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**MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION  
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL AFFAIRS  
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CAPACITY BUILDING INQUIRY Submission No. <u>51</u> .....
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Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

Dear Committee Secretary

On behalf of the South Australian Government I am pleased to provide the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs with South Australia's response to the Inquiry into Capacity Building in indigenous Communities.

The response, which has been endorsed by the South Australian Cabinet, is a coordinated reply from South Australian Government departments.

I have also enclosed for your information the South Australian Coroner's report into the deaths of three people as a result of inhalation of petrol fumes.

Should you have any comments or queries, please contact Nick Stewart, Senior Project Officer, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, on telephone (08) 8226 8952, e-mail [nick\\_stewart@dosaa.sa.gov.au](mailto:nick_stewart@dosaa.sa.gov.au) or by correspondence at GPO Box 3140, Adelaide SA 5001.

Yours sincerely

Terry Roberts MLC  
**MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS & RECONCILIATION**

12 / 10 / 02



House of Representatives Standing  
Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Affairs  
Inquiry into Capacity Building in  
Indigenous communities.

Response by the  
Government of South Australia

August 2002

## **Introduction**

In response to the terms of reference put forward by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into Capacity Building in Aboriginal Communities the South Australian Government has coordinated the following information for submission.

The paper has been compiled with the intention of introducing items for discussion and consideration as well as outlining some programs and projects that can be viewed as good practice examples under the guidance of the Terms of Reference.

South Australia notes that, while focusing on the management and delivery of services, the Terms of Reference do not directly raise the issue of the ability for Indigenous communities to better identify appropriate services and how the mechanism of those services are influenced. It is respectfully requested that the Standing Committee acknowledge this as a significant issue within the Inquiry that warrants consideration within the report.

This inquiry is consistent with the strong focus on Indigenous communities since the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the reconciliation resolution in November 2000. In particular the Council stated in the Communique:

The Council agreed that many actions are necessary to advance reconciliation, from governments, the private sector, community organisations, indigenous communities, and the wider community. Governments can make a real difference in the lives of indigenous people by addressing social and economic disadvantage, including life expectancy, and improving governance and service delivery arrangements with indigenous people.

As a member of COAG South Australia has committed to progressing issues, including capacity building, to address the problem of social and economic disparity which is apparent within the Aboriginal community.

It is assumed that the inquiry will be informed by the processes put in place following the COAG resolution relating to reconciliation and the corresponding Action Plans that have been prepared by the various Ministerial Councils. As well as the work already undertaken by the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in this process.

## **Discussion**

The term community capacity building is difficult to define and often receives different responses from different individuals and organisations. In fact, in acknowledging that capacity building is a fundamental driver to implementing change, the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

(MCATSIA) has endorsed the convening of a national forum that will discuss and develop an understanding of what capacity building within Aboriginal communities means in reality.

The purpose of the forum, which was held in Brisbane on 29 and 30 August 2002, was to explore practical and successful examples of capacity building in each jurisdiction and establish a common definition and interpretation of capacity building for Government Ministers and Government officers.

At a broad level, capacity building within the Aboriginal community is the use of resources to increase the community's prospect of managing its own course of decision-making with regard to social and economic issues. This translates into the ability to generate an income and breaking the dependency on service providers and welfare money within a community, as well as being better equipped to make governance decisions that relate to the provision of services as well as allowing each member an opportunity for input, either personally or through direct representation.

The issue of capacity building is closely linked to that of good governance and a national conference was held in April this year titled 'Understanding and Implementing Good Governance for Indigenous Communities and Regions' to discuss the issue. The conference, convened by Reconciliation Australia, ATSIC and the National Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra, was an opportunity for people from around the world to bring together ideas and discussion points that resulted in an agreed outcomes paper regarding good governance. All fourteen outcomes are significant and deserve attention, however, five are of particular relevance to Government departments and service providers. They are:

- 6 ... , it is crucial to develop skills and capacities in communities for people to effectively carry out the tasks of governance so that it delivers tangible benefits for communities and the people.
- 7 It is also clear that governments have a critical role at the national, state, territory and regional levels. They must exercise that role firstly by understanding that communities need to be given the necessary powers, secondly by developing good public policy around this understanding, and finally by providing the necessary support and resources – for example, through block funding as outlined at the conference by Jack Ah Kit in relation to the Katherine West Health Board.
- 11 This raises the critical issue of how to best ensure the development of future leaders – especially young leaders – with all the skills to make these things happen.
- 13 It is important to employ people with appropriate skills and application, and with integrity.

- 14 There is no single magic formula – no ‘one size fits all’ – in governance or economic development.

One of the major messages these outcomes provide is the need to develop genuine partnerships between the government and community, that is a partnership that provides autonomy of decision making for the community with expert advice provided from other stakeholders when requested. In other words Government should assist, not direct, communities.

Conversely the time of simply providing funding to Indigenous organisations and expecting them to deal with issues without assistance is gone. Processes need to be developed and implemented if a project or program that is a partnership with an Indigenous community is to have a real chance for success.

An issue frequently raised by Aboriginal communities and Board Members of Aboriginal controlled organisations is the critical need for training and staff development to enable those representing their communities to be fully cognisant of their roles, function and responsibilities. The State Government regards action in this area as a priority and is involved in some significant work in this regard.

Too often Aboriginal controlled organisations are set up with insufficient resource and training support leading to organisation stress and sometimes collapse. It is suggested that this Inquiry take into account the critical need and importance of infrastructure support.

Mainstream agencies must address their own governance structures and continue to understand the importance of Aboriginal involvement as equal participants. This may involve, for example, more than one Aboriginal representative on any one body as well as additional support for such representatives.

The most successful combination within this partnership is for government to provide resources, some skill based experience as well as support and for the community to provide local knowledge and experiences that cannot be supplied from elsewhere. Both parties must bring to the program a desire for success and an understanding and respect for the other party's contributions.

There is a need for full and effective participation of Aboriginal people in decisions affecting funding allocation, distribution and service delivery. This includes:

- The need to increase Aboriginal participation in the operation of mainstream services and to enhance control over Aboriginal specific services.
- An understanding that the Aboriginal community has developed a large pool of knowledge and expertise about Aboriginal issues, enabling it to

deliver appropriate care and to advocate for issues such as better health for Aboriginal peoples.

- The knowledge that the need for higher than average per capita expenditure on services for Aboriginal people is consistent with patterns of expenditure for other groups of Australians who have worse than average health status.

There is also a need for genuine collaborative processes, which include the involvement of government and non-government funders and service providers to maximise opportunities for pooling of funds and multi-jurisdictional and cross-functional approaches to service delivery.

Effective partnerships between service funders, service providers and Aboriginal people will better direct services to address Aboriginal disadvantage. Some essential features of such a partnership are:

- The involvement of all relevant tiers of government with a cross-functional perspective;
- A financial stake for all parties, so that Aboriginal representatives do not feel dominated by fund-holding bodies;
- Full and equal access to policy and service delivery information for all parties; and
- Aboriginal control of, or strong influence over, service delivery expenditure and regional and local service delivery arrangements that emphasise community development, inter-agency co-operation and general effectiveness.

In focusing on the symptoms of the issues faced by Aboriginal communities, service providers may miss the broader picture of providing skills to the Aboriginal community that allow independent decision making, which will result in a better outcome for the community, particularly over the long-term, through the ownership of the resolutions made. Capacity building allows communities to have a positive impact on social disadvantage at the local community level.

Capacity building also provides a vehicle that allows Aboriginal people to take charge of the management and administration of the economic and social development within their own community. To assist communities in their capacity building it is important that diversity within the Aboriginal community is recognised and understood and that service providers and policy makers take this into account when developing relevant programs. This diversity is not only between different regions, it is also within communities and even families depending on age, gender and life experiences.

The diversity of Aboriginal lifestyles, cultural beliefs and values are constantly changing. The long history of movement and social change forced upon the community has produced a very complex and disparate population that defies simple description.

The word 'community' is often associated with a group of people living in one locality or sharing cultural or ethnic characteristics. Members of a community are usually expected to know each other. It also needs to be noted, however, that most Aboriginal people live within non-Aboriginal communities and many have non-Aboriginal family members.

The remoteness of communities is not just in relation to distance from capital cities, it relates to isolation in the sense that service delivery is not provided by mainstream authorities and systems.

It is recognised that the success of many projects is due to its suitability to the relevant local community. From an outcomes perspective, the more localised and specialised the project is for community, the more likely the it will feel a sense of ownership towards it, which in turn will create a greater opportunity for success.

It is also true from the other perspective. If a community has a real sense of partnership within a project a greater input will result, which will in turn give the project a more localised contribution, and again more chance for success.

It is also important that the appropriate people, and in particular 'Opinion Leaders', are identified and utilised to assist in decision making.

As explained by Dr Chanoch Jacobsen, who wrote on the subject of Opinion Leaders, "these are people who because of their experience and demonstrated success in the past, are accepted by others in the community as authorities in their fields. Opinion Leaders are not formally appointed: the community spontaneously gives them the informal position of leadership and authority".

It is vital that communities are able to build upon its human, physical and financial resources to meet both internal and external demands. Communities need to build the expertise and skills of Aboriginal people identified as leaders and key operatives in delivering services. Capital infrastructure needs constant upgrading and development in accordance with community plans and opportunities for income generation need to be explored to create wealth. It is particularly important that capacity building allows communities to develop their decision making, leading to less dependency on outside influence.

The poor state of Indigenous health in Australia continues to be on the national agenda. The difficulties associated with isolating the underlying causes of the failure to improve Indigenous health outcomes have generated numerous reports that have acknowledged these underlying causes are complex and difficult to quantify.

These reports have all made similar recommendations regarding the urgent need for improved living conditions, increased health services, improved training for health staff and the need to involve the community in the planning of all services.



Addressing health and wellbeing issues at a local level requires a comprehensive approach, building on good information and data, which responds to needs across the life span, age, and gender, and across a range of health and wellbeing conditions.

It is important to take the following points into account when working to build "local capacity":

- The existing community infrastructure available to support further work;
- Information about the full range of health and wellbeing services which is the government's responsibility to provide is available to the community;
- The capacity of community leaders to take responsibility for issues is considered;
- The immediate opportunities available for action are identified;
- Employment and training opportunities for members of the local community are a priority;
- Local health needs and priorities are one of the "drivers" of the agenda
- Work to increase capacity and infrastructure may need to precede the development of specific programs.

To further the advancement of addressing health and social well-being issues for Aboriginal communities the State Government works within a community development framework in all its activities.

The key elements of this approach are:

- A commitment to community capacity building. This involves a three tier approach that recognises the inter relationship between individuals, the communities in which they live and the systems which support them;
- Establishing linkages and partnerships between individuals, community and agencies.
- Influencing structural change.
- Assisting community members to use their skills for the benefit of the community.
- Recognising the goal of self-management and understanding our role in that process.

Aboriginal communities in remote and rural Australia often employ community advisers to assist in the day-to-day functioning of the community in particular when issues require communication with external organisations. The reliance by the community on such advisers varies from one community to the next, as does the service provided by the people occupying the position.

The position of community adviser provides an important service to the community and the benefit from their skills and advice is generally extremely positive. Unfortunately there is also the opportunity for community advisers to abuse their position and take advantage of a community that may not have the awareness to realise the position they are being put in, or in the worst case, to provide advice that may benefit the adviser personally.

There is also anecdotal evidence that suggests many advisers who abuse their position move from community to community, continuing actions of personal gain to the detriment of the community.

In an attempt to address this, South Australia proposes that the Committee investigate the viability of developing and maintaining a central register of community advisers. The intention of the register, which for administrative purposes would most likely be held in a Commonwealth department, is to allow communities to have an easily accessible resource that can provide them with the details of accredited people that will allow the community some confidence in their selection of an adviser.

For the register to be successful many issues would have to be discussed in partnership with Aboriginal communities including desired requirements to be included on the register and means to have an individual removed should that be warranted.

Should the majority of Aboriginal communities consider such a register important, and any investigations by the Standing Committee result in a tangible product, the South Australia Government believes it would be extremely beneficial to Aboriginal communities nationwide and would show a genuine desire to deliver a service to the community that is shared and positive.

### **Examples of good practice in South Australia**

To develop leadership and capacity building it is important to consider two levels of interface, individuals and communities. Through training, opportunity and the development of partnerships, both clientele levels can receive benefits and have the opportunity to develop their skills and experiences in dealing with issues independently.

The focus when assisting individuals is to develop their skills to a point that allows the person to regain and/or retain a strong influence over their own life. For those at school age this means ensuring education is delivered in a way that will not only increase the opportunity of a job, it will also cater for better decision making. As stated on the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework:

Formal educational institutions no longer have the dominant role of knowledge generation and transmission in our society. As knowledge is 'democratised' through being generated and dispersed in multiple and increasingly accessible ways, so children and students acquire a range of knowledge, skills and dispositions from varied sources. Such change means that it is no longer sufficient to acquire knowledge. It is important to have the capability to manage it, including the capability to bring critical understandings to bear on the selection and analysis of information and to understand the

power of knowledge, the potential for both its positive and negative use, and the importance of ethical inquiry and action.<sup>1</sup>

Such a method of education is of particular relevance to Aboriginal children who often receive an informal education from their family and the broader environment that is more relevant to their local community. If the skills to apply and manage the knowledge obtained through day-to-day life are suitably taught then the potential for children to contribute to the community in the future is greatly heightened.

Specifically, the South Australian Government has made a serious commitment to the education of Aboriginal students across South Australia with the establishment of an Aboriginal Education unit, which has a statewide focus for Aboriginal students. The unit will be holding a series of conferences for Aboriginal communities during 2002 with the view of sharing information with the community in relation to data and initiatives in all areas of Aboriginal education. The overall aim of these forums will be to form partnerships in finding solutions to closing the statistical gap between Aboriginal students and all other students.

The State Government also has developed a strong partnership with the Anangu Pitjantjatjara (AP) to ensure culturally appropriate education is delivered to the children to make it more relevant and to encourage attendance.

In 1987, following the State Government granting AP control over all educational policy on the AP Lands, AP formed the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC). PYEC determines and endorses all curriculum, administrative and financial policies. PYEC membership consists of the Director, Chairperson and 5 members from each of the nine communities where school services are offered. PYEC reports to each AP Executive, AP General Meeting and presents a report at the AP Annual General Meeting. PYEC is an incorporated body accountable to AP and is therefore not a DECS body.

The Superintendent, Anangu Education, the co-ordinating principal, the Vocational Education & Training (VET) Manager AP Lands, and the Director of PYEC provide advice and support to PYEC and oversee all programs and services provided by Anangu Education Services (AES) as per the Services Agreement. At the school level, principals and Anangu co-ordinators jointly manage the day-to-day running of each school, while teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) jointly plan and deliver classroom programs. These programs are based on district wide curriculum designed to ensure that current best practice is implemented consistently in all Anangu schools.

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<sup>1</sup> **South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability Framework**, by Crown in Right of South Australian Department of Education, training and Employment, DETE Publishing, 2001.

The PYEC is also the representative body on the AP Lands that discusses the appropriate delivery and desired outcomes for TAFE programs and employment services to the communities. Following extensive community consultation, the State Government has commenced a three year training and employment program to deliver these programs.

The plan's implementation is being supported by the newly appointed TAFE Manager and Employment Consultant and lecturing staff will also be increased to meet the community request to provide TAFE training that will lead to employment, traineeships and apprenticeships across the Lands.

A Mobile Centre will provide trade based VET programs to nine community schools across the AP Lands commencing later in 2002.

The Family Wellbeing Program is a holistic community development program developed in South Australia specifically for Aboriginal people and their communities. The Program addresses the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual issues which impact on family unity and stability and that affect the ability of individual family members to benefit from education and training and to obtain and retain satisfying employment.

AES is responsible for the development, delivery and monitoring of pre-school and school education to students living in Anangu communities. Education services are provided through Child Parent Centres (pre-schools) and 9 schools on the AP Lands, as well as the Wiltja School in Adelaide and other residential programs.

AES concerns itself with staffing, management, curriculum and support services and vocational education with employment programs recently being included in the services following community consultation. AES operates an office in Ernabella and a smaller unit in Adelaide where service provision from the wider DETE services are facilitated.

Improved educational outcomes for Anangu students will support the achievement of Anangu goals, which include a desire to manage their own communities and achieve educational outcomes that allow for lifestyle choice.

Educational programs aim to ensure effective access and participation in all areas of study with current priorities focusing on issues such as:

- literacy and numeracy
- Improved patterns of attendance, student behaviour and participation.
- Development of VET and employment programs.
- Enhanced decision making to support active participation and ownership by Anangu in the management of school policies and processes.

- The provision of effective training for Anangu personnel, employment of Anangu teachers in each community and active involvement of Anangu in the selection of staff at all levels of the school and TAFE.

There are currently many programs and activities managed and developed by AES that address the above priorities including the Wiltja School program, which offers supported mainstream secondary education and boarding facilities in Adelaide for up to 58 students, the Anangu Teacher Education Program, which provides training to Anangu to be qualified teachers for Anangu schools in partnership with the University of SA and a specific traineeships initiative to name but a few examples.

In total, 90 Anangu are employed by the State Government in schools and children's services on the AP Lands. This comprises of 8 teachers, 58 AEWs, 16 School Support Officers, the Director, PYEC and 6 Anangu Co-ordinators. There are a total of 69 non-Anangu employed.

Literacy and numeracy results of Anangu students have improved dramatically since 1998 due to the introduction of the scaffolding method and the much greater focus being placed on achievement and accountability. To illustrate, the following information has been taken from the Basic Skills Test completed by mainstream students and Anangu students.

From 1998 to 2001, in a period of approximately 3 and a half years, there has been a 14.0 point reduction in the literacy gap between Year 5 mainstream students and the results of Anangu students. While for numeracy, there has been a 10.4 point reduction in the gap between mainstream students and Anangu students.

The Government is currently developing a new model of service provision on the AP Lands that links early years, schools, training and employment to better prepare Anangu for community (and wider) life experiences. The overall aim is to have the programs and resourcing provided by the Department of Education and Children's Services contribute to generating an improved economy on the Lands with more wealth being retained by Anangu.

Currently attendance in the Anangu Schools is 64%. The target for attendance set by PYEC and schools is 80%. Some of the schools are now nearing this target, including the Wiltja School program where the attendance rate is 94%.

An issue that also needs to be acknowledged is that Anangu students are highly transient between communities. They also travel to other Anangu communities in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and other larger centres, namely Alice Springs and Port Augusta. However, Anangu students generally return to the Lands after short stints away.

To accommodate this all Anangu students on the Lands are on one database (referred to as EDSAS) so that transfer information such as medical, family,

attendance and academic information is immediate. With Global Budgets, schools are now funded for individual students. A Risk Fund also exists allowing schools to apply for funds to compensate for large fluctuations in enrolment due to this transiency. This system is far more responsive to the needs of such students and applies to the AP Lands schools as well as the receiving schools in South Australia.

The recently introduced Partnerships 21 (P21) local school management initiative has provided the opportunity to determine rights and responsibilities through explicit partnership agreements and recorded them as part of P21.

The challenge for the P21 team and the Anangu Schools was to develop a model in cooperation with Anangu that:

- recognised that Anangu society is based around holistic approaches and consensus decision-making.
- recognised and builds on to the prior achievements of PYEC.
- encouraged and actively supports PYEC to participate, and
- confirmed the decision-making powers that Anangu currently have within the existing structure of PYEC.

To address these challenges, a local school governance model that was inclusive of all family groups in each community was established in the following ways:

- Anangu Teachers, Anangu Education Workers and Anangu Coordinators have taken on the responsibility (as the local cultural experts) to ensure that each school's Governing Council is representative of all family groups in that community.
- The Anangu Coordinator at each school will also ensure that the family representatives attend meetings.
- Principals have been directed to report in Anangu-friendly ways and to encourage and actively support the participation of all family representatives on the Governing Council, and
- Governing Councils will meet every month.

All of which encourage and develop capacity building within communities as well as the delivery of services that will continue to improve capacity building through skill development for future generations.

The Yurrekaityarindi Project arose out of the Local Governance and Management Aboriginal Forum project. The purpose of this project was to strengthen the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal parents and community members in school decision making as a central part of local governance.

The Yurrekaityarindi is an affiliated committee of a preschool or school's Governing Council and is designed to foster the access and social inclusion of Aboriginal parents and community members in the decision-making and governance of a school or preschool. The function of the Yurrekaityarindi is to

provide advice and communication between the school or preschool, and parents and the broader Aboriginal community.

The Yurrekaityarindi model was based on an extensive consultation process with Aboriginal people across the State in 2000. The development of the model was supported by the operation of a Reference Group. Some materials have been developed that will support the involvement and active participation of Aboriginal people in school decision-making. These materials, which have recently been distributed, include:

- A video for Aboriginal parents explaining the Yurrekaityarindi and
- A wall chart presenting the operation of the Yurrekaityarindi information for school principals and preschool directors.

The State Government has identified two positions within the Aboriginal Education Unit who will have responsibility to build capacity in educational decision making through Yurrekaityarindi.

The South Australian Government also supports capacity building in Indigenous communities through Enterprise and Vocational Education (EVE) initiatives.

In particular, the Government has provided funding through the EVE Strategy 2000-2002 to 20 Regional Networks that have been established across South Australia and operate in partnership with schools, training organisations, Regional Development Boards, Area Consultative Committees and community agencies. The Regional Networks have provided participating organisations with a common framework, focus and collaborative means of improving the transitions of young people at the local level.

A Regional Management Group (RMG) has been established for each Regional Network. RMGs have developed strategic plans and have coordinated the key initiatives, strategies and achievement of outcomes at the local level. More than \$9 million is being provided over three years to the 20 RMGs to support arrangements for coordination and delivery of programs and services to local young people. This strategy is scheduled to conclude in December 2002. Within their strategic plans, RMGs are required to develop a range of strategies including those that target students at risk in their region and Aboriginal students.

Several regions have implemented community-based programs that improve outcomes for Indigenous young people. Examples include an Indigenous Medicinal Garden project in Southern Futures, the WAVES (Western Adelaide Vocational Education Services) Indigenous Horticulture project and the Eyre Indigenous hairdressing, silkscreen and pottery projects. Outcomes for these projects include improved school attendance rates, improved life skills and work readiness skills, links with local service providers and local community and pathways planning opportunities that improve transitions from school.

The State Government has supported individual and community capacity building in the AP Lands through the provision of funding to the Regional Network and the employment of a vocational education and training project officer. The Department of Education and Children's Services has supported Anangu Education Services to establish a regional structure on the AP Lands to support vocational education, training and employment outcomes. This includes a RMG and community-based groups.

The Government contributes to supporting EVE outcomes for Indigenous students at the State level including the identification of a Principal Development Officer who has responsibility for liaising across the department to undertake activities such as professional development, input into policy directions and supporting joint projects.

The State Government, through the Department of Education and Children's Services, appointed a project officer during 2001/2002 to develop an Aboriginal Employment Strategy in consultation with key stakeholders within the department and other agencies.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy and resulting recommendations are currently being finalised. It is anticipated that the strategy will be released in the near future. Some of the recommendations contained in the Aboriginal Employment Strategy are already being implemented such as:

- designated training for Aboriginal employees
- an annual conference for Aboriginal teachers, and
- promotion of the Aboriginal Employment register to managers and chairpersons of selection panels.

Following the release of the strategy there will be extensive liaison to progress the implementation of the recommendations contained therein.

Key objectives of the strategy include:

- increased recruitment of Aboriginal people
- increased permanency and/or long term employment for Aboriginal people in a range of positions, and
- promotion of career pathways in education to secondary and tertiary Aboriginal students.

The State Government liaises closely with South Australian universities to promote teaching as a career of choice for Aboriginal people. The universities support Aboriginal people undertaking teaching qualifications and advise DECS of upcoming graduates to facilitate their employment.

DECS also operates an equal employment opportunity program whereby Aboriginal people who are suitably qualified and who apply for teaching positions within DECS are guaranteed two years contract work if they do not obtain permanent positions through the normal recruitment process.



In Adelaide, the Tauondi Aboriginal College, a registered training organisation, governed by an Aboriginal Council, has been operating for nearly thirty years. Tauondi has a funding agreement with the State Government that enables it to provide training from Australian Quality Framework level 1 to 5 in seven different industry areas. In addition to providing accredited training to some 350 Indigenous students and non-accredited adult community education programs to 400 Indigenous students, cultural classes were delivered to over 7,000 non-Indigenous students in 2001.

The establishment and management of Tauondi reflects the South Australian Government's commitment to fostering capacity building within Indigenous communities through the delivery of training and adult community education.

Also reflecting an awareness of the need to build capacities of Indigenous communities is the response to 'Partners in a Learning Culture', a blueprint for implementing the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in vocational education and training, by establishing an Indigenous VET steering committee.

Membership of the committee is broad and includes representation from relevant government departments, unions, advisory bodies, ATSI, ATSI regional councils and employment, training and educational institutions. The Executive of the steering committee comprises full Indigenous membership.

Main discussion items for the Committee include employment and training issues to determine ways of improving outcomes as well as engaging in cross-sectoral discussions with other government departments, universities and TAFE Institutes regarding community needs for education.

Another program that has been implemented to provide Aboriginal people with the opportunity to develop and provide positive input to their community is the South Australian State Public Sector Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy. The Strategy aims to increase the representation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector to better reflect their representation in the State population. The strategy comprises a public sector employment register, a work placement incentive pilot, career enhancement and skill development programs.

Aboriginal people residing in South Australia are invited to be included on the Aboriginal Employment register, which currently contains 779 registered clients. Of those approximately 25% have been referred to Job Network Providers, Group Training Companies, employment agencies or the Adrail Employment Register.

Clients' job skills and work experience are assessed and their career aspirations recorded and are then allocated to one or more of the four programs that are offered, which include skills development, work placement incentive pilots, recruitment and career enhancement.

An Aboriginal Apprenticeships Program is also available and targets Aboriginal people over sixteen years of age who have shown commitment to their chosen field of study either through attending pre-vocational studies or by working in trade areas without qualifications.

The objectives of the program are to increase the representation of Aboriginal people in the trade areas, provide long-term outcomes that will assist in personal and community development, non-reliance on government agencies all resulting in economic independence. The overall benefits will include individual and community capacity building.

It is also important to address the needs of young people of school age who are at risk of offending and who do have the opportunity to focus on the importance of education.

The State Government has implemented programs that aims to reduce contact with the criminal justice system for young Aboriginal people who are identified as likely to offend.

This program is a whole of community initiative that works through Tjutjunaku Worka Tjutta (TWT) Inc Ceduna's local Aboriginal Resource Agency to deliver a program that aims to reduce repeat juvenile offending. The program works with juveniles aged 8-16 years, providing cognitive and skills development, mentoring and school retention components. The project is managed by a coordinator and management committee with ongoing monitoring of both process and outcome by the State Government.

The program takes a developmental approach to crime prevention and works in three ways.

1. To develop community cohesiveness and pride.
2. To support families to develop a secure and stable environment, and
3. To provide opportunities for young people at critical turning points in their lives to become valuable and productive members of the community.

Panyappi (formerly Indigenous Youth Mentoring Project, IYMP) is a mentoring project working with Aboriginal young people aged 10 to 18 years of age involved in offending behaviours. Panyappi is a jointly funded partnership between the South Australian and Commonwealth Governments. The project is expected to operate for a period of two years as a pilot project, with ongoing funding subject to consideration of the evaluation report findings.

Panyappi is working with young Aboriginal people at risk, or in the early stages of contact with the juvenile criminal justice system. The Project model has Mentors working with young people for up to 20 hours per week providing support, friendship, and positive role modelling. The Mentor has a proactive role in providing advice, reinforcing appropriate behaviours, in assisting the young person in accessing education and training, and linking the young person with appropriate social networks.

Panyappi is principally a crime prevention project. Its aims are structured around crime prevention practice and experiences with mentoring. The aims of the project are:

- Intervene in pathways of offending behaviour and bring about a positive shift in each young person's attitude towards offending and in their behaviour.
- Decrease each young participant's contact with the juvenile justice system and/or agencies associated with the juvenile justice system.
- Promote self-discovery and self-determination by young people participating in the project, their family and the wider community.
- Work collaboratively with all agencies that have mutual responsibility for resolving the young person's difficulties.

For people beyond the education system who find themselves in a position of dependency it is important they are given the opportunity to address their situation and to make decisions that will assist them in the short and long-term future. A successful example of this is the Port Augusta Aboriginal Families Project.

The major focus of this project is to identify individuals and families that have a high rate of contact with multiple government agency service providers and assist them to address their problems by identifying their own priorities. This enables a client to address one problem at a time and therefore focus their energies into that issue. The project has been successful because it works with families on a personal level and develops agreed programs, empowering individuals to help themselves.

Those who have success within this program not only address specific problems within their life but also gain the capacity to make their own decisions and develop an understanding of their abilities as well as their rights.

An example of encouraging capacity building within an Aboriginal community in South Australia can be taken from actions from the Nepabunna Community Council.

Nepabunna Community Council took the initiative to progress issues that have or will allow the Community Council to become better decision makers for their community as well as other steps to ensure strong employment opportunities.

Through active participation in the Local Governance Project, Nepabunna Community Council developed a framework for governance for the management of its area at the local level providing the Council with greater capacity to manage the local affairs of its area. This Project involved consultation and deliberation within the Council, with the Council itself responsible for facilitating discussions amongst its community. Moreover, consultation occurred with relevant service providers and funding agencies to

discuss, clarify and promote their roles and responsibilities as they relate to local governance and management.

The Framework for Governance Project was completed in December 2001 and was designed to outline the development of, and future actions for, a governing structure that accommodates the traditional representation of family and hierarchical structures within that particular Aboriginal community and built on the existing Constitution of the Council

The framework that was developed asked the following questions:

- Is the local governing authority (the incorporated body) recognised as having legitimate decision-making powers, both by the community and funding bodies?
- Does (and/or should) the decision making structure accommodate representation of cultural groupings?
- Are there structures in place to minimise cultural bias in decision-making?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of elected Councilors, the Administrator, and employees clearly articulated?

From these questions a Generic Framework for Governance has been developed that can be adapted and used as a starting point for SA's other four prescribed local governing authorities, which may choose to review and update their current local governing structure.

The generic framework of governance developed was then applied to the Nepabunna Community Council's governance arrangements thereby providing a practical working example. The project considered the current functions and responsibilities of the Nepabunna Community Council including its membership, Constitution and election processes. The paper specifies future actions the Council has identified as important steps to enhance its accountability, leadership and representative decision making of the Executive Board.

Nepabunna Community Council is eager to develop a Community Plan to assist it to plan for, develop and operationally manage its area so as to provide appropriate services and facilities to meet the present and future needs of its local communities. Such a Plan would be developed in consultation with its communities as well as with relevant service providers and funding agencies, to ensure more integrated planning for services and better responses to specific local community priorities. Development of such a Plan would further enhance and encourage the participation of local communities in the affairs of their local authority and provide local communities, through the Nepabunna Community Council, with greater capacity to manage the local affairs of its area

Also in Nepabunna, the State Government, with the support of ATSIC, initiated the Nepabunna Indigenous Community Involvement Projects in which specific targets were set to address training and employment of community members through projects associated with Indigenous communities.

Opportunities for employment in rural and remote areas are limited and Community Involvement Projects are designed to maximise employment of Indigenous people to work on Government funded programs within their own communities. People involved also gain a sense of ownership of their work as well as a lift in personal confidence. At particular times the community has achieved the rare and commendable feat of total employment for those seeking work.

The State Government has been strongly active in addressing the health and social well-being issues that are currently such an issue within the Aboriginal community.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Reconciliation Plan, endorsed by the South Australian Elders Council in March this year, establishes clear benchmarks against which progress can be measured.

The "Iga Warta" principles, developed from a Renal Health Summit held on an Aboriginal homeland in the Flinders Ranges in May 1999, provide a framework for service delivery to Aboriginal communities and have been formally endorsed by DHS.

The Government is presently working on the development of a service delivery framework appropriate for remote Aboriginal communities, many of which are facing serious social problems.

The Framework will reflect the following principles:

- Building and strengthening individual and family capacity
- Creating safe environments
- Building sustainable environment
- Reorienting service delivery.

Central to the above is the building of trust between Government and Aboriginal communities.

The State Government has identified the following key strategies to assist in the development of this Framework:

- Interventions which immediately address emergency situations, decrease harm and improve safety (for example, zero tolerance of family violence)
- Community Development (eg welfare and governance reforms, economic development, education and training, investment in social capital, developing and building capacity and leadership in the communities and developing collaborative partnerships.)
- Public Sector Reform (coordinating departments, programs and services through negotiation.

The "locking in" of all state governments departments is essential if we are to address the many needs requiring attention in the remote communities.

It is well acknowledged that Aboriginal people are well over-represented in the criminal justice system and the South Australian Government is seeking ways to reduce that number and to allow those already in the system an opportunity to address their situation. Both approaches will only provide a better opportunity for Aboriginal people to positively contribute to their own community and in turn increase the capacity of the community as a whole.

Importantly, these approaches are being developed in strong partnership with the Aboriginal community allowing input and open discussion from the most important stakeholders, the community itself.

The Aboriginal Justice Consultative Committee was established by Cabinet in January 2002. The Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Justice Department and co-chaired by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). It comprises members from key State Government departments, and Aboriginal community representatives from ATSIC, Grannies Group, Council for Aboriginal Elders, Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Maralinga Tjarutja, Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service, Kumangka Aboriginal Youth Service, Aboriginal Women's Statewide Advisory Council, Aboriginal Justice Advocacy Committee and Far West Aboriginal Social and Justice Committee.

The Chief Justice has also nominated four judicial representatives who attend Committee meetings in a resource and advisory capacity. The Committee meets quarterly and to date has convened one meeting in Adelaide and one regional meeting in Ceduna/Koonibba, where consultations with the community have taken place.

The Committee represents a partnership between the Justice Portfolio and Aboriginal stakeholders to improve justice services and ensure fair and just outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. It is a consultative mechanism that provides advice, information and directions on program priorities in the administration of justice taking into account matters arising from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Work has also been developed in regional areas of South Australia to provide communities with the opportunity to have a direct say in how to address concerns within the community. Engagement of communities in conjunction with ATSIC in the development of Aboriginal Justice Regional Plans have been progressed in areas of Ceduna, Pt Lincoln, Murray Bridge and Pt Augusta.

These plans will be developed from an issues-based participatory planning process that draws on the community's determination of direction and appropriate ways of responding to justice needs in the community. It assists in building community confidence in the State Government's commitment to reconciliation and problem solving with a focus on the Aboriginal community's ways of dealing with offending behaviours.

Aboriginal courts are established at Port Adelaide, Murray Bridge and Port Augusta. Discussions have also been underway with community and justice agencies on the establishment of an Aboriginal Court in Ceduna. The court is designed to allow Aboriginal people to have their cases heard in a less threatening environment and is less formal in its procedure, allowing the magistrate to discuss issues with the defendant and their family to determine a verdict.

New roles have emerged in the development of these specialist courts that incorporate Aboriginal eldership in the hearing process. The role of the family in supporting the defendant is promoted ensuring best possible outcome for the Aboriginal defendant.

The Port Augusta Court Complex is also receiving a redevelopment, which has given consideration to the needs of Aboriginal defendants and their families in the architecture of the courtroom. Aboriginal community representatives have been engaged in the design discussions.

The Coober Pedy Alcohol Strategy was implemented as an outcome of a directive from State Cabinet in May 1999 to develop a comprehensive plan to address alcohol misuse in Coober Pedy. It is recognised that alcohol misuse has a profound social and economic cost to the local and broader community and has a significant impact on the capacity of many communities. The Coober Pedy community have had a long history of alcohol related issues resulting in a range of violence, crime, health and social problems.

The Strategy provides the community with resources to address alcohol misuse in a coordinated and sustainable way that in the first instance minimises the harm to the individual and community. In the longer term the Strategy will reduce the level of alcohol misuse. The flow on effect will be a reduced demand for services in the community and more effective service delivery that is not dictated by alcohol related crisis management.

Community ownership and management of the issues in the community are accommodated in the Strategy design with appropriate levels of support from State and Commonwealth Government. A multi agency Advisory Committee has been established at the community level to oversee the Alcohol Strategy. An Adelaide based multi agency Management Group has also been established to assist the implementation process, provide continuing advice and support to the community, monitor and evaluate the Strategy, and report to relevant Ministers.

Given the long-term natures of alcohol misuse, a holistic approach has been developed to address the issues. Subsequently strategies have been developed which address harm minimisation, demand and supply reduction and rehabilitation.

More specifically, the core strategies include:

- mobile assistance patrol;

- transient camps and gathering places;
- a dry camping area;
- sobering up service;
- day centre, for programs and activities related to the client group;
- liquor licensing restrictions;
- rehabilitation; and
- early intervention/detection

The State Government is currently developing strong and effective partnerships with Aboriginal communities, and other key stakeholders, to support crime prevention initiatives within their Aboriginal community.

A particular example is that of the Davenport Community. Following repeated incidents of property crime in the community, the Davenport Community Council is currently developing a range of crime prevention initiatives. These include:

- Initiating a crime prevention advisory group for the Davenport community;
- Developing a community survey to gain a 'community' perspective concerning issues of crime and community safety relevant to Davenport;
- Developing a range of community guidelines around acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and how Council intends to respond to incidents when they occur; and
- Developing a discussion paper outlining crime and community safety issues pertinent to Davenport and proposing a range of crime prevention initiatives for implementation.

The South Australian Government is also working in partnership with the Nulla Wimila Kutju Regional Council of ATSIC in identifying priority crime issues within the region and developing a range of crime prevention initiatives, in association with identified local Indigenous organisations.

Consultations in the region have occurred with a range of crime problems being identified, including:

- Alcohol-related destructive and criminal patterns of behaviour among men and women; and
- Family violence issues, especially issues associated with the neglect and abuse of children.

The project intends to identify ATSIC Councillors and staff to work with local organisations to form community-led multi-agency project groups to address the crime issues, with the Crime Prevention Unit providing professional methodology and guidance.

Following recommendations of the Port Augusta Social Vision and Action Plan the Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee was established as a committee of the Port Augusta City Council. The roles and responsibilities of the committee are to;



- a) provide advice and make recommendations to the Council to increase the well being of Aboriginal people in Port Augusta.

take a leading role in the ongoing implementation and management of the recommendations in the Social Vision and Action Plan.

identify key issues that relate to and affect Aboriginal people within the Aboriginal community and the wider community.

- b) act as an advocate and address issues between the community, Council and relevant groups.
- c) design strategies to increase the Council's promotion of Aboriginal culture within the community.

establish positive relationships between Council, Aboriginal people and the broader community.

- d) be a forum to assist in addressing issues relating to racism and stereo-typing within agencies and the community.
- e) liaise and network with other Councils, State Government and Government Agencies
- f) inform Aboriginal community members about how the Council and Local Government in general works and how to access it.

The development of the Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee has many positive outcomes for the local Aboriginal community and the Port Augusta City Council, not the least of which is the increased capacity for the community to contribute to actions and discussion as leaders in their field and to be accepted as equal partners.

In the field of emergency management the State Government has begun a project to promote and enhance capacity building within a Community Emergency Risk Management process.

In addition, the Government is actively working with the emergency services agencies to identify employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and to better promote recruitment programs to the Aboriginal community.

Also the South Australian Country Fire Service is currently engaged in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands to promote the development of fire prevention and preparedness strategies.

As stated earlier the development of capacity building is an issue that requires influence at all stages of an individual's life. Beginning with early access to human services, education and positive role modeling to services for more mature people that allow a real and positive input into decisions, both personal and community orientated. It is also important that a cross portfolio

and whole of government approach is taken in the provision of services and assistance.

The South Australian Government, in the signing of the Partnering Agreement with ATSIC on 14 December 2001, has shown a practical way to develop and implement an across government commitment to addressing issues relevant to the Aboriginal community. Most significantly the agreement progresses issues in partnership with the highest Aboriginal representative body, ATSIC, providing a strong avenue for capacity building within the community through two distinct but related avenues. Firstly through direct Aboriginal representation and involvement in projects that have been identified to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people as peers and, secondly, through the downstream results of those projects.

The Partnering Agreement addresses many social and economic issues relevant to improving circumstances for Aboriginal people either through direct intervention, such as setting specific employment targets, or less directly, such as longer-term programs addressing domestic violence.

In particular the Agreement recognises the importance of capacity building for all the agreed commitments by stating, "Improved community capacity for the management and administration of economic and social development underpins the joint approach to the following initiatives [within the Agreement]".

It should also be noted that the South Australian Government is currently in negotiation with ATSIC to enhance the existing Agreement with particular attention being given to issues of employment and training opportunities, heritage issues, land management and social well-being issues.

In addressing the Terms of Reference it is assumed that the definition of 'service delivery' includes the provision services to manage land and biodiversity as both of those are critical to Indigenous communities because of their strong relationship to culture and social structure and therefore individual well being.

The State Government is operating programs relating to land management under an Aboriginal Partnerships program, which include the Native Title (Indigenous Land Use Agreement [ILUA]) program, training and employment, cooperative parks and wildlife management programs, enterprise development and Aboriginal heritage management.

Many of these programs specifically involve 'capacity building' and examples include; the State ILUA program as it relates to park and wildlife management and the cooperative parks and wildlife management program which has close links to Native Title, the Aboriginal traineeship and apprenticeship and proactive employment program, already underway, which will increase skills and employment opportunities, enhance the careers of Aboriginal people already employed within the Government and contribute to capacity building in communities.

The State Government is also actively facilitating the development of cultural tourism enterprises on parks with Aboriginal interests to assist those communities to build capacity and to foster economic independence, as well as directly contributing to training and employment and land management programs on the Maralinga Tjarutja and Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, which also have a strong emphasis on capacity building.

Services are also provided to assist communities to build environmentally sustainable regional economies, such as through appropriate mineral and energy resource, aquaculture and fisheries as well as agricultural and tourism developments to provide for economic independence and employment.

The Rekindling Family Relationships Framework for Action, which was developed from the Rekindling Family Relationships Forum held in Adelaide in April 2001, provides a basis for the development and implementation of Local Community Family Violence Action Plans. The Action Plans will be developed and implemented through a community development approach.

It is well acknowledged that to address issues such as family violence it is necessary to attend to a broad range of social and economic factors that affect the community, including building of community capacity. The Framework outlines the principles upon which Government, in partnership with the Aboriginal community, can move forward in a commitment to provide holistic, collaborative support for Indigenous communities, determining and implementing local strategies to promote collective healing.

An Intersectoral Officers Working Group on Indigenous Family Violence is convened by DOSAA and includes representatives from the Commonwealth (including ATSIC and Family and Community Services), the State Government (Department of Human Services, Office for the Status of Women, Attorney-General's Department, Justice Department and the South Australian Police Department) as well as the community and non-government organisations (Council of Aboriginal Elders, Nunga Mimir and the Aboriginal Women's Statewide Advisory Council Inc.)

From the Intersectoral Officers Working Group on Indigenous Family Violence a Regional Forums Planning Group has been selected to contact community agencies and representatives and seek the community's guidance to hold a Regional Forum. The aim of this contact is to develop a local Implementation Steering Committee which will develop and promote a regional forum that develop local strategic plans to address Indigenous family violence.

One such regional forum was held in Ceduna on 12 and 13 June 2002. The forum's agenda was lead by the recommendations that came from the 'Grief, Shame and Pride' report, which was prepared for the local women's group, Weena Mooga Gu Gudba.

The recommendations, which were derived from consultation with community members and stakeholders, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, seek a

holistic approach to addressing the problems of Indigenous family violence. Suggestions put forward include pooling of relevant funds, broader education programs regarding cultural issues and cultural change (for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) and improving local decision making.

The Action Plans will evolve from, and be owned by, the local Indigenous communities, supported in partnership with governments and community organisations, promoting family and community well-being.

South Australia has responded to the resolution put forward by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in November 2000, which has directed Ministerial Councils and jurisdictions to develop and report on actions and benchmarks that will address practical reconciliation, with a direct reference to improving governance. The November 2000 Communique states:

Drawing on the lessons of the mixed success of substantial past efforts to address Indigenous disadvantage, the Council committed itself to an approach based on partnerships and shared responsibilities with Indigenous communities, programme flexibility and coordination between government agencies, with a focus on local communities and outcomes. It agreed priority actions in three areas:

- investing in community leadership initiatives;
- reviewing and re-engineering programmes and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people. In particular, governments agreed to look at measures for tackling family violence, drug and alcohol dependency and other symptoms of community dysfunction; and
- forging greater links between the business sector and indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands Inter-government Inter-agency Collaboration Committee [APLIICC] (otherwise known as the Pitlands project) started in August 2000 prompted by concerns that, despite large sums of money being invested in services and programs on the AP Lands, reports were being received that the serious health problems and level of poverty of Anangu communities show no indication of improvement.

The program is very much in its infancy stage with discussions to begin with Anangu Pitjantjatjara representatives shortly. Progress to date includes the project recently being endorsed by the Premier as South Australia's selection for the COAG Community Initiative and will report to the unit that is being developed within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to monitor and coordinate the initiatives throughout Australia.

The APLIICC comprises Commonwealth and State Government Chief Executives and Senior Executives who are joined in their concern to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Anangu. Such membership ensures the

committee already has a strong cross-portfolio commitment to the region as well as a working relationship with the Commonwealth.

Terms of reference for the APLIICC were signed off on 7 September 2001 and read as follows:

- To work with and through the Anangu Pitjantjatjara to:
  - improve Anangu community capacity to manage current and emergent issues;
  - ensure that Anangu have access to services necessary to sustain life and well-being at a quality comparable with that enjoyed by other Australians;
  - design and deliver services in a manner which respects, promotes and sustains Anangu hopes and aspirations;
  - monitor, evaluate and review the success of programs and processes in light of the above.

These terms of reference reflect the agreement of all participants that the project broaden its original focus of social issues (including education, human services and justice) to include industry, economic, environmental, employment/job creation and regional development issues and therefore a true whole-of-government approach.

A project team to support APLIICC has been established for a period of two and a half years with funding sourced from various key agencies.

Research into the resources allocated to the AP Lands has revealed total State and Commonwealth Government funding is approximately \$60 million per year. The funding covers all elements that are required for community functioning, including the income for Anangu and non-Aboriginal people living and working on the lands.

The Pit Lands project is seeking to address the major concern that these resources are not making a significant impact into the quality of life for the Anangu people. It is apparent that one of the reasons for this lack of success includes a lack of coordination of the funds provided, which has created a lack of awareness amongst service providers and a communication with organisations within the AP that has often been blinkered toward other aspects of the community.

## **Conclusion**

The South Australian Government takes the issue of developing capacity building very seriously, as can be observed through participation on national forums and bilateral initiatives that are seeking to increasingly improve the

way we move forward with the community to advance the social and economic well being of the Aboriginal community.

As highlighted by the need of this Commonwealth Inquiry, there is still much work to be done, and through the increasing use of whole-of-government and cross-portfolio resources, along with strong partnerships with the community, advances will continue to be made through programs and initiatives such as those highlighted within the body of the submission.