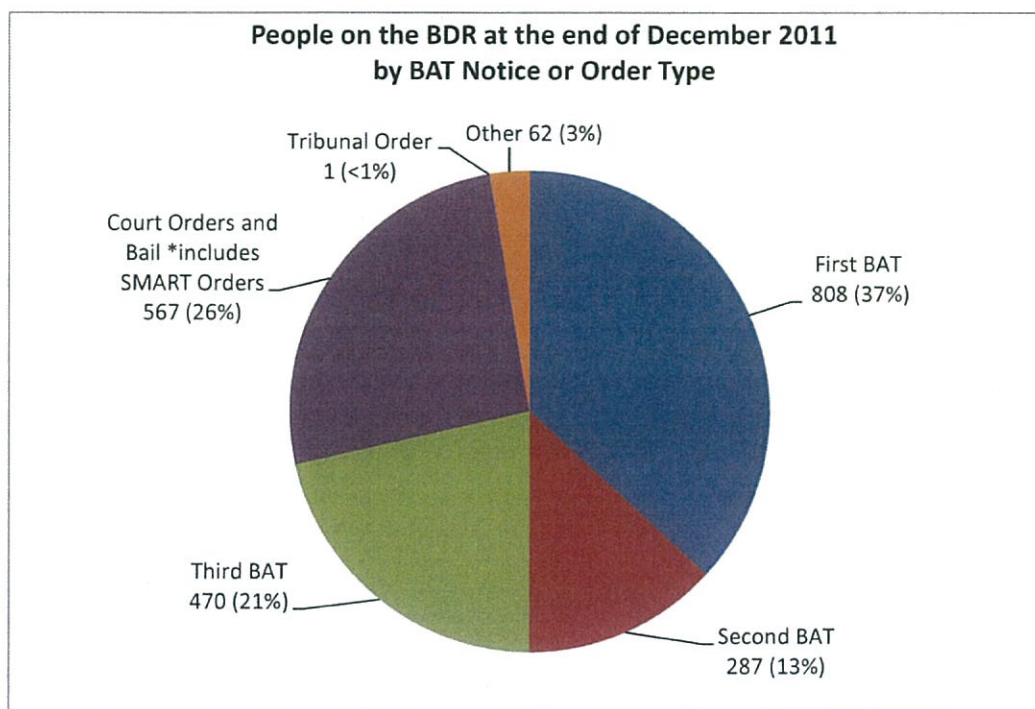
Figure 1: People on the BDR for BAT Notices or Order Type as at end of December 2011
(data extracted from IJIS on 1 February 2012)

Of the 2,195 on the BDR as at the end of 31 December 2011:

- 808 people (37%) had received a First BAT Notice;
- 287 (13%) had received a Second BAT Notice;
- 470 (21%) had received a Third BAT Notices;
- 567 (26%) had received a Court Order (including SMART Orders);
- 1 (<1%) had received a Tribunal Order; and
- 62 (3%) of people had received another type of Order.
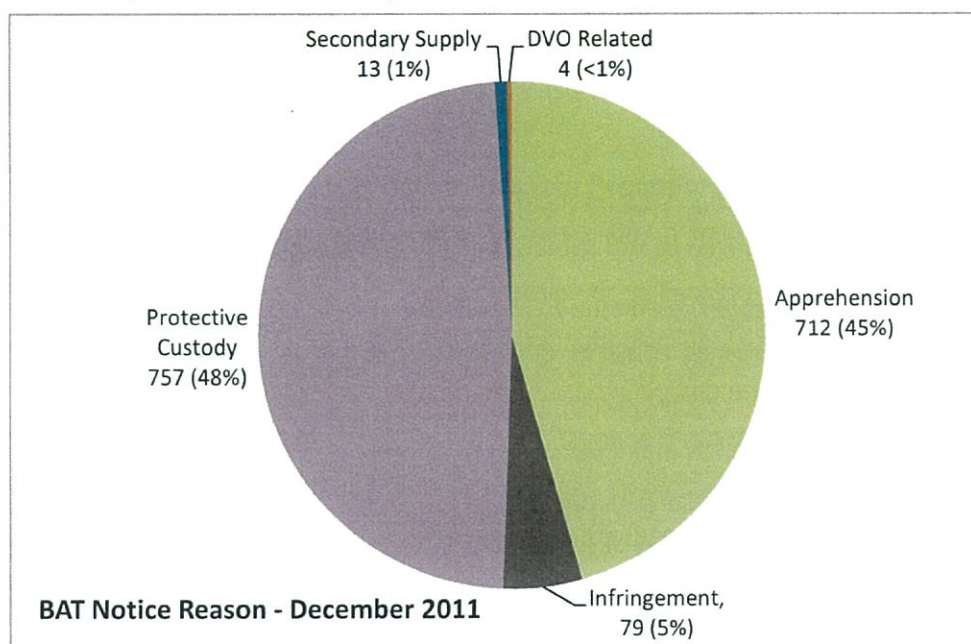
Figure 2: BAT Notice Reason - December 2011
(data extracted from IJIS on 1 February 2012)

At the end of December 2011, of the 1,568 people on the BDR for BAT Notices, 712 (45%) people were on the BDR for BAT Notice due to an apprehension for an offence, and 757 (48%) were as a result of protective custody incidents.

2. A Banned Drinker Register

The BDR is an electronic identification system that maintains central information about the identity of banned drinkers, that is, people who have been issued banning and treatment notices and other banning orders. The BDR enforces court orders, and prohibition orders (such as those as part of a parole or bail condition) at the Point of Sale, preventing sales of takeaway alcohol to banned drinkers throughout the Territory.

The BDR is linked Territory wide, preventing the sale of takeaway alcohol to banned persons. In regions such as Katherine and Alice Springs, local product restrictions continue to apply. Areas with existing electronic permit systems, such as Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt, will be the final premises to have the BDR installed. This is expected to be completed by mid June 2012.

The electronic permit systems which are currently used in these areas will continue to enforce local permit restrictions and will interface with the BDR to ensure that banned persons cannot apply for or possess a liquor permit.

The rollout of the infrastructure to support the BDR commenced in March 2011, and as at 31 December 2011 was installed in 190 takeaway liquor outlets across the Territory.

Triggers for a ban and being placed on the BDR include:

- Repeat protective custody incidents (3 times in 3 months);
- High range and repeat drink driving;
- Repeat alcohol infringement notices;
- Alcohol-related offences such as assault;
- Domestic violence order breaches; and
- Knowingly supplying alcohol to someone who is already banned (secondary supply).

People on the BDR at the end of the Month

Month	People
Jul-11	778
Aug-11	1170
Sep-11	1577
Oct-11	1767
Nov-11	1955
Dec-11	2195
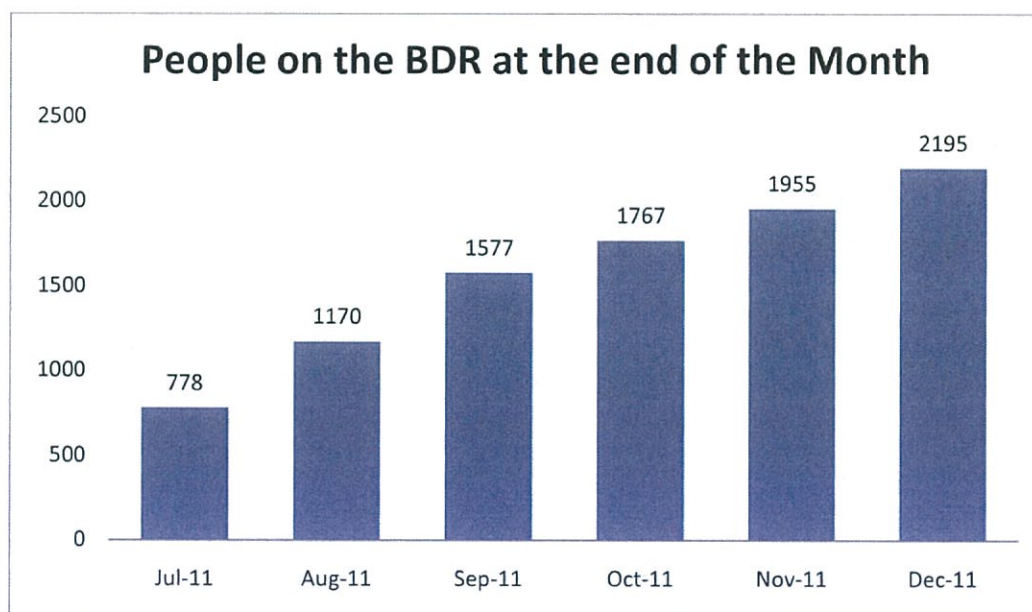
Figure 3: Persons on the BDR (data extracted from the BDR as at 1 January 2012)
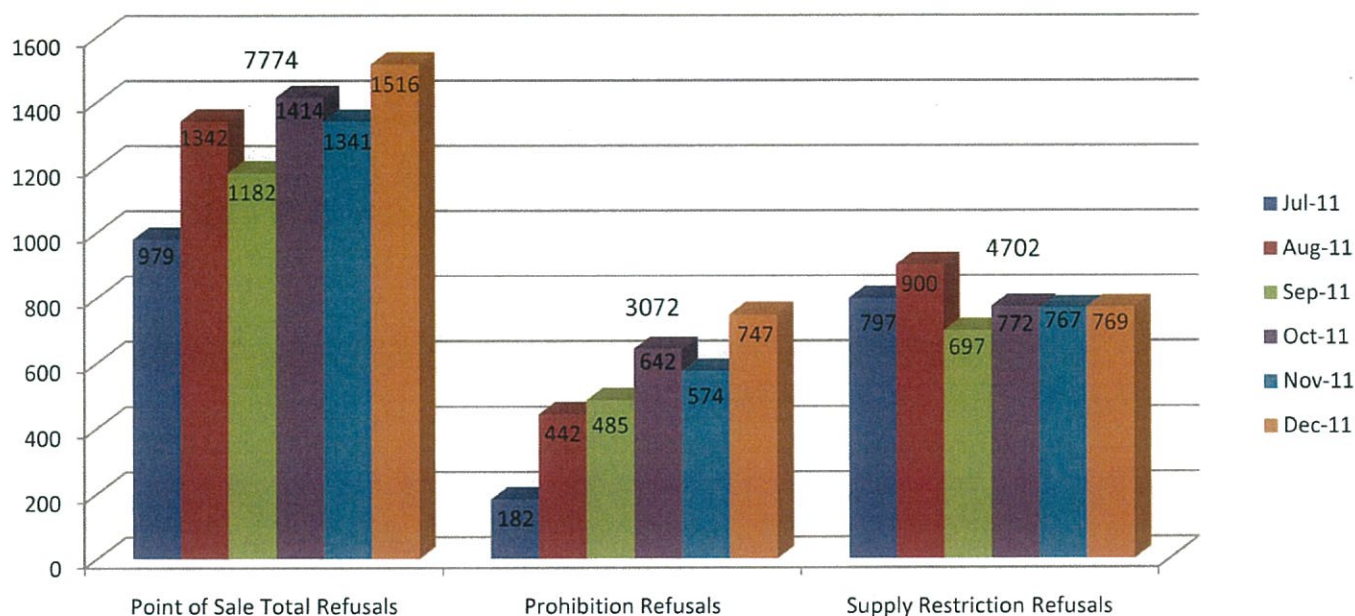
Figure 4: Point of Sale Refusals to 31 December 2011 (data extracted from BDR as at 31 December 2011)

During the first six months 7,774 point of sale refusals were recorded with 3,072 of these related to banned drinkers attempting to purchase alcohol. In December 2011, there were 1,516 point of sale total refusals with 747 for prohibition, i.e. banned drinkers attempting to purchase alcohol.

Prohibition refusals have increased as more people are added to the BDR. Point of Sale supply restrictions in those areas where they apply have remained consistent.

Overall for the first six months of operation the BDR point of sale scanners have handled an average volume of over 400,000 transactions per month.

3. Court Reform

The Alcohol Reform has introduced two new statutory bodies to deal with people who misuse alcohol and drugs; the AOD Tribunal and the SMART Court. The AOD Tribunal has the power to make orders for the benefit of people who misuse alcohol or other drugs and the SMART Court, replacing the Alcohol Court, to make orders for people who have been found guilty of a criminal offence related to alcohol or drug misuse.

The AOD Tribunal will consider whether a person is misusing a substance and, if so, will make orders to help that person access counselling or intervention.

The AOD Tribunal became operational in a limited capacity on 1 July 2011 to deal with reviews of BAT Notices and to administer Alcohol Misuse Intervention (AMI) applications. To 31 December 2011, no ban review or AMI applications have been received by the AOD Tribunal.

From 1 November 2011, the AOD Tribunal is able to receive voluntary application (self-referral) from people who wish to be placed on the BDR to address either their own substance misuse issues or to avoid pressure from family and friends to purchase liquor (humbugging). Voluntary inclusion on the BDR prohibits purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol for a determined period of time. To the end of December 2011, six applications for voluntary inclusion on the BDR have been received and processed by the AOD Tribunal, five from people who were misusing alcohol and one person who wanted to avoid humbugging.

From 1 January 2012, NT Police must refer any person who has breached a third BAT Notice to the AOD Tribunal. The AOD Tribunal commenced receiving mandatory applications for breaches of Third BAT from NT Police on 1 January 2012.

Also, from 1 January 2012, the AOD Tribunal is able to receive applications from an authorised applicant to refer a person who they think may be misusing a substance. Authorised applicants include: police, authorised health practitioners, authorised child protection workers, and adult family members.

Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral for Treatment Court

The new SMART Court hears criminal matters where the offender has committed an offence and the offender has a history of serious substance misuse.

The SMART Court is a court of therapeutic jurisdiction and aims to: reduce offending and antisocial behaviour associated with substance misuse, increase rehabilitation, and reduce the harms associated with substance misuse through improved health and social outcomes for people whose offending is related to substance misuse.

The objective is principally to create rehabilitation pathways in context of a client's substance misuse behaviour and the need to sanction criminal behaviour. The aim is to reduce the number of people re-offending and assist problem drinkers.

The SMART Court is presided over by a magistrate and has the power of a court and can hand down orders, either before sentence or as part of a sentence, that include a combination of: bans on purchasing, possessing and consuming alcohol and mandatory treatment.

The SMART Court commenced operating in a limited capacity on 1 July 2011 alongside the existing Alcohol Court. From 1 July 2012 the SMART Court will operate with full capacity which will include a holistic integrated case management model for people being issued with SMART Orders.

To 31 December 2011, 84 people have been issued with SMART Orders.

Of those, 65 (77%) have commenced treatment to assist with rehabilitation.

Reporting on the outcomes for people who are progressing through the AOD Tribunal and SMART Court systems will start to become available in the coming year.

AOD Tribunal from 1 January 2012

To 15 February 2012, the AOD Tribunal has received one ban review and no AMI applications.

From 1 January 2012, NT Police must refer any person who has breached a Third BAT Notice to the AOD Tribunal. To 15 February 2012, a total of 305 mandatory referrals have been lodged with the Tribunal. Of these, 299 have been referred for clinical assessment.

Of the 305 mandatory Police referrals there were:

- 124 from the Darwin region;
- 104 from the Katherine region;
- 60 from the Alice Springs region;
- 12 from the Barkly region; and
- 5 from the East Arnhem region.

These banned drinkers remain on the BDR until they have been assessed by clinicians and completed the requirements of any order made by the Tribunal, including orders for treatment.

To date, there has been limited response from those people who have been referred to the AOD Tribunal to attend clinical assessments. AOD Tribunal staff are investigating options for working with Non-Government Organisations to locate and advise people of their obligations to attend the AOD Tribunal. The Territory Government is supportive of the Federal Government's proposal to expand income management as an option for the AOD Tribunal.

The AOD Tribunal are collaborating with Licensing Regulation and Alcohol Strategy (LRAS) and local service providers to implement a pilot project in Katherine. The pilot program will involve local treatment providers undertaking clinical assessments (on an outsourced basis) as well as providing case management and case support to banned persons who reside in the Katherine region and have been referred to the AOD Tribunal.

From 1 January 2012, the AOD Tribunal has also been able to receive applications from an authorised applicant to refer a person who they think may be misusing a substance. Authorised applicants include: police, authorised health practitioners, authorised child protection workers, and adult family members.

4. Increased Rehabilitation Services

Significant investment across the spectrum of treatment and rehabilitation services has occurred, building the sectors capacity to meet existing and emerging demands for treatment.

Service Agreements are in place to maximise the treatment service capacity of the non-government residential treatment providers across the NT. This includes funding for additional staff to optimise use and increase capacity for existing withdrawal and rehabilitation beds and in some cases to provide additional beds, as well as increased case work, counselling and outreach services.

The Primary Health Care sector received extensive Alcohol Reform training and workforce development for health practitioners in Central Australia and in the Top End. A key component of the training targeted the professional development of clinical staff and alcohol and other drug workers based in remote communities, ongoing training is provided as part of new staff induction and training to organisations is available upon request.

An online training package and resource manuals for NT Health Practitioners and Health Centres in delivering Alcohol Misuse Interventions (AMIs) was developed. Training in AMIs was delivered by professional health staff to Doctors, GPs and Clinicians in 50 remote Health Centres and over 70 other Medical and Treatment Centres across the NT, including the NT Government Primary Health, Aboriginal Medical Services, Private Practitioners, Residential Treatment and Outreach services. A new culturally specific assessment tool was developed to increase the likelihood of people living in remote communities to engage with Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) services.

DoJ and Alcohol and Other Drug Program (AODP) staff are working on a 'pathways to treatment' initiative to raise awareness of services and programs for people on the Banned Drinker Register (BDR).

DoH has provided funding to Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) to recruit a specialist position. This position is working with Aboriginal Medical Services across the Northern Territory, AODP (DoH) and DoJ to identify the gaps in services in remote regions and where new resources for treatment will be allocated.

Improved pathways have been put in place for withdrawal clients from Emergency Department to Ambulatory services and non-Government agencies, resulting in a referral to treatment / withdrawal being able to occur in less than three hours, where previously it averaged eight days. Currently nurses are located in the emergency department of Royal Darwin (RDH) and Alice Springs Hospitals. Additional positions will be filled in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy over the next six months.

For people that are taken into protective custody by Police, the Darwin Watch House now has a trained nurse available from Wednesdays to Saturdays from 7:00pm to 3:30am. The nurse provides medical assessments and screening to triage people with acute health needs. Nurses are able to make recommendations for referrals onwards for those people that require treatment.

Significant investment across the spectrum of treatment and rehabilitation services has allowed treatment services to build their capacity to support the Alcohol Reforms. Treatment agencies are now able to provide expanded services for people seeking treatment for alcohol related problems due to two factors. Firstly, the services have increased the bed utilisation rates by being able to recruit more staff and secondly, some services have made additional beds available and to provide case work, counselling and outreach services.

The Alcohol Reform initiatives have increased the expansion of services as well as the strengthening of clinical management so that staff in government and non-government agencies can be supported to deliver 'best practice' programs.

5. Awareness Campaigns

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform continues to be supported by community education and awareness campaigns to promote safe and responsible drinking.

A comprehensive communication campaign to assist Territorians and visitors understand the Reform was deployed through various media throughout the Territory; including newspapers, radio and television prior to and after 1 July 2011. Information brochures outlining key alcohol laws in the Territory remain available to all tourism operators and tourist information centres.

Throughout the implementation of the 'Enough is Enough' reforms, DoJ worked with the Liquor Industry with working groups, customised information packs, online material and a dedicated call centre for licensees with technical issues.

There is currently a focus on effective communication aimed at increasing awareness of the Alcohol Reform for Indigenous communities, storyboards and information kits are being delivered to community service organisations in remote areas. Talking posters aimed at raising awareness of the Reform amongst our remote Indigenous communities have already been distributed to remote police stations, health clinics and shire offices.

Summary

The 'Enough is Enough' Alcohol Reform is a long-term strategy aimed at breaking the cycle of problem drinking and the issues it creates by directing people into appropriate treatment and rehabilitation.

The Territory Government has invested significant funds and effort into implementing the most comprehensive alcohol reform package in the nation's history.

The implementation phase of the Alcohol Reform has been a successful collaboration across multiple agencies led by DoJ.   DoH and NT Police in partnership with DoJ have successfully implemented a massive reform agenda for the benefit of all Territorians.

In addition, non-government organisations and the health sector have invested much time and energy in supporting the government in the implementation of this reform.

Co-operation and support from liquor licensees has also been an integral element in the success of the implementation of the reform.

The crime and other data provided in this report is of a volatile nature and in some cases will vary slightly from one reporting period to another.

Alcohol abuse causes crime
60% of all assaults are alcohol related.
*Data Source: Issue 31: March Quarter 2010 Northern Territory Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics.

Call 1800 131 634
www.safeterritory.nt.gov.au

Recorded Crime March Quarter 2011
Nhulunbuy – key findings*

Northern Territory Government

Explanatory Notes

Largely as a result of its small population, statistics in the Northern Territory can be highly volatile with large swings from one period to the next.

Consequently recorded crime statistics are presented over an extended period to present the current period's data within the context of any longer term trends.

The underlying average smooths out volatility and identifies major changes in the level of crime.

ASSAULT

Underlying average – The underlying average level of *assault* has has ranged between 6 and 10 offences per month during the past nine quarters. Its current level of 7 per month is at the lower end of the range.

Trend – Over the past 12 months no trend was identified.

Quarterly comparisons – There were 23 *assault* offences recorded in the current quarter, an increase of 5% (1) from the previous quarter, but a decrease of 21% (6) from the same quarter the previous year.
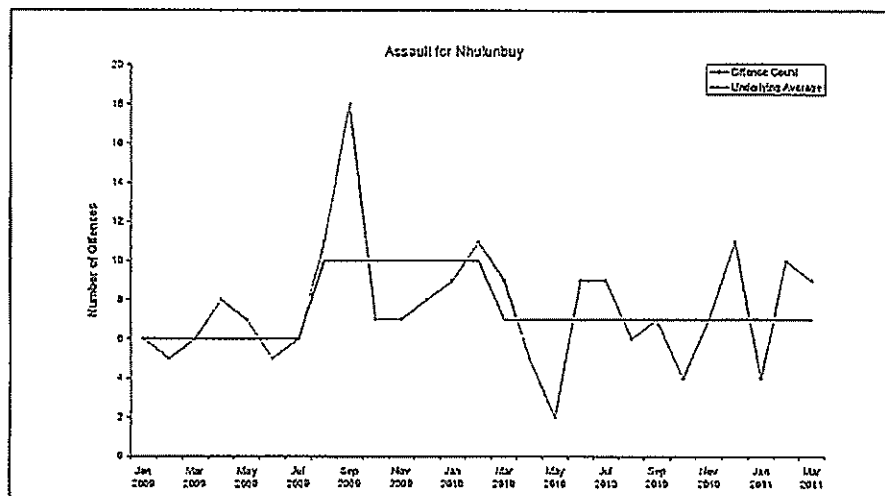
HOUSE BREAK-INS

Underlying average – The underlying average level of *house break-ins* has ranged between 1 and 3 offences per month during the past nine quarters. Its current level of 2 per month is in the middle of the range.

Trend – Over the past 12 months no trend was identified.

Quarterly comparisons – There were 8 *house break-in* offences recorded in the current quarter, an increase of 7 from the previous quarter, but no change from the same quarter the previous year.
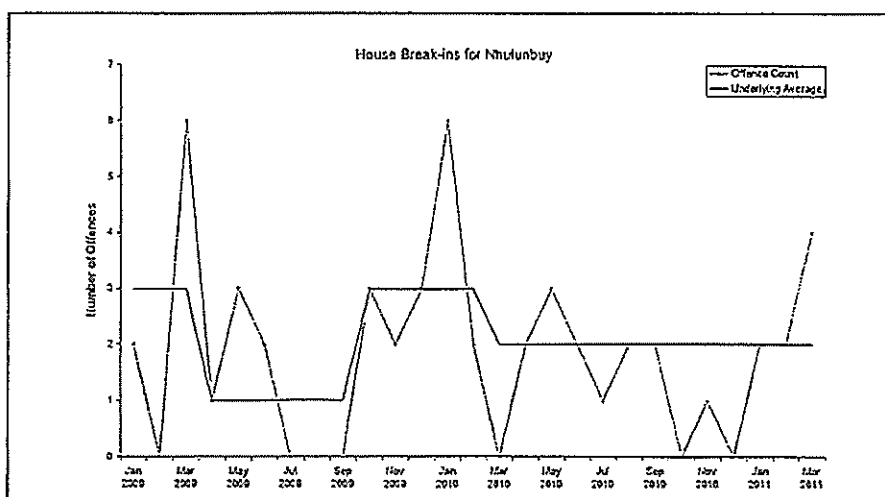
Number of Police Issued Infringement Notices for Alcohol Related Offences[#] in Prescribed Areas

Year	Number of Infringements
2007*	21
2008	358
2009	1189
2010	1033
2011	944
Total - 1 July 2007 to 31 December 2011	3545

Extracted from IJIS on 28 February 2012.
Include offences under S75 of the NT Liquor Act and S12(2) of the Commonwealth NTER Act
* 2007 is from July to December only.

Number of Apprehensions for Alcohol Related Offences[#] in Prescribed Areas

Year	Number of Apprehensions
2007*	326
2008	392
2009	609
2010	425
2011	227
Total - 1 July 2007 to 31 December 2011	1979

Extracted from IJIS on 28 February 2012.

Include offences under S75 of the NT Liquor Act and S12(2) of the Commonwealth NTER Act

* 2007 is from July to December only.

E

Number of Convictions for Alcohol Related Offences[#] in Prescribed Areas

Year	Actual Imprisonment	Home detention	Fully Suspended Imprisonment	Community Work Order	Monetary Penalty	Other Order	Total
2007*							
Supply in excess of 1350 ml of alcohol in prescribed areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Alcohol related offences in prescribed areas	14	0	0	5	249	2	270
Sub-Total	14	0	0	5	249	2	270
2008							
Supply in excess of 1350 ml of alcohol in prescribed areas	4	0	0	0	5	0	9
Other Alcohol related offences in prescribed areas	9	1	4	5	320	5	344
Sub-Total	13	1	4	5	325	5	353
2009							
Supply in excess of 1350 ml of alcohol in prescribed areas	3	0	3	0	8	0	14
Other Alcohol related offences in prescribed areas	17	0	0	6	428	3	454
Sub-Total	20	0	3	6	436	3	468
2010							
Supply in excess of 1350 ml of alcohol in prescribed areas	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other Alcohol related offences in prescribed areas	4	0	0	6	357	4	371
Sub-Total	4	0	0	6	359	4	373
2011							
Supply in excess of 1350 ml of alcohol in prescribed areas	1	0	0	0	4	0	5
Other Alcohol related offences in prescribed areas	4	0	0	2	187	3	196
Sub-Total	5	0	0	2	191	3	201
1 July 2007 to 31 December 2011							
Supply in excess of 1350 ml of alcohol in prescribed areas	8	0	3	0	19	0	30
Other Alcohol related offences in prescribed areas	48	1	4	24	1541	17	1635
Total	56	1	7	24	1560	17	1665

Extracted from IJIS on 28 February 2012.
Include offences under S75 of the NT Liquor Act and S12(2) of the Commonwealth NTER Act
* 2007 is from July to December only.

H

ANCO	Date effective	Description	KeyWord	Jurisdiction	Act	Section
591070	16-Sep-07	PERSON MUST NOT HAVE LIQUOR IN THEIR POSSESSION WHILST IN A PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(B)
591080	19-Aug-07	PERSON MUST NOT CONSUME LIQUOR IN A PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(C)
591090	19-Aug-07	BRING LIQUOR INTO A PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(A)
591110	18-Aug-07	DISPOSE OF LIQUOR IN A PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(C)
591140	19-Aug-07	SELL LIQUOR IN A PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(C)
591180	20-Aug-07	HAVE LIQUOR UNDER CONTROL WITHIN A PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(B)
591385	18-Aug-07	PERSON COMMITS OFFENCE IF PERSON SUPPLIES LIQUOR TO THIRD PERSON IN PRESCRIBED AREA WHERE ALCOHOL WAS MORE THAN 1350ML	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(C)
591386	18-Aug-07	PERSON TRANSPORTING LIQUOR INTO PRESCRIBED AREA INTENDING TOSUPPLY IT TO THIRD PERSON ALCOHOL MORE THAN 1350ML ALCOHOL	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(A)
591387	18-Aug-07	POSSESS LIQUOR IN A PRESCRIBED AREA INTENDING TO SUPPLY TO ATHIRD PERSON WHERE ALCOHOL WAS GREATER THAN 1350ML	PRESCRIBED	NT	LIQUOR ACT	75(1)(B)
591440	10-Jul-07	POSSESS/CONSUME LIQUOR IN PRESCRIBED AREA	PRESCRIBED	FEDERAL	NTER ACT 2007	12(2)

Number of Convictions for Alcohol Related Offences# in Prescribed Areas

Year	Actual Imprisonment	Home detention	Fully Suspended Imprisonment	Community Work Order	Monetary Penalty	Other Order	Total
2007*							
NT Section 75 (1) Liquor Act	14	0	0	5	249	2	270
Sub-Total	14	0	0	5	249	2	270
2008							
NT Section 75 (1) Liquor Act	13	1	4	5	325	5	353
Sub-Total	13	1	4	5	325	5	353
2009							
NT Section 75 (1) Liquor Act	20	0	3	6	436	3	468
Sub-Total	20	0	3	6	436	3	468
2010							
Commonwealth NTER Section 12(2)	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
NT Section 75 (1) Liquor Act	4	0	0	6	356	4	370
Sub-Total	4	0	0	6	359	4	373
2011							
Commonwealth NTER Section 12(2)	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
NT Section 75 (1) Liquor Act	4	0	0	2	190	3	199
Sub-Total	5	0	0	2	191	3	201
1 July 2007 to 31 December 2011							
Commonwealth NTER Section 12(2)	1	0	0	0	4	0	5
NT Section 75 (1) Liquor Act	55	1	7	24	1556	17	1660
Total	56	1	7	24	1560	17	1665

Extracted from IJIS on 28 February 2012.
Include offences under S75 of the NT Liquor Act and S12(2) of the Commonwealth NTER Act
* 2007 is from July to December only.

Question on Notice

Information from the Northern Territory Government about what the processes are, the penalties are and information about drugs across the Territory.

Number of Convictions for Supplying Dangerous Drug in Indigenous Community

	Actual Imprisonment	Fully Suspended Imprisonment	Monetary Penalty	Total
2010	2	2	1	5
2011	4	13	5	22
Total	6	15	6	27

Extracted from IJIS on 28 February 2012.

Note: The amendment was enforced in July 2008 but there were no convictions for this offence until late 2010.

H

Question on Notice

Information from the Northern Territory Government about what the processes are, the penalties are and information about drugs across the Territory.

Number of Apprehensions for Supplying Dangerous Drug in Indigenous Community

	Number of Apprehensions
2009	1
2010	53
2011	68
Total	122

Extracted from IJIS on 28 February 2012.

Note: The amendment was enforced in July 2008 but no-one was charged with this offence until late 2009.

4

DEPARTMENT OF
**HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES**

Northern
Territory
Government

Information Management

community engagement charter
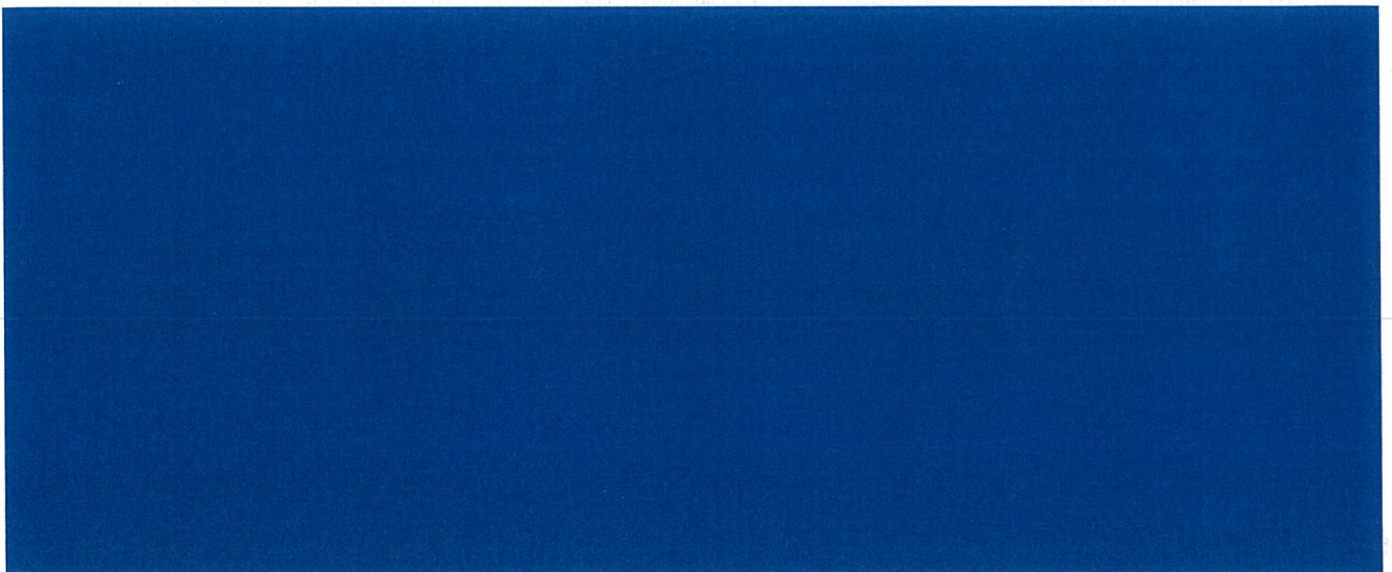
Community Engagement Charter
Department of Housing, Local Government & Regional Services

The Department engages with the community to identify views to assist Government to make informed decisions and involve stakeholders in decision making.
Our vision for the Territory is strong, creative communities. Effective community engagement:

- assists the Department to understand the specific issues affecting the community and better target programs and services;

- promotes community development and building capacity; and

- fosters a positive relationship with the community by acknowledging the benefit of Territorians actively participating in the continual development of policy and service delivery options for Government's consideration.

The Department has a broad range of stakeholders including anyone who is interested in, or affected by the outcomes delivered to the Territory community by the Department.

Not all decisions require community engagement and the Department makes decisions about when it is appropriate to consult on a case by case basis. Community engagement should not raise unrealistic expectations and the Department will ensure that the engagement methods used are flexible and appropriate for the stakeholder group, and are an efficient and effective use of public funds.

Our Commitment

When providing information

The Department is committed to providing stakeholders with a balanced view and objective information in relation to the Department's role and programs, and Government's initiatives. Relevant information will be presented in clear, concise and easily understood format. It will be readily available and easy to access to allow people to make informed and timely contributions.

In certain circumstances information may be withheld about a particular issue due to its personal, cultural or commercially sensitive nature.

When consulting and encouraging active participation

The Department is committed to keeping stakeholders informed, listening to and acknowledging their concerns, reflecting their views in the options developed for Government's consideration and providing feedback on how stakeholders contributions have influenced Government decision making.

We will be focused and professional:

- Clear statements will be made outlining the purpose of the consultation, and the roles and expectations of the Department and participants.
- We will use appropriate engagement methods for the task.

We will be inclusive:

- We will encourage the participation of all community members interested in or affected by a decision.
- Community members will be provided with a range of opportunities to participate and we will be sensitive to the different needs of community groups to maximise their ability to contribute.
- We will use Interpreters as required.
- The Department will provide clear avenues for feedback, consider and respond to contributions from all participants, be open to different views and alter the course of action where appropriate.
- The Department will engage with the community in a transparent fashion. All participants will be advised of how their feedback will be used, will be able to view written information recorded as a result of the consultation and be afforded the opportunity to comment on whether the documentation is an accurate of their view.

Working in partnerships

When working in partnership, the Department will look to relevant stakeholders for advice when considering issues and formulating solutions, and incorporate their advice into decisions as much as possible.

Monitoring and evaluation

As a part of the Department's commitment to effective community engagement practices, consultation and decision making processes will be monitored and regularly evaluated.

How we engage

Methods of community engagement will vary depending upon the goal and outcome, time and resource constraints, and the size and characteristics of the stakeholder groups involved. he Department currently uses a variety of community engagement tools.

Community Engagement Charter
Department of Housing, Local Government & Regional Services

Partnership and active participation

- The Department provides support and works to promote the capacity of a number of advisory bodies so that they can provide advice to Government and actively participate in decision making.

- The Department provides support to a number of joint decision-making structures with other levels of government.

- Frontline counter staff and Community Development Officers make direct and regular contact with individuals and community groups to provide information, seek views and report on emerging issues.

- Business partnerships with sponsors of events are developed.

Consultation

- Surveys are sometimes used to seek the community's view in relation to particular programs or issues.

- The Department may call for public submissions or produce discussion papers for public comment to obtain more considered input into matters.

- Public meetings, forums, workshops and focus groups may be held to identify a range of different options.

Information provision

- Personal, community leaders and stakeholder briefings, and lectures and seminars are used to focus on specific issues and allow expert opinions to be aired.

- Our staff are available at information centres and the show circuit to highlight some of the major initiatives being managed by the Department.

- Various divisions of the Department produce special publications or information kits including brochures, flyers and fact sheets.

- Newspaper advertisements, media releases, and television and radio broadcasting may be used when we need to provide the general public with important information, or if we intend to promote an event or program to a wide distribution of people.

- Various divisions of the Department produce regular print and email newsletters so that individuals and community groups are informed about the Department's programs or Government initiatives.

- The Department may email or send letters to individuals, community groups and organisations to ensure relevant information is provided about matters, to advise of an event, or to invite comment.

- Letterbox drops may be used to provide summarised information and keep stakeholders updated on the progress of certain matters.

- Telephone information including toll-free numbers may simply provide recorded information or be used interactively.
- Our website is regularly updated and includes email, mail and telephone contacts so that staff can respond to your queries.

Community Engagement Implementation Plan

Initiatives for 2005 and beyond

- The Department will continue to assist and facilitate the work of the various bodies established to advise Government.
- The Department will promote and continue to develop business partnerships with existing and potential sponsors of events.
- The Department will actively pursue partnerships with appropriate peak bodies, local governments and individual communities to agree on joint activities.
- All major policy proposals and strategies will detail how the Department intends o engage with stakeholders.
- The Department will include community engagement activities in its planning process, which will be linked to the Charter.
- The Department will develop a community engagement page on our website, which will include links to the departmental community engagement charter and implementation plan, in addition to the relevant communication strategies for initiatives.
- The Department will web enable community access to information held on departmental databases subject to privacy considerations.

The Department undertakes to protect personal information and has developed policies in relation to Information Access and Privacy, under the auspices of the Information Act 2002. A copy of these polices can be found on the Department's Internet site.

Contact details are listed below should you have any questions in relation to these policies, require information about the Department or how you might engage with us on particular matters, or should you have any comments in relation to this Charter.

Contact: Manager of the Information Unit
Telephone: (08) 8999 8490
Web address: http://www.dlghs.nt.gov.au
Postal address: GPO Box 4621, Darwin NT 0801
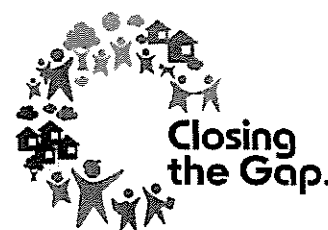
Remote Service Delivery Engagement Strategy

Introduction

The Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Engagement Strategy has been developed to:

- guide the way government agencies and their staff engage with Indigenous Australians in RSD communities on the development, implementation and delivery of COAG and non-COAG programs, services and initiatives; and

- assist government agencies and their staff to understand good engagement practices, and so, embed these in all RSD activities.

The elements that make up the Strategy include:

- Understanding the new RSD model

- Encouraging government agencies to adopt and apply good engagement practices for all engagement activities in RSD communities

- Encouraging government agencies to utilise the engagement planning template to guide engagement activities in RSD communities

- Providing support to build community and government staff capacity to engage

- Encouraging government agencies to utilise consistent RSD communications messages.

The following attachments are provided to support engagement activities in RSD communities and include:

Attachment A: Template/Guide to planning RSD engagement activities

Attachment B: Issues to keep in mind when engaging with Indigenous Australians

Attachment C: COAG *Service Delivery Principles for Programs and Services for Indigenous Australians*

Attachment D: Communications messages

1. Overview of Remote Service Delivery Model

In December 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that all levels of government would work with Indigenous Australians to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

In recognition that life outcomes for Indigenous Australians remain well below those of non-Indigenous Australians, COAG set six targets to be achieved in the areas of health, housing and education and seven areas for action (building blocks) that need to be in place if the current levels of disadvantage are going to be reduced.

COAG agreed to a National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (RSD NP), an agreement between governments that puts into place a new approach to delivery of services to Indigenous Australians living in remote Australia. The new model sets service standards and specifies the roles and responsibilities of each level of government. The new model also requires agencies to work closely with Indigenous Australians to determine what services are needed, how services will be provided and how these services can help 'Close the Gap' in their community.

The objectives of the RSD NP are to:

(a) **improve the access** of Indigenous families to a full range of suitable and culturally inclusive services;

(b) **raise the standard and range of services** delivered to Indigenous families to be broadly consistent with those provided to other Australians in similar sized and located communities;

(c) **improve the level of governance and leadership** within Indigenous communities and Indigenous community organisations;

(d) provide **simpler access and better coordinated government services** for Indigenous Australians in identified communities;

(e) **increase economic and social participation** wherever possible, and **promote personal responsibility**, engagement and behaviours consistent with positive social norms.

The model requires that we pay close attention to the relationship between government staff (or our non-government service providers) and the Indigenous Australians they assist. It calls for a better relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians based on a shared respect, shared resolve and shared responsibility. It requires that we develop and use flexible, tailored, local approaches in cooperative and shared ways. Information on good engagement practices to support how government agencies work with Indigenous Australians in remote Australia is in Section 3.

The Australian Government, together with the NSW, QLD, SA, WA and the Northern Territory Governments, is already implementing this new approach to remote service delivery. The first phase of this concentrates on 29 priority communities across those jurisdictions, while non-RSD locations will continue to receive the same levels of support and financial assistance as usual. The model requires us to:

- establish a 'single government interface' – a single point of contact with both the Australian and State/Territory government – through:

    o the establishment of a joint Regional Operations Centre (ROC) staffed by officers from both spheres of government; and

- o Government Business Managers (GBMs) and Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs) based in each priority community;
- providing leadership and governance training to develop the abilities of Indigenous Australians living in remote communities to be better involved in processes that affect them;
- working collaboratively across our agencies and governments and in partnership with people living in priority communities to jointly develop and set priorities within Local Implementation Plans;
- direct Government funding in areas such as early childhood development, education, health, housing and employment programs in ways that meet the needs and priorities of Indigenous Australians living in remote communities.

All government staff should understand this shared government decision, and work with staff in the ROC, including GBMs and IEOs in planning and undertaking engagement activities in communities.

Implicit in this new approach is a commitment to 'hardwire' genuine engagement with Indigenous Australians into government processes and actions going forward. That is, to establish a new culture of government and community going forward together.

A copy of the RSD NP and bilateral plans for each participating jurisdiction can be found at:
http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_partnership_agreements/in digenous.aspx

2. RSD and Resetting the Relationship

All Governments have recognised that they have not been very effective in engaging with Indigenous Australians living in remote Australia on the programs or services that affect them. They understand that imposing solutions on people without their active involvement is not useful, and that genuine collaboration is needed for real and lasting results to be achieved.

An effective and respectful relationship with Indigenous Australians is a critical part of Closing the Gap and fundamental to the new model for delivery of services in remote Australia. A truly effective relationship is one that is respectful and involves honest and open communication. Only through such relationships can we build local ownership of approaches that will improve the lives and futures of Indigenous Australians living in remote Australia.

Governments are providing increased investment in priority communities and improving their interaction with Indigenous Australians. All government staff therefore should understand and follow the *National Principles for Investments in Remote Locations* when changing existing or developing new policies and programs.

Government has to move from abstract policy and one-size delivery to building local capacity and responsibility. Governments must look at the ways in which they currently develop policy and deliver services and consider how they can do this more effectively through real involvement and participation with the people affected by those policies and services.

All government staff should also understand and build the COAG *Service Delivery Principles for Services to Indigenous Australians* into every part of their work in remote Australia, especially when working with local Indigenous Australians in delivering services to meet their needs. In particular, the principles note that:

Engagement with Indigenous men, women and children and communities should be central to the design and delivery of programs and services. In particular, attention is to be given to:

- *recognising that strong relationships/partnerships between government, community and service providers increase the capacity to achieve identified outcomes and work towards building these relationships;*
- *engaging and empowering Indigenous people who use Government services, and the broader Indigenous community in the design and delivery of programs and services as appropriate;*
- *recognising and understanding local circumstances;*
- *ensuring Indigenous representation is appropriate, having regard to local representation as required;*
- *being transparent regarding the role and level of Indigenous engagement along a continuum from information sharing to decision-making; and*
- *recognising and respecting Indigenous culture, language and identity.*

Governments also look to Indigenous Australians to take responsibility for their own lives. Support should be provided to local Indigenous Australians in remote communities to be involved in the development and delivery of programs and services and to:

- embrace change;
- strengthen or restore community values; and
- take responsibility for their own wellbeing and for the health, safety and education of their children

without which, improvements in housing and other services will not make sufficient difference.

The COAG *Service Delivery Principles for Services to Indigenous Australians* are at **Attachment C.**

3. RSD and Engagement

What is engagement?

The way we work with Indigenous Australians in remote communities is extremely important.

Engagement is more than just informing or consulting or discussing an issue. It requires us to enter into a relationship as equal partners, with respect and concern for the other's situation and perspective. We must be respectful and honest. We must ensure good two way communication and actively listen. We should make sure messages are clear and interpreter services are provided where needed. We have to be flexible and know how to encourage contributions. We must enable ownership. We need to recognise the importance of traditional lines of authority, of networks and partnerships.

This is not about being able to say we 'consulted'. It is not about making sure that community members are "involved in decisions" so as to justify subsequent actions, nor is it necessarily about reaching consensus.

Engagement is respectful: it sets the example of good democratic practice and it builds capacity rather than disempowers. At its highest level it is about the relationship between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. More practically, it is the way we all need to work *together* to get things done.

Government representatives should make sure that community members are closely involved in any and all discussions on the problems that affect them, and work with them in decisions on solutions. To do this we need to:

- *build on existing mechanisms for engagement with the Indigenous community*
  - this should include mechanisms that exist within the community itself as well as those established or being used by governments

- *recognise and utilise the skills and experience of local staff in conducting the engagement process*
  - including ROCs, GBMs, local IEOs

- *provide support* for members of local Indigenous organisations to actively participate in the engagement process

- *recognise that development of local implementation plans will take time*, and will involve ongoing engagement with local communities.

Types of Engagement

We need to be clear on what the objective is for the engagement activity and the level and type of involvement that is appropriate to achieve this. The engagement activity may be to:

- *inform* – providing factual information, educating communities with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions policy, outcomes of a process and/or decisions taken, why they were taken and the intended benefits, to provide information on the process and opportunities for engagement

- *consult* – obtain feedback from communities through clearly defined channels to help guide the development of policies and programs, analysis, alternatives and/or decisions -listening to concerns and aspirations, gather information

- *involve* – work directly with communities throughout the process to ensure common understanding of the issue and that the views, concerns and aspirations are reflected in the development of options or approaches, two way exchange of information, encourage discussion, opportunity to influence the outcome

- *collaborate* – partner with communities by directly incorporating their input to and advice on formulating solutions and or options, shared agenda setting and deliberation of issues

- *devolve* – placing final decision-making in the hands of the public - the community decides what will be implemented.

Government staff must contact the ROC Manager and/or the GBM before engaging with Indigenous Australians in any identified RSD priority community. This is to ensure:

- the COAG decision to put into place a single government interface is respected and complied with

- the volume of engagement activities to be undertaken can be managed appropriately so that communities are not overwhelmed;

- engagement activities can be streamlined and if appropriate, combined;

- the right people and arrangements can be put in place to facilitate the engagement.

ROCs and/or GBMs maintain schedules of planned engagement activities in priority communities. Visiting Officer Notification forms should be completed to assist with scheduling of engagement activities.

Principles for Engagement

Regardless of the type of engagement envisaged, it is important that all engagement activity is underpinned by the following **core principles**:

- *Respectful*
  - Respect and trust the knowledge and views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians
  - Engage through the community's preferred and/or nominated channels
  - Be factual

- *Informed*
  - Know as much as possible before proceeding with engagement.
  - Understand the broad physical, social, historical, cultural and political context in which engagement is to occur
  - Take into account the preferences of all parties involved in how they wish to engage, whilst building on existing strengths and assets

- *Ethical*
  - Be transparent and honest
  - Government must be clear about why it is engaging and what it hopes to achieve to ensure that expectations are aligned with what can reasonably be expected as an outcome

- *Meaningful*
  - Allow adequate time for genuine engagement
  - Encourage genuine partnerships between the Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, including sharing decision making and having provisions for well-defined roles and responsibilities

- *Outcomes focussed*
  - Ensure engagement activity is outcomes focussed
  - Successful outcomes need to demonstrate how the relationship has been improved through the engagement
  - Work for 'win-win' outcomes

- *Sustainable*
  - Maximise local participation, implementation and handling

- Ensure that adequate support is provided so that people are able to participate and contribute to the engagement process
- Be clear about why participation is being sought and how people's participation will affect the process
- Follow up
  - Acknowledge the participation of Indigenous Australians in engagement activity
  - Ensure that clear feedback is provided to RSD communities to inform them of how their input has been utilised
  - Feedback should be provided through the appropriate channels in the community

Objectives of Engagement

There are four key objectives linked to the goal of renewing relationships – they are:

Building Trust	Government representatives act to foster trust between themselves and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is a vital first step in renewing the relationship.
Promoting Dialogue	Dialogue becomes the foundation for policy development and implementation across all portfolios.
Enhancing Capacity	Build the capacity of individuals and empower them to participate in the development and implementation of programs and policy and to achieve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Developing Community	Governments affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' diversity and support them in their communities without undermining their right to determine their future.

4. RSD engagement priorities

The new model of Remote Service Delivery requires that many specific activities start as soon as possible in order to achieve the desired changes. These involve varying levels of engagement with Indigenous Australians living in priority communities. These activities include:

- Ensuring detailed understanding and recording (baseline mapping) of the current indicators of social and economic circumstances, levels of government investment, current services and service gaps in each location:
  - this involves sharing information to be drawn together in a baseline mapping report for each community, for comment by community members and suggestions of other information for inclusion
  - advice will be sought from community members on local research they might want to do around baseline mapping and future planning
- Audit of Municipal and Essential Services:
  - ensuring community members understand that governments have asked for an audit of the municipal and essential services infrastructure in and around each priority location to better understand levels of current services, gaps in services and the funds required to provide them
  - this may lead to later decisions around which sphere of government is best able to provide those services
- Mapping of existing community networks and governance structures
  - this involves understanding and recognising the way in which the community operates, who is involved in what decision and how the community manages its affairs – this will be done the first instance as a desktop exercise using existing information from various sources. It will then be checked and refined through direct discussion with community members and those with decision making authority.
  - work then needs to happen with community members to establish a group that is representative of all, with whom Local Implementation Plans can be negotiated.
- Development of Local Implementation Plans
  - work will be done with community members to help to identify their vision for their community and the specific activities needed to achieve that vision, drawing on any existing plans, new investments available through other National Partnership Agreements, baseline mapping or other sources of information identified by the community.
- Development and delivery of leadership skills to priority locations:
  - community members will be asked for advice on the type of leadership and governance training that they believe will meet their needs and enable them to influence change.
- Local Community Awareness
  - this involves local community residents sharing their local knowledge and experiences through structured discussions to build the capacity of ROC staff to engage effectively with local Aboriginal people.
  - this may include community members telling their story about their community, their history, their current situation and what they want for their children, themselves, and their community into the future as the basis for discussion on how to get there.
- Development and delivery of capacity building in priority locations:
  - engage with community members to help them make their communities self-sustaining.

Various other specific programs are going to be put into place in priority communities. This may include delivery of new Indigenous Parenting Support Services and Indigenous Playgroups and Indigenous Children and Family Centres. All of these will require engagement with local people on the design and delivery of those services to ensure that they meet local needs. To ensure that local participation is effective, work will need to be done on an engagement plan and supporting communications materials. A template to guide planning is at **Attachment A.** Activities will continue to develop and evolve and new activities will come into place over time. Specific engagement strategy for each RSD location will need to be prepared.

It will be important to be aware of and use existing engagement mechanisms at every level – within the community and at local/state/ and Australian government level (e.g. women's groups, Local Councils, Indigenous Health forums). Ongoing engagement should occur through a comprehensive set of mechanisms that are inclusive of the broad community.

Information on things to keep in mind when engaging with Indigenous Australians and communities is at **Attachment B.**

5. Building capacity to engage in RSD communities

It is important that people who undertake engagement activities in the RSD locations have a good appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and perspectives. It is also important to understand the government wants agencies to effect a cultural shift and ensure that cultural awareness training is taken seriously.

Clause 17 (k) of the NPA RSD requires *"the delivery of cultural competence measures for all government employees involved with identified communities".* Every staff member from any agency of any government that is working with Indigenous Australians in a priority RSD community should have at least completed a departmental cultural awareness training course. These courses, while not comprehensive, are intended to raise staff awareness of the cultural issues that should be kept in mind when planning for and undertaking any form of engagement with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

FaHCSIA is developing training modules that will further build the capacity of government employees to effectively engage with Indigenous Australians, understand the government's policy agenda and possibly, also understand how to work with interpreters. These will be offered to ROC staff and others. The development of further cultural competency training, including accreditation is being considered that would further build the skills and expertise of public servants working in this area.

Locally specific cultural awareness training is also being developed in each location. This training will use local Indigenous Australians in order to build awareness of the issues and concerns of which community members want government employees to be aware.

The ROC Manager and his or her staff play a critical role in managing the operations of the ROC, supporting the GBMs and ensuring they are aware of the key activities being undertaken in each community. ROCs will also ensure that community members are engaged in development of the Local Implementation Plans and in oversighting the involvement of any and all government agencies in the identified locations.

GBMs are key people on the ground in each identified priority community. As well as acting as the primary point of contact with governments, they help to ensure the involvement of community members and other key parties in the development of Local Implementation Plans. This requires local level community engagement, collaborative decision making and ownership of the implementation of the plans. GBMs will need to help to identify strong Indigenous leaders who can champion and support reforms, involve

all members of the community in the design and delivery of programs locally and regionally, and who will contribute to their implementation. The GBM ensures that services are coordinated on the ground and also reports on progress and on local issues and concerns to the local Regional Operations Centre and State/Territory Board of Management.

The role of IEOs is to support GBMs and act as a link between other people in their community or local area and governments by:

- ensuring that other government staff understand the circumstances, complexities and 'rules' of the local community;
- helping to explain government policies and processes;
- supporting engagement activities in communities and ensuring community members understand what is being asked of them; and
- encouraging and supporting local people in contributing to their own futures.

Leadership training and support modules for IEOs are being developed that will help them to undertake their role effectively.

Clause 21 (e) of the RSD NP states "establish programs in identified locations to develop community leadership skills for individuals around which communities and social groupings can organise, including capacity building opportunities (for example, training in leadership, financial management and administration for existing and potential members of governing bodies in remote communities)"

Leadership and governance training modules are being developed tailored to the needs expressed by community members. Support and training in participatory research methodologies can also be provided to Indigenous Australians who wish to undertake priority local research projects in their community in support of baseline mapping, Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) and future planning activities.

Community engagement workshops are also being held with community representatives from RSD locations, IEOs and GBMs and ROC staff to:

- help build understanding across the broader community about the new approach to working with Indigenous people in remote Australia;
- build new or strengthen existing relationships between the different groups; and
- encourage community representatives to play an active role in their community and consider how they might contribute.

6. RSD communications

Clear and understandable communication is essential. Proper engagement is only possible when community members are sufficiently and appropriately informed, prepared and supported.

For good communication, the message itself has to be understandable and make sense. It should not be clouded in 'management-speak' or obscure social policy jargon. The audience must be known and understood, including the way in which the desired message will best be conveyed. This means communication approaches need to be tailored to suit the local circumstances.

Various communications material (video, pamphlets, flip charts) can be used to support engagement, and these should be made available when needed - not overly developed

and refined, but appropriate to the time, place, message and intended recipients. Communication needs will change over time and those responsible need to be able to respond accordingly. New messages or communication material should be cleared through the relevant Board of Management prior to its use.

Consistency is also important and standard messages on Closing the Gap and remote service delivery have been developed. These are at **Attachment D** and include:

- general text providing the context for Closing the Gap

- A question and answer document going into detail about RSD with additional information for the Northern Territory

- An in-community messaging document: messages, however, need to be tailored to local circumstances and phased.

An Indigenous Communications Team will be established in the Northern Territory to support ongoing development of communications messages and materials for all RSD communities, in the Territory and elsewhere, with assistance from FaHCSIA National Office.

11

ENGAGEMENT PLANNING

Every specific initiative or activity to be undertaken in a priority remote Indigenous community should be guided by an Engagement Plan.

The template attached below will assist this process and help to ensure that all key elements have been considered.

As well as considering the purpose and type of engagement necessary, we also need to think about:

The purpose of the engagement activity

It is important to be clear about why you are engaging and what you hope to achieve. Are you:

- providing information,
- raising awareness of a program or project,
- building relationships,
- seeking comment,
- working jointly to develop a policy or agree an approach;
- providing an opportunity for communities to input into decisions for program; and so on etc.

The outcome you want to achieve will inform the type of engagement activity, the method/s of engagement required for that engagement activity.

Who are you engaging with?

You should be clear about who it is that you need to engage with i.e., the audience/stakeholder. These are the people, groups or communities who have a direct interest or involvement in the engagement activity and/or its outcomes. It may not be possible or feasible to engage with all stakeholders so focus on those most important to the success of your work by thinking about their level of support and influence.

In RSD communities this may include: community members, non-government organisations, the corporate sector, IEOs, GBMs, ROC/ICC staff, Commonwealth, State and Territory or Local Government agencies.

Key Messages?

Being clear about who you need to engage with will help you to tailor messages to suit the particular audience/ stakeholder and will also help inform the communication tools necessary to support delivery of the key messages. Messaging needs to include advice on what will happen as a result of the engagement as well as how feedback to the community will occur e.g.

- verbal summary

- written summary
- pictorial summary
- final decision/outcome

The feedback should include:

- a report on the proceedings;
- information about the scope of the consultation and diversity of opinions obtained;
- an analysis of how that information relates to input from other consultation processes;
- opportunity for further input (where possible);
- impact of the consultation (where possible).

How engagement will occur?

Is engagement best done with key individuals, those with assigned community authority? Or through public meetings/workshops; workshops targeting community members; major Stakeholder, etc

Do you need an interpreter?

It is often strongly advisable that you use an interpreter, even if the people you are dealing with appear to have good spoken English. Interpreters should be used:

- to ensure accurate communication between staff and community members;
- because effective community engagement requires both parties to have a clear understanding of each other;
- to ensure greater clarity and awareness of key messages;
- to enable a better understanding of those messages among community members;
- because in times of crisis or stress, a person's second language competency may decrease; and
- because all Australians have the right to access services freely available to English speaking Australians – irrespective of their first language preference.

The need for an interpreter will in part depend on circumstances. ROC managers and GBMS should have a solid understanding of the local circumstances and needs of people in a given community and can advise if an interpreter is needed. More detail on the RSD Interpreter Program is available in the Interpreter Program Guidelines. **Note:** Where possible pre-engagement work should be undertaken with the interpreter to ensure any translation issues are identified and addressed.

Roles and responsibilities

We need to clearly identify all parts of the engagement activity and who will have responsibility for these.

Timelines and milestones

The Plan should set out key deliverables or milestones and the estimated timeframe for their delivery or completion.

Monitoring and evaluation

Depending on the nature of the engagement activity an evaluation may or may not be required. Consideration should be given to the purpose of the evaluation and who to involve; key evaluation questions and information requirements; sources and methods; and how results will be interpreted and reported.

1. **Program/Initiative Overview**

   In this section provide an overview of the program or initiative including key elements, and the aims and objectives of the program/initiative.

2. **Objectives of Engagement**

   What is the end result that you are seeking to achieve? E.g. building relationships; provide opportunity for communities to input into decisions for program; to build awareness of program etc.

3. **Target Audience**

   In this section provide an overview of the community or communities involved in the development and implementation of this program/initiative. Information could include location, population, existing engagement channels and local considerations etc.

4. **Stakeholders**

   In this section, identify all stakeholders or stakeholder groups.

   Use the table below to assist in determining the priority of for each stakeholder.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR PRIORITY

[ENTER COMMUNITY NAME]

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Stakeholder name E.g. this could be an organisation, person, family etc	Type of stakeholder E.g. family, organisation, elder, spokesperson etc	Priority (H, M, L)	Strengths and challenges of current relationship	Desired relationship	Proposed changes

5. **Key Messages: to be shared with target audience**

   What are the key messages for each target audience? What are the communications tools needed to support delivery of the messages?

6. Engagement Method

In this section outline the method/s of engagement to be used for each stakeholder/group or audience. Complete the table below for each stakeholder/group or audience. Complete as many tables as required.

AUDIENCE/STAKEHOLDER	METHOD
	E.g. Fact Sheets, Discussion Paper, Posters, Flip Charts, Free Call Hotline, Media, Website, Information sessions, workshops

7. Roles and responsibilities of agency staff in engagement process

In this section clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of all areas involved in the specific program/initiative and the community engagement plan.

Section/Branch/Group/ Department/State Office/ Regional Operations Centre	Role and responsibilities
E.g. (From NTER Redesign Engagement Plan) FaHCSIA National Office	E.g. Design an engagement/consultation strategy Coordinate within and cross agency input Liaise with Minister/s and Minister's Office. Prepare consultation materials Communications products Assistance with media management (NTSO) AIS arrangements Design Reporting process

8. Timelines and Milestones

In this section identify critical milestones for **community engagement** for the program/initiative. Include timeframes and dates for completion of each activity.

Activity	Milestone 1	Completion date	Milestone 2	Completions date	Activity completion date
Activity i.e. posters					

Activity					
i.e. free call hotline established					
printed and distributed					

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

In this section establish the purpose of the evaluation and who to involve; key evaluation questions and information requirements; sources and methods; and how results will be interpreted and reported.

10. Checklist

Prior to approving this Engagement Plan, complete the following checklist to ensure that appropriate planning has been undertaken before seeking to engage with communities and other key stakeholders.

Are you clear about what you want to achieve through the proposed engagement exercise?

Has the relevant Regional Operations Centre (ROC) Manager been consulted about the proposed engagement activity? If community visits are planned, have you sought advice from the ROC or GBM on the date of your proposed visit?

Are you aware of what else is happening in the community that may impact on your engagement and/or any visit/s?

Have all stakeholders been identified and included in the Stakeholder Table?

Are your key messages specific enough for the meeting/visit and do you require any other information or communication tools?

Have you considered all possible barriers and challenges and thought through how to overcome these should they present themselves?

Have you considered the need or otherwise of booking a suitable interpreter for the engagement activity? And have you briefed them appropriately?

Is your strategy flexible enough to accommodate any barriers and challenges and still meet objectives?

Have you planned how the engagement will take place – what methods you will employ?

Do you have a process or tool for evaluating the effectiveness of your engagement activities and approach?

Do you have a mechanism for ensuring that lessons learnt (what works/what doesn't) can be shared with others to inform future community engagement activities?

11. Approval

Action Officer   ....   Date   ....

Delegate   ....   Date   ....

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ISSUES TO KEEP IN MIND

The information below is drawn from a range of protocol documents[1] and highlights issues that should be kept in mind when engaging with Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Wherever possible, it is preferable to use the terms 'Aboriginal' or 'Torres Strait Islander' when referring to the original inhabitants of Australia, although the term 'Indigenous' is used by the Commonwealth in delivering its services and programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Acronyms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should not be used.

Outdated terms such as full-blood, half-caste, quarter-caste or quadroon etc should not be used.

The official criteria used by Australian Government and most State Governments to define Aboriginality are:

1) A person must be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.
2) A person must identify as an Aboriginal and or/Torres Strait Islander person.
3) A person must be accepted as an Aboriginal and or/Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they live.

Aboriginal people have terms by which they broadly define themselves e.g. Koories, Murries. Australian Government employees should not use these terms unless agreed by the community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags

The Aboriginal flag was designed in 1971 by Harold Thomas. The black represents the Aboriginal people, the red the earth and their spiritual relationship to the land, and the yellow the sun, the giver of life. In 1997, the Federal Court of Australia officially recognised Harold Thomas as the author of the flag.

The Torres Strait Islander flag is attributed to the late Bernard Namok of Thursday Island, and was flown for the first time in 1992. The flag is emblazoned with a white Dari (headdress) which is a symbol of Torres Strait Islanders. The white five pointed star beneath it symbolises the five major island groups and the navigational importance of stars to these seafaring

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[1] This attachment draws on a number of protocol documents. We would like to acknowledge in particular, the NSW Department of Community Services' 'Working with Aboriginal People and Communities – A practical Resource"

people. The green stripes represent the land, the black stripes represent the people, and the blue the sea. The flag as a whole symbolises the unity of all Torres Strait Islanders.

In July 1995, both flags were proclaimed as official flags in section 5 of the Flags Act 1953. At events at which flags are shown, the order of display, from an audience perspective from left to right, the Australian flag, the relevant State or Territory flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

Family and Kinship

Understanding structures and concepts that exist in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities is important in building relationships.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have strong family values and an extended family structure.

The concepts of extended family and 'community as family' in Aboriginal communities encompass the idea that children are not just the concern of the biological parents, but of the entire community. The raising, care, education and discipline of children are the responsibility of everyone — male, female, young and old. An extended family structure is based on:

- blood-related (mum, dad, brother, sister, grandmother/ father, cousin, aunty, uncle)
- marriage (aunty, uncle, cousin)
- community (Elder, neighbour, friend, organisation)
- kinship system (aunty, uncles, cousins or Elders)
- non-related family (Elder, friend, community member)
- mutual respect
- a sense of belonging
- acceptance and knowledge of Aboriginal kinship ties
- mutual obligation and support.

Kinship systems define where a person fits into the community. Kinship systems may vary across communities and nations but the principle is the same across Australia. Kinship defines the roles and responsibilities for raising and educating children and structures systems of moral and financial support within the community.

The family structure is linked with the community and with this knowledge comes a complex system of roles and obligations within the community. Aboriginal children learn at an early age the kinship ties that exist within their community and subsequently their place in the community.

Diversity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities cover many different nations and are made up of many different clan groups. They are as diverse as any other community. While communities will have common ground and similarities, they will also have very different issues. There will often be a diversity of views on any particular issue within and

between communities and structures and relationship dynamics will differ by community and can evolve and change over time.

It is important when engaging with communities to use follow the customs and lores of the people or community you are working with and engage with them in a way that is relevant to them.

Acknowledgment of land and original custodians and Welcome to Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the original owners of the land and it is important that this special position is recognised and incorporated into official activities.

When organising a meeting, event or conference, it is respectful and good practice to acknowledge the land in which you are meeting and its original custodians. At the start of the planned meeting or gathering an acknowledgement of country should be given:

'I would like to acknowledge the original custodians, the xyz people, on whose land we are meeting today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present, and welcome all Aboriginal people here with us today.'

A Welcome to Country can only be performed by an Elder or leader who is from the community in which you are meeting.

Traditional Owners

Traditional owners are the first inhabitants of the area where the meeting takes place. They are the clans, nations and groups of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who have traditional connections to the land and waters relating to their area.

The Traditional Owners should undertake the 'Welcome to Country' Ceremony. However, this is dependent upon the location of the event and the practice of the community. Steps should be taken to ensure that the appropriate Aboriginal representative is invited to undertake the ceremony. It is very important that the Aboriginal representative is comfortable with the arrangements.

Elders

An Elder is a member of the community who is respected and has the authority of the community to give permission, advice and to disclose cultural knowledge and beliefs.

Whilst Elders are often older members of the community, this is not always the case. Similarly, age alone does not necessarily mean that someone is a recognised Elder.

When negotiating with a community, you should try to ensure that recognised Elders of that community are involved, either directly or indirectly.

Depending on the issue that you wish to address, you may also need to include other interest groups and organisations within the community.

It is important to be aware of community politics including the relevant issues and priorities and which groups of people are the appropriate representatives or contacts associated with the issue.

Men's and Women's Business

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture certain customs and practices are performed by men and women separately, often referred to as Men's and Women's Business. These practices have very strict regulations attached and penalties for breaking these rules can be severe. Some communities that continue to practice their traditional customs will also continue these segregated practices and it is important that this is understood by all those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It may be appropriate when engaging with communities to conduct discussions separately with men and women.

Coordination

Often, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are faced with multiple changes or consultation with Government agencies at the same time. At times this has been ad hoc and poorly coordinated with and across agencies. This can be a significant challenge to effective engagement resulting in confusion on the ground and a negative outcome.

Agencies should work to better manage engagement activities with communities by taking responsibility in the planning stages for ensuring cross agency coordination. This is of particular relevance where policies and programs cross several portfolios.

Agencies should contact a central point before working with communities so that wherever possible and appropriate, the proposed engagement can be integrated and coordinated with existing processes.

Under the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Strategy, engagement with priority RSD communities must be coordinated through the Regional Operations Centre and/or the Government Business Manager located in the community (see RSD Engagement Framework for details).

Planning

When planning a visit to a community, individual or group:

- use the Engagement template to help you plan the engagement activity
- ensure that you have a clear understanding of your role and the purpose of the engagement activity.
  - Do you know the nature and origin of the issue or problem – is there a history or background to why you need to engage?
  - Try to anticipate possible questions or hot issues beforehand, and work through possible solutions or options.
  - Does the issue cover one or more agencies' jurisdiction (eg or another government department)?
  - If other agencies are involved ensure that they are aware of any visit and advise them on what issue you will be discussing. A representative from that agency may wish to attend as well.
  - Consider when you will travel as weather conditions affect access to communities (eg wet season in the Top End of Australia).

- Identify the Indigenous Australians with whom you wish to consult.
  - Whose business is it, according to local culture? Who is the correct people/organisation to contact? What is the correct way to contact them?
  - What positions do these people hold?
  - Are they a part of the formal elected representatives (Council) or another community group or individual?
  - What is the relationship between those you wish to consult and other members of the community (eg the Community Council or community elders)?
  - Are all the major leadership groups going to be represented or consulted (eg Councillor, Elders, women's groups or Church leaders)?
  - Does the community as a whole need to be given an opportunity to be involved and given the opportunity to provide input during and after consultation?
    - consider whether you need a facilitator, interpreter or mediator to assist you.
- What information can you share as part of the engagement process?
- Remember those you are engaging with may not have the same background information as you, so send relevant information in advance so as to make the engagement activity viable and productive on both sides.
- Think through, prior to the visit, what potential barriers to specific strategies might be, so that these can be shared in the negotiation process (e.g. fixed budgets, government policy, practical environmental matters, legislative constraints and potential areas of conflict with other groups).

It should be noted that cultural responses to time concepts are different and sometimes more value is placed on other priorities. It is suggested that a flexible timetable is put in place as arrangements could change with little or no notice due to a range of community issues you may not be aware of and have no control over (eg "Sorry business"; a death; a funeral; a mourning period).

Arranging engagement activities in community

There is no legal requirement for Commonwealth or State officers to seek permission to enter an Indigenous community on business. In most cases however it is appropriate and respectful to at least notify of your need and intention to visit, and to seek advice if this is an appropriate time.

Prior to travelling to community the ROC Manager and/or the GBM in the community (and Local Council where appropriate) should be advised of the proposed visit. You should cover:

- who you are and why you need to visit
- expected arrival and departure date/time:
  - for remote community visits, this may need to be arranged at a Council's convenience. If meeting with the Council itself it would be preferable to arrange the visit to coincide with the Council's regular (usually monthly) meeting. Councils have considerable demands placed upon their time,

particularly from outside agencies. Consideration of this fact will greatly enhance the relationship with Councillors.

- the time required for meeting/s:
    - depending on the issues, a series of visits may be required over a period of time
- who else you might like to talk to while in the community, or at the organisation you are visiting
- whether anyone else is travelling with you
- seek permission to advertise your visit (if appropriate)
- clarify any issues about payment to individuals for attending the meeting
- accommodation options if required to stay overnight
- using an interpreter (desirably by employing a neutral Indigenous person/seeking advice from the relevant interpreting service)
- whether there are any particular cultural considerations that you should be aware of (e.g. is it a community that maintains skin and relationship avoidance practices?)
- if you should provide catering for the meeting.

You should confirm all of the above in writing.

Undertaking engagement

Showing respect

When meeting with the community/individuals you should inform and gain the support of the relevant people. Often this will include elders and traditional owners, but depending on the issue that you wish to address, may also include other interest groups and organisations within the community.

It is important to be aware of community politics including the relevant issues and priorities and which groups of people are the appropriate representatives or contacts associated with the issue.

You should demonstrate your understanding o local circumstances by:

- respecting local protocols by the community for organising discussions and formal meetings;
- demonstrating to the community an interest in its way of seeing the world, and acknowledging their culture;
- respecting the political structures in the community;
- demonstrating that you understand and are sensitive to the different communication styles used, particularly the use of non-verbal communication;
- show that you are patient, as engagement in an Indigenous manner can take much longer than that in the non-Indigenous world;
- demonstrate that you have their interests at heart, by listening, and then repeating to them the outcomes of the engagement process for them to acknowledge that you have heard their position correctly; and
- respecting due confidentiality.

When engaging you need to:

- pay attention to the needs that the community leaders identify as important;

- note and understand the solutions that a group or community have in mind and be careful not to jump to grander solutions which can't be comprehended; and

- accept that there are biases in the way you carry out your enquiries, and also in the way that clients interpret information. These biases shape the value put on things that are told and what is considered as reasonable.

You will also need to make sure that:

- your attention is not given solely towards a single issue as there are other related community concerns;

- you don't only hear the views of a small group which may not be representative of community opinion;

- you are aware of gender issues at all times (eg women's and men's business);

- you don't simply exclusively see whatever is modern as good, rather than taking account of and incorporating traditional values;

- you are appropriately dressed as a government representative.

Sometimes matters of importance cannot be approached too quickly or directly. Proceed at the pace set by the community/individual and check that you both understand the issue or decision at hand.

The community/individual will relate to what you do, more than what you say or who you are. Therefore be down-to earth, honest (never promise something that you know cannot deliver) and relate to actual, practical things.

When leaving a group, let them know where you are going and why, rather than leaving without explanation.

Language

Some important points to remember:

- do not assume anything

- use "Plain English' and ensure that clear and appropriate language is used

- try to avoid jargon or technical language

- do not mimic Indigenous ways of speaking in words, slang, speech or accent

- be open minded

- do not be too direct as this can be taken as confrontational and/or rude

- consider local protocols on the use of eye contact.

It may also be appropriate in many communities to consider the following:

- emphasise the purpose of your visit and the intended benefits to the community

- do not ask hypothetical questions

- deal in practical, real issues not theoretical ideas.

If English is not the first language spoken:

- when you facilitate meetings, workshops or training sessions, be aware there may be a need for an interpreter to assist the process; and

- consult with the interpreter and the relevant community interest groups before preparing the agenda.

Deciding who to speak to

If you are new, then you need to:

- contact the relevant ROC/ICC for advice

- work towards building relationships without expecting people to accept you immediately (it may take several visits over an extended period of time)

- be open minded and flexible in your practice

- observe courtesies when visiting someone's house:

  o wait at the fence or front door

  o the people inside will decide who should go and see you and whether to invite you in

- ensure that you follow up any issues raised:

  o as the 'face of government' you may be asked to resolve matters that are the responsibility of another department or level of government. You should note the issue down, refer it to the appropriate person or organisation and let the community know what action you have taken.

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COAG SERVICE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

B1   These principles draw upon the National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians agreed to by COAG in 2004. These principles are to guide COAG in the:

(a)   design and delivery of Indigenous specific and mainstream government programs and services provided to Indigenous people; and

(b)   development and negotiation of National Partnership agreements, National Agreements and reform proposals.

Principles

B2   *Priority principle*: Programs and services should contribute to Closing the Gap by meeting the targets endorsed by COAG while being appropriate to local community needs.

B3   *Indigenous engagement principle*: Engagement with Indigenous men, women and children and communities should be central to the design and delivery of programs and services.

B4   *Sustainability principle*: Programs and services should be directed and resourced over an adequate period of time to meet the COAG targets.

B5   *Access Principle*: Programs and services should be physically and culturally accessible to Indigenous people recognising the diversity of urban, regional and remote needs.

B6   *Integration principle*: There should be collaboration between and within Governments at all levels and their agencies to effectively coordinate programs and services.

B7   *Accountability principle*: Programs and services should have regular and transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation.

Principles in Detail

B8   *Priority principle*: Programs and services should contribute to Closing the Gap by meeting the targets endorsed by COAG while being appropriate to local community needs. The COAG targets are:

(a)   close the 17 year life expectancy gap within a generation;

(b)   halve the gap in mortality rates for children under five within a decade;

(c)   halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade;

(d)   halve the gap in employment outcomes and opportunities within a decade;

(e)   at least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020; and

(f)   within five years provide access to a quality early childhood education program to all Indigenous four year olds in remote Indigenous communities.

B9   *Indigenous engagement principle*: Engagement with Indigenous men, women and children and communities should be central to the design and delivery of programs and services. In particular, attention is to be given to:

(a)   recognising that strong relationships/partnerships between government, community and service providers increase the capacity to achieve identified outcomes and work towards building these relationships;

(b)   engaging and empowering Indigenous people who use Government services, and the broader Indigenous community in the design and delivery of programs and services as appropriate;

(c)   recognising local circumstances;

(d)   ensuring Indigenous representation is appropriate, having regard to local representation as required;

(e)   being transparent regarding the role and level of Indigenous engagement along a continuum from information sharing to decision-making; and

(f)   recognising Indigenous culture, language and identity.

B10   *Sustainability principle*: Programs and services should be directed and resourced over an adequate period of time to meet the COAG targets. In particular, attention is to be given to:

(a)   service system orientation, particularly:

    (i)   using evidence to develop and redesign programs, services and set priorities;

    (i)   recognising the importance of early intervention; and

    (ii)   including strategies that increase independence, empowerment and self management;

(b)   ensuring adequate and appropriate resources, particularly:

    (i)   setting time-frames for meeting short, medium and longer-term targets and outcomes;

    (ii)   considering flexibility in program design to meet local needs;

    (iii)   considering workforce supply and future planning;

    (iv)   considering sustaining or redesigning services to best use existing resources, as well as the need for programs and services to meet the COAG targets;

(v) minimising administrative red tape to enable greater integration of program and service delivery;

(vi) ensuring that programs and services are efficient and fiscally sustainable; and

(vii) ensuring that infrastructure is appropriate and adequately maintained;

(c) building the capacity of both Indigenous people and of services to meet the needs of Indigenous people, particularly:

(i) developing the skills, knowledge and competencies, including independence and empowerment of Indigenous people, communities and organisations;

(ii) supporting Indigenous communities to harness the engagement of corporate, non-government and philanthropic sectors;

(iii) building governments' and service delivery organisations' capacity to develop and implement policies, procedures, and protocols that recognise Indigenous people's culture, needs and aspirations;

(iv) ensuring that programs and services foster and do not erode capacity or capability of clients; and

(v) recognising when Indigenous delivery is an important contributor to outcomes (direct and indirect), and in those instances fostering opportunities for Indigenous service delivery.

B11 *Access Principle*: Programs and services should be physically and culturally accessible to Indigenous people recognising the diversity of urban, regional and remote needs. In particular, attention is to be given to:

(a) considering appropriate and adequate infrastructure and placement of services (including transport, IT, telecommunications and use of interpreter services);

(b) minimising administrative red tape that may be a barrier to access; and

(c) providing adequate information regarding available programs and services.

B12 *Integration principle*: There should be collaboration between and within Governments at all levels, their agencies and funded service providers to effectively coordinate programs and services. In particular attention is to be given to:

(a) articulating responsibilities between all levels of government;

(b) identifying and addressing gaps and overlaps in the continuum of service delivery;

(c) ensuring services and programs are provided in an integrated and collaborative manner both between all levels of governments and between services;

(d)   ensuring services and programs do not set incentives that negatively affect outcomes of other programs and services; and

(e)   recognising that a centrally agreed strategic focus should not inhibit service delivery responses that are sensitive to local contexts.

B13   *Accountability principle*: Programs and services should have regular and transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation. In particular, attention is to be given to:

(a)   choosing performance measures based on contribution to the COAG targets and report them publicly;

(b)   ensuring mainstream service delivery agencies have strategies in place to achieve Indigenous outcomes and meet Indigenous needs;

(c)   clearly articulating the service level to be delivered;

(d)   ensuring accountability of organisations for the government funds that they administer on behalf of Indigenous people;

(e)   periodically measuring/reviewing to assess the contribution of programs and services to the above, and adapting programs and services as appropriate;

(f)   clearly defining and agreeing responsibilities of government and communities;

(g)   supporting the capacity of the Indigenous service sector and communities to play a role in delivering services and influencing service delivery systems/organisations to ensure their responsiveness, access and appropriateness to Indigenous people; and

(h)   evaluating programs and services from multiple perspectives including from the client, Indigenous communities and government perspectives and incorporating lessons into future program and services design.

CLOSING THE GAP

The Indigenous Reform Agenda

[INTRODUCTION]

Closing the Gap is a commitment by all Australian governments to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians, and in particular provide a better future for Indigenous children.

Closing the Gap has been agreed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which brings together the Australian Government and all the States and Territories.

COAG's national agreements and partnerships, in areas such as early childhood, education, housing and health, are the main means of achieving Closing the Gap. COAG's commitments include an additional $4.6 billion investment in Indigenous-specific National Partnerships to be rolled out over the next decade.

COAG has committed to strict timeframes for achieving a set of ambitious Closing the Gap targets, in life expectancy, early childhood, education and employment.

Underpinning Closing the Gap is a new way of doing business across government and of engaging with Indigenous communities. Governments will work together and in partnership with Indigenous Australians.

Clear priorities, specific targets and trajectories, and stringent reporting will keep governments on track.

Consultation and engagement with Indigenous Australians will help to produce workable solutions to entrenched problems.

Closing the Gap: The targets and building blocks

In 2008 COAG set specific and ambitious targets for Closing the Gap:

- To close the Indigenous life-expectancy gap within a generation
- To halve the gap in mortality rates for children under five within a decade
- To ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities within five years
- To halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade
- To halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent by 2020
- To halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

There are seven priority areas for action or 'building blocks':

- Early Childhood
- Schooling
- Healthy Homes
- Safe Communities
- Health
- Economic Participation

- Governance and Leadership

Each building block is backed by funding and initiatives designed to improve results on the ground. The building blocks are linked—achieving the Closing the Gap targets depends on progress in each of these areas.

Closing the Gap: The government framework

Closing the Gap is part of a wider reform of Commonwealth-State financial relations aimed at achieving better outcomes for all Australians.

The Commonwealth and State/Territory governments are collaborating on policy development and service delivery while advancing reforms in areas of national significance.

Under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, payments for specific purposes from the Commonwealth to the States/Territories are supported by national agreements setting out objectives, outputs and outcomes; progress measures and benchmarks; policy and reform directions; and respective roles and responsibilities.

COAG's National Indigenous Reform Agreement (November 2008):

- commits all jurisdictions to achieving the Closing the Gap targets
- clearly defines responsibilities
- promotes accountability among governments
- provides a roadmap for future action
- commits significant funding through National Partnership Agreements to help in meeting the targets.

An Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap guides its implementation across Australia in urban, regional and remote areas.

Closing the Gap: The National Partnerships

Specific reforms are being progressed through a number of Indigenous-related National Partnership Agreements on:
- Indigenous Health Outcomes
- Remote Indigenous Housing
- Indigenous Early Childhood Development
- Indigenous Economic Development
- Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access
- Remote Service Delivery
- Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory.

The Indigenous-specific agreements are part of a wider set of National Partnerships driving better outcomes for the whole Australian community in areas such as health education, homelessness, social housing, sustainability and the environment. These mainstream agreements also have a special focus on meeting the needs of Indigenous Australians, particularly those living in regional and urban areas.

The National Agreements are a platform for change.
The Indigenous-specific National Partnerships and related strategies aim to provide, over time:
- more maternal and child health services for Indigenous children and their mothers
- universal access to preschool for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year for Indigenous children

- more children and family centres in areas with a high Indigenous populations
- strategies at the local and regional level to improve school enrolment, attendance and retention rates, literacy and numeracy attainment and parental and community engagement
- expanded primary health-care services and targeted disease prevention
- improved management of chronic disease
- more jobs for Indigenous Australians, including Indigenous workforce strategies in all COAG implementation plans
- healthier housing and less overcrowding in remote communities
- increased internet connectivity and use in remote Indigenous Australia
- a better quality of life and greater opportunities in communities across the Northern Territory and in other priority locations in remote Australia.

An Indigenous Food Security Strategy under development aims to make healthy foods more accessible and affordable in remote areas.

Closing the Gap: The guiding principles

Principles guiding government action on Closing the Gap include:

Targets, accountability and reporting

All governments must be accountable for the commitments they have made. Progress against the six targets will be monitored, and regularly reported. Improved statistics relating to Indigenous Australians will help to build a better evidence base against which to measure progress.

The COAG Reform Council, established by COAG to oversee implementation of the Commonwealth-State financial reforms, reports to COAG each year on progress against the six Closing the Gap targets.

Using this and other information, the Prime Minister is reporting on achievements in Closing the Gap at the beginning of each parliamentary year.

Coordination and better service delivery

Programs and services must be effectively coordinated and accessible to Indigenous Australians. This requires collaboration between and within governments at all levels.

Building partnerships across all sectors

Closing the Gap is a cross-community effort. The corporate and philanthropic sectors are being engaged to assist Indigenous Australians and communities and contribute to Closing the Gap.

Engagement with Indigenous Australians

Governments are committed to building respectful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous Australians, marked by open dialogue and mutual responsibility.

Australian Government initiatives, past and present, that are repairing and strengthening relations with Indigenous Australians include:

- the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples and in particular the Stolen Generations (February 2008)
- the Healing Foundation
- Link Up (family reunion) services for the Stolen Generations

- the Government's support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- the proposed National Indigenous Representative Body
- the repatriation of Indigenous ancestral remains from Australian and overseas collecting institutions
- the consultations in the Northern Territory to redesign certain measures in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and the Government's commitment to reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act in the NTER legislation.

Building strong families and healthy communities

Indigenous Australians hold the key to their own futures. Governments are engaging Indigenous Australians in the design and delivery of services and programs.

The aim is to build responsibility and capacity at the personal and community level and lay the basis for lasting change.

Closing the Gap: Remote Service Delivery

The Remote Service Delivery (RSD) National Partnership is harnessing the benefits of other National Partnership Agreements to demonstrate how new ways of working can achieve better results for communities in remote Indigenous Australia.

The RSD strategy will initially focus on 29 priority locations, across the Northern Territory (15), Queensland (6), Western Australia (4), South Australia (2) and New South Wales (2). The strategy will progressively deliver to these communities the facilities and services enjoyed in other Australian towns of comparable size, location and need.

The Australian Government is working with the relevant State and Territory government to provide integrated service planning and delivery—a 'one-stop shop'. Communities will not have to deal with multiple agencies across government.

Government Business Managers and Indigenous Engagement Officers (or their equivalents) are living in the communities, reporting to a Regional Operations Centre where staff from the Australian Government and the relevant State or Territory work together.

Communities are being 'mapped' to establish what services exist and what the needs are. Local Implementation Plans are being developed for each location as a basis for change. The plans are a partnership involving the community, government and other stakeholders.

Transforming these communities is a two-way commitment:

- From governments – to cooperate to put in place the resources and planning for better infrastructure and services and to develop the capacity of individuals, communities and service providers
- From the community and community members – to embrace change and take responsibility for their own wellbeing and in particular the health, safety and education of their children.

Closing the Gap: Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services

To deliver on the Remote Service Delivery strategy, the Australian Government has appointed Mr Brian Gleeson as Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services.

The Coordinator-General is an independent statutory officer, established under the *Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services Act 2009*. Mr Gleeson will work with

equivalent senior officers appointed in each relevant State and Territory and across key Australian Government agencies.

The Coordinator-General will oversee planning and investment in communities and provide guidance on good practice. He will also assess progress and advise governments where there are gaps or slow progress or where improvements need to be made if governments are to meet their commitments.

The Coordinator-General:

- formally reports to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs twice a year, and ensures all government agencies are held accountable for their implementation responsibilities
- has the authority to work across agencies to cut through blockages and 'red tape'
- has a direct line of sight to the Regional Operations Centres and government officers working in communities.

The Coordinator-General works closely with Indigenous Australians, community groups and the private sector to make local inroads on the Closing the Gap targets in the priority communities.

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory

The Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement (May 2009) continues funding for measures begun under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), but aims to ensure the benefits are sustainable and driven by community aspirations.

The NTER was launched in June 2007, in response to the *Little Children Are Sacred* report. It was designed to protect children, make communities safe, and in the longer term build a better future for people living in Indigenous communities and town camps in the Northern Territory.

Following an independent review of the NTER in 2008, the Australian Government committed to making the NTER conform to the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA). The Government will introduce legislation to remove the provisions in the NTER Acts that currently suspend the operation of the RDA.

From June to late August 2009 the Government conducted extensive consultations across the Northern Territory on the redesign of measures affected by the RDA, including:

- income management
- bans on alcohol and sexually explicit material
- compulsory acquisition of five-year leases on Aboriginal townships
- licensing of community stores.

Consultation and engagement with Indigenous Australians are basic to making the NTER measures effective and sustainable in the long term.

Also contributing to Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory are:

- the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program, a $672 million joint program with the Northern Territory Government that will deliver 750 new houses, 230 rebuilds of existing houses and 2500 refurbishments across 73 Indigenous communities by 2013
- the RSD strategy which is being rolled out in 15 major communities in the Northern Territory

- the COAG agreements, both mainstream and Indigenous.

Closing the Gap: National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy

Closing the Gap also requires a concerted effort by governments among the 75 per cent of Indigenous Australians who live in urban and regional locations across Australia.

COAG's National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy (agreed July 2009) commits governments to coordinate and target the substantial funding provided under mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs to tackle Indigenous disadvantage in these areas.

In addition the strategy involves:

- coordinating service delivery
- using place-based approaches adapted to local needs
- strengthening Indigenous capacity, engagement and participation including promotion of a strong sense of Indigenous identity and culture
- improved statistical and other information collection services for more accurate reporting on outcomes.

DRAFT IN-COMMUNITY MESSAGING FOR RSDS

[for a products such as a flipchart/storyboard]

AUDIENCE: COMMUNITY MEMBERS – TEXT NEEDS TO BE TAILORED TO LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Closing the Gap in your community

Working together for a better future – for you, your children and your community

You are looking after your community's future.

XXXX is one of a number of communities where governments will be working together and with you to improve services, deal with issues and build on things that work.

The Australian Government and the xxx Government have agreed on this approach.

We will be working with you and listening closely to what you have to say.

We are working together to help close the gap in your community.

2. What is Closing the Gap?

Across Australia, the Australian Government is joining with State and Territory Governments to 'close the gap' between Aboriginal people and other Australians.

Governments want to make sure that Indigenous Australians:

- enjoy longer and better lives—and do not die young from illnesses that can be prevented
- have healthier babies and children
- can attend a pre-school
- can go to a good school and finish school, and
- have the education and skills to get real jobs.

3. Closing the Gap – what it means for you and your community

Closing the Gap means more government money for some government services and programs.

Most of all, it means better ways of using the money—working with you and making sure that governments work together.

Indigenous Australians have been telling governments about problems for a long time. You have been looking at solutions.

We will be working with you to find the answer to problems.

4. Closing the Gap – why it is needed

Communities want to be good places to grow up, start a family and get a job.

Many Indigenous communities don't have important government services.

Some communities have not been good places to live.

Families need to protect and care for their children.

We are working together to help families and communities to make them stronger

5. Closing the Gap – government people in your community

Government Business Managers (GBMs) [note: name of both GBM and IEO may vary by jurisdiction] are your community's direct link with government.

They are helped by Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs). IEOs are Indigenous Australians from your community who can talk to you and the government about community issues and about government issues.

GBMs and IEOs live in your community. They are here to help you understand government programs and services and help you to plan for the future.

They can answer questions or find any information you need.

6. Closing the Gap – better houses and services

We will work with you and your community to improve:

- community stores – so that food is healthy
- schools – to help children get the education and skills to get a job
- houses – so that children grow up in healthy homes that are well built and looked after
- council services (power, water, clean up) – so your community is a better place to live
- community safety – so people are not harmed.

7. Closing the Gap – a partnership with your community

Government wants to work with you to build a good future for this community.

Your ideas and leadership will shape your community's future.

Families are also important. They look after themselves and especially their kids and old people.

Houses are homes that need to be looked after.

Working together we can get more done.

Families and the community will work with government for good and lasting change.

8. Closing the Gap – community plans for a better future

You have a lot of ideas on how to make your community a better place.

We will build on these ideas and on the things you are already doing to help the community.

Local Implementation Plans will set out what we are going to do together.

We need your help to come up with these plans—and your help in making them happen.

9. Closing the Gap – new government arrangements

Governments have new arrangements for making sure your community gets better houses and services.

The Regional Operations Centre (ROC) in XXXX will be helping the GBM and IEO to work with your community.

The ROC will have people from the Australian Government and the State Government/Territory Government.

You won't have to deal with a lot of different government agencies.

10. Closing the Gap – Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services

The Australian Government has also set up a Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services.

Mr Brian Gleeson is the Coordinator-General. You may have already met him.

His job is to make sure governments work together and get things done.

He reports to the Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Affairs and to Parliament.

The Coordinator-General will visit your community and work with you and others to make sure your community plans are met.

11. Closing the Gap – it will take time

Making these changes in your community will take time.

It will not happen quickly. But getting it right is important.

There is a lot of work to be done – by you, by individuals, families, the community and by government.

12. Closing the Gap – why was this community chosen and what about other communities?

Your community was chosen because it is growing in size and because of the progress already made here ...

Outstations/homelands will be helped by the services and facilities set up in your community [if this applies].

Other communities will go on getting the services they get today and may also get extra services and houses. No funds will be taken away from other communities.

Closing the Gap is about building a better future for all Indigenous Australians.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE

REMOTE SERVICE DELIVERY
NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (RSD NP)

AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER INITIATIVES

What is Closing the Gap?

Closing the Gap is the overarching policy in Indigenous Affairs, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), comprising the Australian Government and all States and Territories.

It is a commitment by all levels of government to work with Indigenous Australians to help close the wide gaps in living standards and life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

To make the process more accountable, COAG agreed in 2008 to six ambitious and time-limited targets:

* closing the life expectancy gap within a generation
* halving the gap in the mortality rate for Indigenous children under five within a decade
* ensuring all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to quality early childhood programs within five years
* halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade
* halving the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment rates or equivalent attainment by 2020
* halving the gap in employment outcomes within a decade.

COAG also identified seven building blocks:

* early childhood
* schooling
* health
* economic participation
* healthy homes
* safe communities
* governance and leadership.

Coordinated action in these areas is required to achieve Closing the Gap. The building blocks are being tackled through a series of National Partnership Agreements.

Indigenous-specific agreements so far negotiated include partnerships on:

* Indigenous Health Outcomes
* Remote Indigenous Housing
* Indigenous Early Childhood Development
* Indigenous Economic Development
* Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access
* Remote Service Delivery
* Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory.

Other mainstream agreements are also supporting the objectives of Closing the Gap.

What is different about Closing the Gap?

Closing the Gap is both a series of National Partnerships, backed by significant extra funding, and a new way of doing business with Indigenous communities.

COAG's National Indigenous Reform Agreement, concluded in November 2008:
- commits all jurisdictions to achieving the Closing the Gap targets
- defines responsibilities and promotes accountability among governments
- provides a roadmap for future action
- commits significant funding through National Partnership Agreements to assist in meeting the targets.

The Indigenous reforms acknowledge that the operation of Australia's federal system has resulted in duplication, gaps and overlaps in services for Indigenous Australians, as well as second-rate services in some areas. Responsibilities and accountabilities have been blurred resulting in cost and blame shifting. In remote areas many communities have been under-serviced. In urban and regional areas Indigenous Australians have often not had access to appropriate mainstream services.

Governments are committed to intervening where necessary to protect vulnerable people from harm. Over the longer term, Indigenous communities and individuals are being supported to develop the capacity and leadership to take charge of their own futures.

Engagement with Indigenous Australians and communities is central to Closing the Gap.

What is the Remote Service Delivery strategy?

The Remote Service Delivery strategy is implementing the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (RSD NP). The agreement was signed by the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory on 27 January 2009.

The RSD strategy will demonstrate how a new place-based approach can make a measurable difference and provide a better quality of life for residents of remote Indigenous communities. The initial focus is on 29 priority locations across Australia.

Under this agreement the Australian Government and the relevant States and Northern Territory will invest $291.2 million over six years in the priority communities to better coordinate and harness the benefits of funds and initiatives provided through the other National Partnerships.

In the priority communities, governments will work together to coordinate the delivery of services—communities will not have to deal with multiple agencies or programs. Whole-of-government coordination will be underpinned by audits of infrastructure and services, data collection to track progress over time, and Local Implementation Plans that are clear and measurable and agreed with the community.

Governments also acknowledge that sustainable progress in remote Indigenous communities depends on working with local people. Indigenous Australian's ideas, contributions and leadership are vital to the strategy's long-term success.

Other potential stakeholders will also be engaged including businesses, non-government organisations, volunteers and local government.

The position of Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services (see below) has been created to drive the reform process and report on the performance of government

agencies in meeting their commitments to implement the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery.

How will Indigenous Australians be involved in the RSD strategy?

The RSD strategy relies on Indigenous Australians in all priority communities working with government to drive change in their community.

The communities themselves will have an integral role to play in the design and delivery of their services, including through input into the Local Implementation Plans. Many RSD initiatives will build on existing community initiatives. The strategy will help to tackle issues identified by the community, including—for example—substance abuse, violence, activities for young people or school attendance.

The RSD strategy includes programs to strengthen Indigenous governance and leadership to help ensure that in the longer term communities are safe and well run, with positive and productive relationships among community members.

It also includes employment of Indigenous Engagement Officers (or their equivalents) in each community who will work to maximise community input to the strategy.

Where will the work start?

The priority locations for initial investment are:
- Northern Territory (NT) – Angurugu, Galiwinku, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Hermannsburg, Lajamanu, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Nguiu, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Wadeye, Yirrkala, Yuendumu and Umbakumba
- Queensland (Qld) – the Gulf communities of Mornington Island and Doomadgee, and the Cape York communities of Aurukun and Hope Vale, together with continuing work in Coen and Mossman Gorge which are part of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial
- Western Australia (WA) – Fitzroy Crossing and surrounding communities, Halls Creek and surrounding communities, and the Dampier Peninsula (with a focus on Beagle Bay and Ardyaloon)
- South Australia (SA) – Amata and Mimili in the APY Lands
- New South Wales (NSW) – Walgett and Wilcannia in the State's far west.

Why were these communities selected?

The initial priority locations were identified using the investment principles set out in the schedules to the RSD NP.

Communities were selected on the basis of their:
- significant concentration of population
- anticipated demographic trends and pressures
- potential for economic development and employment
- pre-existing shortfalls in government investment in infrastructure and services
- potential to build on other significant investment already in progress or on community-based initiatives.

The RSD strategy may be expanded to other remote communities on the basis of the investment principles.

What is the 'single government interface'?

Community members will be dealing with one face of government, with no distinction between levels of government or between agencies across government.

The single government interface is made up of:
- locally based government staff
- Regional Operation Centres, where both Australian Government and State/Territory staff will work together.

The latter will report to a Board of Management in each jurisdiction.

What staff will be living and working in priority communities and what is their role?

Locally based government workers will be employed in all priority communities. In many cases, e.g. in the Northern Territory, these workers will be called Government Business Managers (GBMs) and Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs). In other jurisdictions, the local staff may have different titles, but their roles will be largely the same.

The GBMs are the community's direct link to government. They:

- are the key liaison and consultation point in communities

- work collaboratively with other government representatives

- assist with community planning and agreement making

- ensure that services are coordinated on the ground

- report on progress and on local issues and concerns to the local Regional Operations Centre and State/Territory Board of Management.

The IEOs are Indigenous Australians recruited from within the local area, who speak the local language/s. They will assist the GBMs in their liaison and engagement work and help to support their communities as the strategy is rolled out.

All government workers visiting or working in the priority communities will receive training, to ensure they are more culturally aware, and can more effectively engage with remote Indigenous communities.

What are Regional Operation Centres?

To implement the new RSD arrangements in each jurisdiction, the Australian and State/Northern Territory Governments are staffing Regional Operations Centres (ROCs).

The locations of the ROCs are:
- Darwin, NT
- Alice Springs, NT
- Cairns, Qld
- Mount Isa, Qld
- Broome, WA
- Adelaide, SA
- Dubbo, NSW.

Each ROC will support government staff living and working in the priority communities. ROCs will work with government agencies to ensure effective and timely service delivery.

The ROC Manager will lead regular meetings of an RSD working group, comprising key service providers, corporate partners and government agencies, and will deal with implementation issues that cannot be managed at the local level.

What is the difference between ROCs and Indigenous Coordination Centres?

The existing network of Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) remains in place to serve the Indigenous populations in their regions, including whole-of-government coordination and brokering access to mainstream programs. The work of the ROCs will be focused on the priority communities.

In some cases ROCs and ICCs will be co-located. ROCs and ICCs will work together, with remote-area ICCs helping to identify and prepare the next group of RSD priority locations.

ICCs are mainly Australian Government offices with State Government staff in some locations, while ROCS are joint Australian and State/Territory Government offices.

What is a local Board of Management?

A Board of Management (BoM), comprising senior Commonwealth and State/Northern Territory officials, will operate in each jurisdiction to oversee implementation of the RSD strategy.

The BoMs are jointly convened by the Australian Government and the relevant State/Territory. They meet regularly to monitor progress and expedite service delivery issues as necessary.

Where an Indigenous advisory body or bodies exist in a jurisdiction, the BoM will liaise with these bodies on progress in implementing the RSD strategy.

The BoM is part of the jurisdiction-level whole-of-government support for the work of the ROCs, GBMs and IEOs (or equivalents).

Will the government use interpreters?

In many remote priority communities, English is not spoken as a first language. To ensure that Indigenous Australians are properly engaged in the RSD strategy, funding has been provided to ensure that interpreter services are available when required.

The interpreter services will assist government workers to perform their jobs more effectively, and will help local Indigenous Australians to have a genuine involvement in the implementation of the RSD strategy in their community.

What are Local Implementation Plans?

Future government investment in the priority communities will be guided by Local Implementation Plans (LIPs).

These plans will be developed with and agreed by local Indigenous communities. The LIPs will set out for each community agreed priorities, actions, responsibilities and commitments. They will detail what services are required and how they will be delivered.

Agencies across government will commit to resources and timeframes to close the gaps identified in the plans.

Approaches to developing and reporting on the plans will be worked through with each community.

What is 'baseline mapping'?

Each of the priority communities is being 'mapped' to identify current social and economic conditions, government investments, services and gaps in services. A wider audit of infrastructure gaps, the municipal and essential services audit, is being conducted at the same time and will form a key part of baseline mapping in the RSD locations.

The information collected will form a crucial evidence base—or 'baseline'—from which improvements can be measured. The information collected from the baseline mapping and infrastructure audits will inform the Local Implementation Plans, and will inform where improvements need to be made and gaps filled.

Baseline mapping is currently underway. Initial fieldwork will be completed by the end of 2009, with reports by end March 2010.

How does baseline mapping relate to the Municipal and Essential Services Audit?

The Australian Government is undertaking an audit of municipal and essential services as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and to facilitate the planned transfer of responsibility for municipal services to the States and Territories.

The RSD NP baseline mapping and the municipal and essential services audit are both investigating what existing services are in place in the priority communities. In the RSD context the municipal and essential services audit is also looking at what the current gap is for infrastructure and service delivery in the priority communities compared to comparable communities elsewhere in Australia.

The municipal and essential services audit is focused on essential services including power, water and sewage services as well as other municipal services and environmental activities. These include dump and waste maintenance and environmental health activities.

What does the RSD NP mean for those communities not included?

Those communities not covered by the RSD strategy will continue to receive government support and services, at least to existing levels. They will benefit from Indigenous-specific and other National Partnership Agreements, according to the implementation plans for these agreements. They will benefit from government reforms in areas such as employment services and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

The priority communities, which in many cases are growing as a result of demographic factors, are receiving additional and accelerated investment.

Governments will also work to extend the RSD strategy to other remote communities over time.

Will support be withdrawn from outstations and homelands?

Support for outstations and homelands will continue at current levels. It is not intended that any existing investment in homelands or outstations be removed.

Will people move to the priority communities from outstations and homelands to access services?

Mobility patterns are complex and many moves are short-term. But the long-term trend among Indigenous Australians follows the rural to urban pattern that has been observed in numerous other locations in Australia and overseas.

The RSD strategy aims to build up the priority communities so they can be service centres for surrounding communities. The priority communities will benefit from the accelerated investment approach and be able to play a greater role in supporting outlying communities and outstations.

What are the timeframes for the RSD strategy?

The RSD NP was signed on 27 January 2009 and is set to run for a period of five and a half years, until 30 June 2014. Work on its implementation is currently underway.

Timeframes for implementation are set out in the RSD NP. Implementation is proceeding on schedule or ahead of schedule.

Will the States and Territories be required to match Commonwealth funding?

The RSD NP will provide $291.2 million over six years in total. The Commonwealth is providing $187.7 million and the States and Territories $103.5 million.

What will RSD funds be used for?

RSD-specific funds are mainly available for enabling functions:
* the network of field and ROC staff to coordinate investment and engage with communities
* improved interpreter services
* leadership development and capacity building in communities
* cultural awareness training of government workers, and
* monitoring and evaluating progress.

The RSD does not provide significant resources directly to communities. Rather the strategy will harness other government spending (including in the other National Partnership Agreements) to provide improved services and infrastructure in priority locations.

Who is responsible for making the RSD NP happen?

The RSD NP has the support of the Australian Government and the relevant State and Northern Territory governments. The responsibility for its implementation is spread across many government agencies at all levels of government.

The RSD NP implementation will be overseen by the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services, a new statutory position established by the Australian Government. The Coordinator-General will also work with senior officers appointed in each jurisdiction and with the National Coordinators appointed by each Australian Government agency involved in RSD.

Bilateral implementation plans have been negotiated between the Australian Government and each relevant State and Territory Government.

What is the role of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services?

On 27 May 2009, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs announced the formation of the office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services.

The Coordinator-General is an independent statutory officer, whose functions and powers are set out in the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services Act 2009.

On 18 June 2009, Minister Macklin announced the appointment of Mr Brian Gleeson as the Coordinator-General. Mr Gleeson took up his position on 20 July 2009.

The Coordinator-General is overseeing implementation of the RSD NP and monitoring its contribution to achieving the Closing the Gap targets in the specified locations.

He is ensuring that government commitments in remote Indigenous communities deliver real results. He has the authority to coordinate across agencies, to cut through bureaucratic blockages and 'red tape', and to make sure services are delivered effectively and on time.

The Coordinator-General will report directly to the Minister and will work closely with Indigenous Australians in the priority communities, community groups, industry and government organisations to make local inroads on the national targets for Closing the Gap.

The Coordinator-General will formally report twice a year on the development and delivery of remote services. He will also provide information to Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies on obstacles within their areas of responsibility and advise the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and COAG on the need for any changes.

What is the role of the State and Northern Territory Coordinators-General?

Each State and the Northern Territory has appointed a senior officer to perform the coordinator-general function within their jurisdiction.

While not statutory officers, they will have a similar role to the Australian Government's Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services at the jurisdictional level. These functions include coordinating across State/Territory agencies, cutting through bureaucratic blockages, and making sure State/Territory services are delivered effectively.

They will act as a key contact point for the Australian Government's Coordinator-General.

The State/Northern Territory Coordinators-General are:

Ms Olga Havnen

Coordinator-General for Remote
Indigenous Services

Department of Housing, Local
Government and Regional Services

Mr Tony Hayes

Deputy Director-General

Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander Services

Department of Communities, QLD

Mr Pat Walker

Director-General

Department of Indigenous Affairs, WA

Ms Pauline Peel

Deputy Chief Executive of Department of
Premier and Cabinet

Department of Premier and Cabinet, SA

Ms Jody Broun

Chief Executive

Aboriginal Affairs

Department of Human Services, NSW

How does the RSD strategy work with local government?

Local government plays a key role in providing basic services across the Australian community, including remote Indigenous communities. It is recognised that this level of government needs to be brought into the RSD strategy.

Is the RSD strategy just another trial?

The RSD strategy is not a trial. Through the RSD NP, the Australian, State and Northern Territory governments have agreed to a significant and sustained commitment.

The strategy involves fundamental reform of the way services and investments are coordinated across the levels of government and will inform how governments deliver services to all remote communities in the long-term.

A top-down approach involving a multiplicity of programs will be replaced by a community-development approach, where resources are matched to local needs and aspirations. Government will undertake sustained on-the-ground engagement.

Those working on the RSD strategy will listen to what communities are saying—in many case what they have been saying for a long time. Indigenous Australians will be engaged

in the reform process. Communities will be supported to take up responsibility for their own futures.

How does the RSD strategy relate to previous government initiatives?

The RSD strategy has been developed with reference to a number of initiatives rolled out over recent years, including:

- the 'COAG trials' in each jurisdiction
- Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) and Regional Partnership Agreements (RPAs)
- 'strategic interventions' implementing a place-based approach in selected remote communities
- the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) which, among other things, set up a network of government officers on the ground.

The RSD strategy incorporates lessons learned from these initiatives. However, it is more comprehensive, better planned, backed by significant resources over the medium term, and involves a degree of coordination across government and community engagement not achieved in the past. The commitment to government transparency, through targets, monitoring, reporting and improved statistics, distinguishes all COAG National Partnerships from previous initiatives. The position of Coordinator-General has no precedent in former arrangements.

How will we know if this approach has achieved anything?

The RSD process includes an annual monitoring report shared across all jurisdictions. The first of these is due on 1 July 2010. These will report against agreed indicators in each priority location and will be informed by evidence collected as part of the baseline mapping exercise.

An overall assessment will be completed at the end of the agreement in 2014.

The Coordinator-General is also required to provide regular reports to government and the public on progress under the RSD NP, including a bi-annual report to the Minister, an annual report to Parliament and a confidential report to COAG. These reports will provide advice on any systemic changes required, lessons learned and best-practice approaches.

Other reporting is also built into the RSD process.

What is FaHCSIA's role?

FaHCSIA is the lead agency in Indigenous Affairs within the Australian Government. The department assisted in negotiating the RSD NP and is leading implementation on behalf of the Australian Government with relevant States and Territories.

GBMs, IEOs and ROC Managers are employees of FaHCSIA. FaHCSIA is providing much of the infrastructure and services needed to support the single government interface, in cooperation with the jurisdictions. It is delivering the leadership and other development activities in RSD communities.

FaHCSIA is also supporting the office of the Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services.

NT SPECIFIC

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How does the RSD strategy work with local government and in particular the new shire arrangements in the Northern Territory?

Local government plays a key role in providing basic services across the Australian community, including remote Indigenous communities. It is recognised that this level of government needs to be brought into the RSD strategy.

The Northern Territory Government established a new system of shire councils from 1 July 2008, abolishing many former Aboriginal community councils. The GBMs already in place in the Northern Territory work with the shires on a day-to-day basis to identify and address issues affecting the communities they are responsible for. The single government interface serving the 15 RSD communities will continue to coordinate services and facilitate interaction between communities and local government. Both the Australian and Northern Territory governments are committed to working with the shires and associated advisory boards.

How is the RSD strategy different to the Northern Territory Emergency Response?

The Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) was announced by the former Government in response to evidence of child abuse in the *Little Children Are Sacred* report (June 2007). Its immediate aim was securing community safety and protecting children and other vulnerable people. In the long term it is designed to build a better future for Indigenous Territorians.

The NTER was initially implemented by the Australian Government within a very tight time-frame and with limited opportunities for consultation with communities prior to the roll-out of the NTER measures.

The NTER has included legislated measures such as:
* compulsory income management
* compulsory acquisition of five-year leases on Indigenous townships
* bans on alcohol and the possession of sexually explicit material
* audits of publicly funded computers, and
* the licensing of community stores.

The NTER legislation also suspended the operation of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA) and equivalent legislation in the Northern Territory. The RSD strategy does not contain these legislated measures or suspend the RDA.

RSD is a long-term commitment involving all levels of government. Its implementation rests on building partnerships with the Indigenous Australians in the priority locations.

Some lessons learned in the NTER are incorporated into the RSD strategy, including the benefits of an on-ground government network in communities. There are already around 60 GBMs across the Northern Territory serving 73 communities, as well as town camps in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

The Government is committed to continuing the NTER, but transitioning it to a new phase where communities are consulted and engaged (see below). Fifteen major NTER communities are RSD sites.

How is the NTER changing?

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Government allocated $807.4 million to move the NTER to a sustainable development phase to ensure its effectiveness in the long term.

Funding is flowing to a wide range of measures including additional police officers, night patrols, child protection, playgroups, school nutrition, strengthening education, expanded health services, community stores and enhanced community engagement. Much of this activity will be undertaken under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement which is the next phase of the NTER.

The Government conducted an independent review of the NTER in 2008 and accepted its three over-arching recommendations. These were (in summary) that governments should continue to address the high levels of disadvantage among Indigenous Territorians; that government actions respect Australia's human rights obligations and conform with the RDA; and that governments 'reset the relationship' with Indigenous Australians based on genuine consultation, engagement and partnership.

The Government committed to legislation lifting the RDA suspension in the Spring 2009 sittings of Parliament.

To meet these commitments, the Government conducted extensive consultations with Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory from June to late August 2009. There were more than 500 different meetings across the Territory encompassing informal conversations with GBMs and IEOs, formal community meetings, five regional workshops and five workshops with Indigenous organisations and peak bodies, including the Northern Territory Indigenous Advisory Council.

The consultations focused on the redesign of the legislated measures affected by the RDA, and will inform the Government's legislative strategy. Legislation is expected to be introduced in November 2009 and the redesigned measures to be rolled out from 1 July 2010.

Fifteen communities in the Northern Territory are priority communities under the RSD, where the new service-delivery model will be implemented. These are also the communities scheduled for major investment under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).

These communities will therefore benefit from the RSD strategy, SIHIP and programs under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement and other National Partnership Agreements, in addition to the Northern Territory Government's Working Future policy (see below).

How does the RSD strategy relate to the Northern Territory's *Working Future* policy?

Like the RSD, the Northern Territory Government's *Working Future* policy is closely aligned with the Closing the Gap targets. It is focused on achieving better outcomes for Indigenous Australians in remote towns across the Northern Territory.

There are six key elements to *Working Future*:

* the development of 20 'towns' across the Northern Territory through the development of existing major communities

- new ways of distributing funding for outstations and homelands
- delivering remote services in a targeted and coordinated way with the Australian Government
- employment and economic development
- a remote transport strategy
- Closing the Gap targets and evaluation.

The 20 towns covered by *Working Future* include all of the 15 RSD priority communities plus a further five 'Territory Growth Towns': Ali Curung, Borroloola, Daguragu/Kalkarindji, Elliott, Papunya and Ramingining.

Local Implementation Plans in each of the 15 RSD sites will bring together efforts under the RSD NP and the *Working Future* policy.