

South Australian Government Submission

to the

**Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Affairs**

**Inquiry into the needs of urban dwelling
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

November 2000

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary and Introduction	3
2. The Demographic Context – current Aboriginal population and distribution in South Australia	4
3. Outline of SA Government activities that meet the key needs of urban dwelling Aboriginal people in a practical, effective way	5
3.1 Health and Housing	5
3.2 Homelessness	10
3.3 Mental Health	11
3.4 Youth Services	13
3.5 Education & Training	15
4. Barriers to access, service gaps and unmet needs	20
4.1 Barriers to Access	20
4.2 Service Delivery Gaps & Unmet Needs	24
5. Future Directions	27
5.1 Economic Independence	28
5.2 Urban Regeneration	30
6. Useful Information Resources	32
Attachment A Indigenous Population in South Australia	
Attachment B A focused step toward wellness and wellbeing in Aboriginal health – A State strategy and action plan for social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal people	
Attachment C A different view – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in contact with community services	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The South Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' inquiry into the needs of urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The terms of reference for the Committee's inquiry are broad and cover a range of issues. As identified, there are widespread current and future needs of urban dwelling indigenous people in the areas of infrastructure, health, education, housing, culturally sensitive services and economic independence.

The South Australian Government places a high priority on reconciliation. On 28 May 1997, the South Australian Parliament was the first in the country to offer a formal apology for past actions to the indigenous community and again, on 30 May 2000 was the first to pass a formal motion in Parliament acknowledging the reconciliation strategy documents of the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

The SA Government's contribution to the Standing Committee's inquiry focuses on State specific issues, successful strategies already in place, service gaps still requiring attention, and a forward vision. A selection of relevant documents is also provided as a useful reference source for further information about how SA is actively addressing the needs of urban Aboriginal communities.

The SA Government's contribution is not intended to cover every need and does not describe in detail the wide range of Aboriginal-specific strategies that the State currently supports in the community. This submission seeks to provide some local information on key issues of importance to this inquiry, with a focus on informing practical reconciliation and policy directions on service delivery.

2. THE DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT – ABORIGINAL POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A detailed analysis of South Australia's Aboriginal population demographics is included at Attachment A. This section provides a very brief summary of key information and trends.

General trends in the indigenous population to 1996

The current statistics on the SA indigenous population are widely acknowledged to be inaccurate, as there was a significant under count of population particularly in the far north, Port Augusta and on the Anangu-Pitjanjatjara Lands.

However, at the time of the 1996 Census, approximately two thirds of those who identified as being indigenous people lived in inland and remote areas, away from major urban centres and other highly populated areas.¹

The number of indigenous people as a proportion of the SA population has increased during the 10 years to 1996. ABS data shows that the number of indigenous people living in non-metropolitan areas of South Australia was 8,466 in 1986, had increased to 9,284 in 1991 and had further increased to 11,059 in 1996.

The Far North region and Port Augusta have the largest regional indigenous populations in the State with 2,284 people and 1,917 people respectively. Compared to the total Australian population, the average age of the Aboriginal population is lower, due in part to a higher proportion of young people and children.

There are a significant number of Aboriginal people living in Adelaide, with the population concentrated in the suburbs of Salisbury, Hindmarsh, Woodville, Enfield, Port Adelaide and Blair Athol. Regional urban centres with larger proportions of Aboriginal people include Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Ceduna, Whyalla, Murray Bridge and the Riverland region.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999). *1996 Census Data* at p52.

3. OUTLINE OF SA GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES THAT MEET THE KEY NEEDS OF URBAN DWELLING ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN A PRACTICAL, EFFECTIVE WAY

3.1 Health and Housing

Improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people is a priority for the SA Government. 'Wellbeing' in an Aboriginal context requires a holistic approach. Key strategies and programs in place in South Australia that address the terms of reference are outlined below. Attachment B provides further information about social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal South Australians.

Housing

In 1996 and 1997, Commonwealth, State and Territory Housing Ministers identified the major impediments to improving indigenous housing and acknowledged the important nexus between better housing outcomes and improved health outcomes for indigenous people. Ministers agreed:

- ⇒ to give priority to maintenance of health related aspects of housing such as water and waste disposal
- ⇒ to remove overlap and duplication in program administration
- ⇒ to improve data collection so that future funds can be targeted to areas of greatest need
- ⇒ to introduce voluntary rent deduction schemes for tenants of indigenous community housing organisations
- ⇒ that single points of contact are needed at national and state levels for housing programs.

SA has made significant progress on a number of these issues, including the establishment of the SA Aboriginal Housing Authority which creates a single point of contact for all indigenous housing needs in the state. Bilateral Agreements between SA and the Commonwealth for the coordinated provision of all indigenous housing in this State through the Aboriginal Housing Authority have also been signed.

Importantly, all members of the Aboriginal Housing Authority Board are Aboriginal people, formally appointed by the SA Governor. All members bring to the Aboriginal Housing Authority a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience on housing, health and management issues.

The Aboriginal Housing Authority offers a range of programs including public rental, rural and remote housing, home ownership, and private rental assistance. These programs are designed to meet the housing and accommodation needs of the

Aboriginal community, while addressing the access and equity barriers that face indigenous people with different types of housing needs. Key programs are described below.

Private Rental Assistance Scheme (PRAS)

The Aboriginal Housing Authority provides assistance to Aboriginal people in need of housing to secure and maintain affordable and appropriate private rental accommodation. In 1999/2000, 223 people were provided with financial assistance which helped them to successfully access housing in the private rental market. The Aboriginal Housing Authority acknowledges and understands the significant barriers facing indigenous people trying to secure private rental in urban SA and offers a number of other housing programs in conjunction with PRAS.

Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP)

The ARHP provides public rental accommodation to meet the specific housing needs of Aboriginal people in South Australia. The Aboriginal Housing Authority manages public housing properties throughout SA in accordance with policies endorsed by the Aboriginal Housing Authority Board and implemented in consultation with local Housing Management Committees (HMCs) across the State. There are currently ten HMCs operating in urban metropolitan and country areas, which comprise local Aboriginal people who actively participate in housing allocations, purchase decisions and maintenance issues. In 1999/2000, a total of 392 properties in metropolitan and major country centres across SA were allocated to Aboriginal families and individuals in need.

Currently there are approximately 1,800 public rental properties in the Aboriginal Housing Authority rental program, with a split of 38% in major country centres and 62% in metropolitan Adelaide. All properties are maintained to building and occupational, health and safety standard as set out by the SA Building Act.

Aboriginal Home Ownership Pilot Program

Another important initiative was the establishment in July 1999 of the Aboriginal Home Ownership Program. This program was developed by Aboriginal Housing Authority in conjunction with HomeStart Finance (which assists low-income South Australian families into home ownership). The aim is to address the low rate of Aboriginal home ownership. Initially, 50 ARHP tenants have been offered the opportunity to purchase their current rental home through a pilot program. This initiative is designed to make home ownership accessible, affordable and attractive to members of the Aboriginal community of South Australia.

Town Camp

In association with ATSIC and the District Council of Ceduna, Aboriginal Housing Authority is involved in developing a town camp at Ceduna. This major project has been in train for a number of years. The project is being implemented in two stages. The provision of camping facilities and drop toilets (Stage 1) has gone to tender. Permanent accommodation, flush toilets and showers (Stage 2) will go to tender early in 2001. It is anticipated that the town camp will benefit Aboriginal communities in and around Ceduna in a number of ways, including:

- ⇒ an appropriate camping place for visitors to Ceduna from remote communities
- ⇒ cooking, toilet and shower facilities for these people
- ⇒ provision of an appropriate facility for transient people in Ceduna.

Health Services

The SA Agreement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health is assessed against a number of significant outcomes which aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal South Australians. This assessment provides a detailed overview of what has already been achieved in SA and the areas covered include those identified in this inquiry's terms of reference and address, among other things:

- ⇒ improved outcomes for Aboriginal access to mainstream health services
- ⇒ linkages between community controlled and mainstream services, including innovation in coordinated care
- ⇒ resource allocation to reflect need
- ⇒ joint planning and participation
- ⇒ access and equity
- ⇒ data collection and evaluation.

Recent, key developments in Aboriginal health across SA are summarised below:

- ⇒ One of the best examples of what can be achieved is the Memorandum of Understanding drawn up between the Department of Human Services and the District Council of Ceduna, Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal communities and service providers in April 2000. It was the culmination of two years of intensive work and brings together the parties as members of a committee working together to establish and develop infrastructure for the Town Camp for Anangu visitors to Ceduna and permanently homeless Ceduna residents.
- ⇒ The Department of Human Services has been a principal contributor to the integrated planning and consultation processes occurring in Coober Pedy to address the misuse of alcohol in the town and at Umoona. A week-long consultation has taken place (9-13 October 2000) which made significant headway in arriving at community consensus on the nature of required services and the way in which the strategy will be managed.
- ⇒ In the Anangu-Pitjantjatjara Lands, the Department of Human Services has been working closely with the Anangu-Pitjantjatjara Council and the Commonwealth to draft a new model for funding allocation based on an audit of current levels of need and service funding.
- ⇒ The Port Augusta Aboriginal Families Project, now in its third year of operation, is an example of Government integrating services based on community need and input, by targeting multi-problem families with severe issues spanning generations. It is strongly client driven, which has proved quite challenging for the professionals providing services.

However, this has been the key factor in the gradual, but significant and lasting gains which have been made in this area of extreme need.

- ⇒ The Department of Human Services has also been active in the Adelaide CBD with local government, mainstream and Aboriginal service delivery agencies, to find better ways of meeting the needs of vulnerable adults, youth and children in the inner-city area. A framework for improved service delivery and collaboration has been developed and a two day consultation and planning process with over forty service providers was held on 6-7 November. A partnership has been formed between the Department of Human Services and the Adelaide City Council and ongoing liaison is occurring with the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, to address the needs of specific inner-city Aboriginal groups, such as women with children.
- ⇒ In Whyalla, the SA Government is working with the local Aboriginal community to ensure that the provision of services more effectively reflects the needs of Aboriginal families. A Whyalla Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Committee has been established, linking in with the existing Northern and far-Western Regional Aboriginal Health Advisory Committee. Advice will be given on the most appropriate mix of Aboriginal-specific and mainstream services for Whyalla, which to date, has not had Aboriginal-specific health services. An inter-agency committee with representatives from health, human services, the local Council and Aboriginal agencies has been established to oversee progress. The major focus of this development is increasing access for the Aboriginal community to culturally appropriate services. Strengthening the recruitment, retention and support of Aboriginal workers as well as cross-cultural training of all workers involved in service delivery to Aboriginal people has been prioritised and resourced.

In addition to these projects which address specific needs in localised urban areas, there are a number of other significant developments taking place, including:

- ⇒ The SA Aboriginal Health Regional Plans foundation document “The First Step...” was prepared in 1997. This successful health partnership report set out comprehensive SA regional plans for the first time. Aboriginal Health Advisory Committees are in the process of planning regional health priorities as part of “Second Steps”.
- ⇒ Primary health care access is being promoted via collaboration between community health services and Aboriginal health agencies (eg, Nunkuwarrin Yunti). A number of key regions have been identified to receive primary health care funding in 2001/02.
- ⇒ Work has been completed on the provision of a ‘step-down’ facility at the Luprina Hostel in Adelaide, catering primarily to the transitional needs of patients from remote areas being discharged from acute care. Improved

recognition of the important contribution made by *Ngankaris* (traditional healers) to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people is being addressed.

- ⇒ Aboriginal Health Workers held a forum in July 2000 and resolved to form a professional association which will promote the image and status of those who work to address the specific health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- ⇒ Significant funding has been received from the Anti-Tobacco Taskforce for a major initiative aimed at improving the health of Aboriginal mothers and children in remote communities. The project will be based on a holistic approach to community development, with a strong education focus, and will target the Anangu-Pitjanjatjara Lands, Yalata, Coober Pedy and Port Augusta.
- ⇒ Funding has also been allocated from the Public Health Outcome Funding Agreement for a 12 month consultation and planning process to develop a strategy for alternative birthing services to be provided to Aboriginal women throughout the State.
- ⇒ Mental health is another key area of need where projects are already in place that improve access to mental health services for Aboriginal people in the Mid-North, Wakefield and metropolitan regions.
- ⇒ Through the Aboriginal Services Division, the Department of Human Services is a major contributor in the focus on prisoner health, as a result of a review of medical and health care services conducted by the South Australian Medical Board. Special attention is being given in the first instance to the health needs of babies and young children living with their mothers in prison.
- ⇒ In September 2000, the Department of Human Services funded the SA Aboriginal Youth Culture Week in metropolitan Adelaide as a community initiative aimed at promoting the pride and cultural heritage of Aboriginal people.

Indigenous Family Violence Strategy

The SA Government is committed to developing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to reducing the impact of family violence in indigenous communities. The success of such an endeavour relies upon cooperation and collaboration across Commonwealth and State Governments, in partnership with Aboriginal communities.

The Ministerial Forum for the Prevention of Domestic Violence recently launched the *State Collaborative Approach* – a document which outlines the policy behind the SA Government's approach to prevention of domestic violence. It is acknowledged that the context of indigenous family violence requires particular strategies of its own, as well as access to mainstream resources. The Ministerial Forum endorsed a proposal

from the SA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that a stand-alone family violence strategy be developed to address matters of concern to Aboriginal communities.

Currently, existing strategies to deal with indigenous family violence in other jurisdictions are being evaluated. This will be followed by consultation on the best approach to be taken in SA, with key stakeholders including Aboriginal community focus groups. The final strategy will be developed with inter-sectoral involvement from the agencies listed below:

- ⇒ SA Department of State Aboriginal Affairs
- ⇒ SA Aboriginal Services Division, Department of Human Services
- ⇒ SA Office for the Status of Women
- ⇒ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- ⇒ Commonwealth Department for Family and Community Services
- ⇒ Aboriginal Housing Authority
- ⇒ Aboriginal Women's Statewide Advisory Group
- ⇒ various Aboriginal community organisations.

The strategy will be prepared by the end of January 2001, prior to the proposed National Indigenous Family Violence Conference in April 2001, that South Australia will be hosting at the request of the Commonwealth. The Conference is being organised by a working group involving Commonwealth and State agencies as well as representatives from Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal-specific service providers. The principles guiding planning and development of the Conference have been signed-off at a national workshop of Elders from around Australia.

3.2 Homelessness

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in the homeless population, particularly in families and individuals that have severe and complex problems. It is important to recognise that homelessness is viewed differently in Aboriginal culture and particularly in traditional communities. For Aboriginal people, a more important meaning to being 'homeless' is the spiritual form – that is, being separated from one's own home, family and land.

Due to this over-representation of Aboriginal homeless people and the additional need to address 'spiritual' homelessness, the Department of Human Services has given high priority to making real improvements in this area.

Access issues are crucial for homeless Aboriginal people, as they are less likely to have ready access to transport, telephone, or written information. There are also those with complex needs which impact on their capacity and willingness to navigate the service system. Their marginalised status, combined with systemic and personal racism and historical experiences (eg, dispossession) means that these Aboriginal people are often reluctant to approach services or seek help.

Creating effective pathways to stable accommodation, self-reliance and pride for an Aboriginal person includes taking into account these complex considerations and in particular, creating meaningful and respectful relationships between the service sector and Aboriginal people.

South Australia has a well deserved reputation for developing flexible and innovative responses in its management of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). Major sector reviews have fostered system-wide planning and innovation, particularly in non-accommodation based services, cross agency linkages and models of case management. There has been much greater transparency and accountability in SAAP services, matched with increased investment in training and development across the sector.

SA also has a wealth of innovative development and good practice models in mental health, aged care, housing and health services sectors that have enormous relevance to the homelessness response. In the current SAAP program being developed in SA, there is an opportunity to broaden and strengthen the planning framework and to work towards a more integrated systems approach. The principles of the Health Partnership agreement between the Commonwealth and the States (as well as the Keys-Young report on Homelessness in the Aboriginal Community), support this move in SA to a more integrated approach to the delivery of Government services to Aboriginal communities.

Inner City and Port Adelaide Services

Vulnerable Aboriginal people identified as facing multiple and compounding difficulties and who reside in or otherwise occupy inner city Adelaide or Port Adelaide are the focus of attempts to develop a framework for the coordinated delivery of Government services. A systematic mapping exercise of the current service system was an important first step that was followed by consultations with key stakeholders to identify priorities and service gaps. The policies currently driving service design and development are being analysed and drawn into the coordinated framework with a focus on:

- ⇒ ensuring the right mix of services
- ⇒ sustainability
- ⇒ strategic investment in new services
- ⇒ adopting best practice models in other identified areas of need.

3.3 Mental Health

Social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal people requires a broad 'whole of life' approach, which can be influenced by compounding historical, social, cultural, political and economic stressors. Several key national and state reports in recent years have identified that Aboriginal mental health issues derive principally from racism, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, unresolved historic losses, identity, incarceration and suicide.

It should also be acknowledged that Aboriginal people can and do experience mental illness in the western diagnostic sense and, for these people, use of western medicine, community mental health and mental health hospital facilities may be suitable. Consequently, mainstream mental health services and practitioners need to adapt thinking, communication, assessment, treatment practices and facilities to better meet the varied needs of Aboriginal individuals, families and communities.

While there are examples of individuals who are recognised by Aboriginal people as sound and appropriate providers of mental health services, the system in general is continuing to struggle with the requirement to change and adapt their services to meet the needs of various cultural groups.

Change can be facilitated by active participation in all aspects of mainstream mental health service design and delivery by Aboriginal people and Aboriginal community organisations. For example, greater access to mainstream mental health services by Aboriginal youth could be promoted through coordination between current mental health and Aboriginal youth service providers.

The Inner City Aboriginal Women's Project will target the needs of clients with mental health issues who also suffer chronic alcohol abuse. Similarly, the Adelaide Inner City Men's Project supported accommodation facility currently supports older Aboriginal men with severe alcohol abuse problems and mental health care needs. The Aboriginal Outreach Program is working with a younger group of Aboriginal men (30-45 years) who frequent the sobering-up centre, but who have additional complex needs and require assistance from several service providers.

The SA Government recognises that, just as in any community, there are Aboriginal people with complex problems who currently 'fall through' the gaps as no service is geared to meet their multiple needs (eg, those who have acquired brain injury through petrol sniffing or alcohol misuse). The difficulties are compounded when the person is from a traditional Aboriginal community and may have poor English skills. Recommendations to address such service gaps are currently being considered.

Traditional and natural healers are recognised as important mental health service providers for Aboriginal people and inaugural funding has been provided for the employment of two Ngankaris by the Ngaanyatjarra-Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara Women's Council.

Key Mental Health Initiatives

- ⇒ The development of a statewide social and mental health strategy, with particular emphasis on Aboriginal men's health, has been funded.
- ⇒ Government funding and support for the inaugural State Aboriginal Youth Social and Emotional Well Being Conference (May 2000, Port Augusta).

- ⇒ A Training Consortium is addressing the need to provide Aboriginal workers with the skills required to assist Aboriginal people with serious social and emotional wellbeing (mental health) problems.
- ⇒ A one year project “Forging Links” will establish linkages between mental health, community health, Aboriginal services and communities working with Aboriginal people, to promote culturally respectful and appropriate ways of delivering mental health services.

3.4 Youth Services

The interface of Aboriginal young people with the service sector is well documented in the research report *A Different View – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in contact with Community Services* (Department of Human Services, 1998 – provided at Attachment C).

Aboriginal children and young people are over represented in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. On every measure of service delivery, Aboriginal youth are wanting compared to non-indigenous young people, for example, service access and appropriateness. Pressures on families, in particular grandmothers, are considerable as the parents of Aboriginal young people are sometimes overwhelmed themselves by life problems.

The service needs of Aboriginal children and young people are currently being addressed by the SA Government in a number of ways:

- ⇒ accommodation hostel and child care needs of families in the Adelaide CBD
- ⇒ a successful youth centre and associated activities in Ceduna
- ⇒ Commonwealth funded youth workers in the Yalata and Koonibba communities
- ⇒ a specific youth focus will be incorporated into Coober Pedy’s alcohol management strategy
- ⇒ Aboriginal Youth Action Committees are supported and give Aboriginal young people participation and skill development opportunities
- ⇒ support for Aboriginal Youth Culture Week
- ⇒ investigating the provision of youth activities in Gerard
- ⇒ a network of Aboriginal young people is being jointly developed by the Departments of Human Services and State Aboriginal Affairs
- ⇒ financial support will be provided for the 2001 indigenous ‘Croc Eisteddfod Festival’
- ⇒ a Family Information Service has been established and an Aboriginal Information Officer engaged, to assist with tracking records in connection with the Link Up service located at Nunkuwarnin Yunti for Aboriginal families who have been separated and lost contact.

Youth Services Framework

Following a Youth Forum of key stakeholders across the youth sector held in December 1999, a youth services framework incorporating the needs of Aboriginal young people is being developed. The framework will span a range of Government services targeted at youth. The framework is expected to produce:

- ⇒ real improvements in young people's health on key indicators
- ⇒ real improvements in young people's mental health
- ⇒ reduction in the number of young people homeless or at risk of homelessness
- ⇒ increased labour force participation rates and income security for young people as a result of meaningful education and employment opportunities
- ⇒ reduction in the number of young people, particularly Aboriginal young people, in contact with the criminal justice system.

The youth services framework should develop clear pathways and integrated services that respond to the needs of young people on a population needs basis rather than on a diagnostic or program basis.

This approach recognises that those young people who are most at risk are often part of a number of corresponding, but not always intersecting service systems, which allows people to fall through service gaps created by boundaries of programs or diagnosis. The framework will suggest a model organised on population lines providing a continuum of services from prevention and early intervention, primary care, tertiary services and continuing care. Priority focus will be given in key areas, eg the health needs of Aboriginal young people in detention.

The framework's goals will be met by:

- ⇒ using resources flexibly to ensure a holistic and integrated response to youth issues
- ⇒ targeted initiatives that are community based, link across services and do things differently
- ⇒ meeting the immediate needs for shelter and support for young people at severe risk
- ⇒ increasing employment of young Aboriginal people
- ⇒ providing support and expertise to people who work with Aboriginal youth
- ⇒ sustained whole-of-Government early intervention effort with young people
- ⇒ integrated youth friendly services with an emphasis on consultation and participation of young people
- ⇒ service delivery prioritised by relative need, with streamlined access and pathways
- ⇒ sustained funding for youth specific services, particularly in country and regional South Australia
- ⇒ culturally appropriate service provision for Aboriginal young people and others from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The youth services framework will promote ways in which young people (particularly Aboriginal young people) can have better access to services across

Human Services, Justice and Education. The framework is being developed regionally so that responses can be tailored to the particular needs of the community. At the same time, work is being undertaken with senior planners in the three agencies to ensure that policies and practices are not developed with mitigate against the inclusion of young people.

A particular focus will be on links between Human Services and Education and the early identification of young Aboriginal people who may be at risk. This work includes examination of the way that schools exclude students from participation and the development of 'diversion' programs which can integrate education programs with health and community service providers leading to a more holistic approach to problems such as drug taking and behaviour management.

Kaingani Tumbetin Waal (formerly Frahn's Farm)

Kaingani Tumbetin Waal (KTW), 'a place of youth healing', is an innovative concept designed to modify and resolve alcohol/substance abuse and offending behaviours among SA Aboriginal youth. KTW is on a 175 acre property leased from the Aboriginal Lands Trust located near Callington (25km from Murray Bridge) and offers a live-in rehabilitation and prevention program specially designed for 'at-risk' Aboriginal youth (both male and female).

The program is an initiative of the SA Aboriginal Sobriety Group and provides residential care for up to ten young people aged between 13 and 18. Participants complete a ten week course which includes independent living skills, an educational and computer literacy component, and outdoor activities in arts and craft. The program gives indigenous young people an opportunity for time-out away from the influences and pressures of substance use in urban centres and encourages them to learn new skills and gain confidence within their own community and culture.

KTW is based upon a model whereby individuals have a sober, drug-free lifestyle and assume responsibility for their own actions. There is an emphasis on family participation and support through primary care givers visiting KTW to support their children.

Young people may choose to enter the program of their own volition, or may be referred to KTW by their families, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, the Education Department, or by the Courts as an alternative to juvenile detention where appropriate.

3.5 Education and Training

Education

A stronger focus in SA over recent years on educational outcomes has led to gains being achieved in the literacy standards of urban Aboriginal students. The number

of indigenous students completing the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) has been trending upwards since 1997. Several of these students have pursued tertiary courses, apprenticeships and traineeships after completion of SACE. The Department of Education, Training and Employment also has sixteen designated Aboriginal Schools, including eight Anangu schools.

However, in general it can be said that education systems in the past have not always been successful in recognising and meeting the educational needs of Aboriginal children. Attendance, participation, retention rates, and levels of achievement of Aboriginal children show that the majority are not engaging in education to the same degree as their non-Aboriginal peers. Nor are they gaining maximum benefit from their educational experiences.

The issues which contribute to and impact on this situation are long standing and complex. Social, cultural, systemic, environmental, economic and health factors all contribute to the alienation and low achievement of many Aboriginal children and students in the preschool and schooling process.

In response to this, the Department of Education, Training and Employment has developed an operational framework – *The plan for Aboriginal education in early childhood and schooling 1999 to 2003*. The plan acknowledges that Aboriginal people continue to be the most educationally disadvantaged group in South Australia.

The plan also recognises that attitudes and practices throughout the Department of Education, Training and Employment need to imbed greater knowledge and understanding of the cultural backgrounds, home languages, and socio-economic contexts of Aboriginal children and students.

The plan provides children's services sites and schools within the Department of Education, Training and Employment with a range of strategies, in partnership with Aboriginal people, to assist them in furthering the goals of Aboriginal education. To ensure successful implementation of the plan, all sites and services are required to report on progress made towards achieving stated goals and outcomes.

In addition to the plan for Aboriginal education in early childhood and schooling, the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) provides supplementary funding to achieve improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. The criteria for monitoring and reporting to IESIP include:

- ⇒ performance targets which are set to ensure national priorities for Aboriginal Education are met
- ⇒ information collection regarding distance travelled to school and educational achievement, in order to enable improvement within key areas of need
- ⇒ monitoring the extent to which stated annual performance targets have been achieved
- ⇒ setting new directions to build upon the previous achievements.

Key educational programs and services currently in place to support the needs of urban indigenous people include:

- ⇒ The Department of Education, Training and Employment Partnerships 21 strategy which gives schools greater flexibility to implement and resource educational programs and services as determined by local school communities. For example, it provides the ability to implement changes to the school leadership profile to appoint a deputy principal to support Aboriginal students.
- ⇒ The Student and Professional Services Unit within Department of Education, Training and Employment provides a range of support services for Aboriginal students including speech, disability, hearing, social work, attendance and behaviour support.
- ⇒ The Aboriginal Education Unit, Department of Education, Training and Employment provides a large range of services to school sites and personnel, including cultural advice and support, advice relating to teaching and learning methods suited to Aboriginal students, facilitation of Aboriginal education networks and a transport program for Aboriginal children who are experiencing difficulties accessing early childhood programs.
- ⇒ In addition, the Aboriginal Education Unit recently successfully trialed separate programs for Aboriginal boys and girls presenting at-risk behaviours. The programs directly involved Aboriginal role models from the local community to support a positive re-engagement in schooling.
- ⇒ The curriculum and staff support program, *Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum*, provides information on training in Aboriginal cultural awareness and studies, reconciliation strategies, strategies to support Aboriginal students, teaching methodologies for Aboriginal children and students incorporating literacy and numeracy and countering racism.
- ⇒ Schools with a significant Aboriginal student population are provided with an additional staffing allocation. Supplementary Commonwealth IESIP funding is used to employ Aboriginal people as Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs). State recurrent funding is used to appoint Aboriginal Education Teachers (AETs).
- ⇒ Both AEWs and AETs have job and person specifications that focus on improving literacy, numeracy, attendance and retention outcomes for Aboriginal students. AEWs also provide support through home to school liaison programs.
- ⇒ A range of specific school-based programs is also provided in SA. For example, Salisbury North Primary School's, *Scaffolding in Literacy* program has resulted in dramatic improvements to literacy standards for local Aboriginal students over a two year period.

Training Programs and Services – key examples

Wardang Island Youth Training Program

A youth training program is conducted on Wardang Island, which is associated with the Point Pearce Aboriginal community and under control of the Aboriginal Lands Trust. The Program involves indigenous young people in restoration activities of the natural and built environment.

Past industrial and farming use has resulted in soil contamination, rabbit infestation and introduction of exotic flora. Accommodation and docking facilities have been allowed to deteriorate. Nonetheless, the Island is visited by recreational sailors and has tourism potential. Wardang Island is also a popular fishing spot for the local Aboriginal community.

Wardang Island training programs for young people were first trialed in 1996 and have been shown to produce attitudinal and behavioural change in the young indigenous people involved. Courts make some direct referrals to the program, although the main focus is on early intervention and diversion from the justice system.

Aboriginal Education – TAFE Institutes

Entry level training and pre-vocational programs are offered through TAFE. This enables Aboriginal community members to access vocational training, further education and employment opportunities in their communities.

Aboriginal Employment Programs

The Office of Employment and Youth offers career opportunities in Government and provides training and development to assist Aboriginal people to obtain employment within South Australia.

Aboriginal Study Centre Program

This program offers courses for full time and part time students who are able to choose from a wide range of certificates and electives in Entry Level Training and Vocational Courses.

Taundi College

Provides Commonwealth funded adult and community training for Aboriginal people in five industry areas: tourism, hospitality, business, information technology and community services. The College also offers the Advanced Diploma in Visual Arts and general literacy and numeracy programs for adults.

Indigenous Management Training Program

The Department of Human Services funds ten major community based Indigenous organisations² throughout SA to deliver programs and services for Aboriginal families, children, young people focusing on managing community infrastructure and support. Organisations may deliver a number of services necessitating a high

² They are Weena Mooga Gu Gubda; Kura Yerlo; Nunkuwarnin Yunti; Nunga Miminis; Aboriginal Sobriety Group; Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement; Kungka Tjutaku Ngura; Aboriginal Family Support Service; Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service; Umoona Ktjutagku Health Service.

level of organisational and management capacity for coordinators, management boards and committees.

To assist and support indigenous managers and their organisations, a three year capacity building program has been developed. The initial stage of this project has involved collaboration between the Department of Human Services and the University of South Australia, together with ten organisations servicing urban dwelling Aboriginal communities.

4. BARRIERS TO ACCESS, SERVICE GAPS, UNMET NEEDS

There are formidable obstacles which affect the ability of Aboriginal people to access and use Government services. These have been recognised in numerous national and state reports. Examples of barriers facing Aboriginal people include:

- ⇒ racism – stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes towards people from other races can still be experienced in particular areas
- ⇒ inequality in workforce structures which perpetuates marginalisation and fails to adopt an aggressive policy of skills transfer, thus affecting future employment opportunities and career development
- ⇒ cultural ignorance can alienate Aboriginal people who seek medical help, lead to delays in making contact with the health system until a condition is chronic, or even lead to no help at all being sought
- ⇒ difficulty recruiting professional staff in regional urban centres – Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal – to meet community needs
- ⇒ the number of funding bodies and service providers with which Aboriginal communities have to deal.

4.1 Barriers to Access

Unemployment

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research estimates that the proportion of the working age indigenous population will rise by 28% in the ten year period from 1996 to 2006, reflecting the high proportion of young Aboriginal people. This figure compares to an estimated increase of 11.6% for the total adult working age population over the same period.

This will present issues for future employment requirements and welfare costs to Government if the current employment disparity between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians continues. Employment disparity is reflected in both urban and remote areas.

Inter-generational unemployment in many families and communities means that there has been little exposure to gaining skills, experience or capacity building for stable employment opportunities or indigenous business development.

However, there are more opportunities for indigenous people living in urban areas to be employed outside of CDEP or other Government funded programs, than may be available to indigenous people living in remote areas. Accordingly, the development of effective partnerships between indigenous interests and private sector business has a better prospect of generating employment gains for Aboriginal people living in urban environments.

Disability

Disability barriers identified in a study by the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia reveals that:

- ⇒ there is limited knowledge by both families and Aboriginal-specific services of the availability of mainstream disability services to Aboriginal people
- ⇒ very small numbers of eligible Aboriginal people with disabilities access mainstream disability services
- ⇒ the Home and Community Care (HACC) programs are the most frequently used services by Aboriginal people with disabilities
- ⇒ effective diagnosis and early access to treatment for disabilities or mental illnesses remain difficult issues for most Aboriginal families
- ⇒ information is not always available to Government services on the extent and nature of the support needs of Aboriginal clients with disabilities and their families and carers.

Aboriginal access to Housing

The Aboriginal Housing Authority has identified a number of barriers to housing access for Aboriginal people. In response, Aboriginal Housing Authority has initiated a number of projects and initiatives this year to address these equity issues, including:

- ⇒ improving access to appropriate housing for young people, Elders and people with mental health issues
- ⇒ improving inter and intra agency coordination to ensure appropriate referral, assessment and support services are provided to the customer
- ⇒ improving the number, type and location of Aboriginal Housing Authority housing stock to better meet changing demand
- ⇒ the development of joint partnership projects, including the provision of housing to other agencies who are better able to provide support to Aboriginal tenants with complex needs.

Many Aboriginal families prefer housing that does not isolate them from extended family support mechanisms. It has also been observed that some Aboriginal families will travel a significant distance from their home to access schools where there are Aboriginal students who are being supported and an Aboriginal Education Worker has been appointed.

Service Provision

Availability, accessibility of services, and case management for Aboriginal people in urban environments requires continued attention. For many, housing is a problem either through being on long waiting lists for public housing or by suffering from over-crowding. Social problems of substance use and family violence contribute to unsuccessful tenancies, which result in evictions and other problems. A significant

proportion of Aboriginal Housing Authority's maintenance expenditure results from damage consequential to episodes of family violence.

Accessibility of services can be influenced by service personnel being unfamiliar in dealing with Aboriginal clients. Unfortunately, racism is sometimes reported to be the cause of poor service being given to Aboriginal people (particularly in the private rental housing market).

On the other hand, dedicated Aboriginal Health services have found through experience that the introduction of culturally relevant service principles now underpins their ability to respond to Aboriginal clients, particularly those presenting with co-morbidities. The culturally sensitive delivery of services is a welcome improvement over previous practices, where mainstream agencies were frequently unable to engage Aboriginal clients, leading to non-compliance or low participation and access rates.

With respect to problems of substance abuse and family violence in Aboriginal communities, many rehabilitation approaches focus on the individual client when it is critical to work and support the family as a whole in this process. Programs that support families and harness their internal strengths have the potential to be more sustaining in their solutions, eg the recent SA Family Kinship Project.

Partnerships with Communities to Improve Decision Making

Reliance on advisory committees to engage community opinion was a creation of the 1980s and South Australia, like many jurisdictions, expended significant funding to support statewide and regional committees around an Aboriginal Affairs agenda. These forums concerned themselves with a range of issues in the general areas of health, education, heritage, justice, housing, land holding, and council governance, while others were focused on more specific matters such as drug issues, women's and men's health, etc.

The principle of engaging communities to secure their views in policy and program development has merit. However, in practice 'community' opinion may derive from the views of a limited number of self-interested individuals. Aboriginal people placed in the invidious position of 'representing' a regional focus (eg, ATSIC Regional Councillors) can pose serious cultural dilemmas.

Responsibilities of a 'public officer' under governance legislation frequently put Aboriginal community representatives in a conflict of interest situation. When western administrative structures are relied upon to govern Aboriginal communities, even those in urban areas, it may not provide sufficient latitude to accommodate Aboriginal ways of doing business.

The following issues have been identified as limiting Aboriginal participation in decision making processes:

- ⇒ Aboriginal people report that they do not feel valued or ‘properly’ consulted in many decision-making processes and believe a better understanding is needed of the consultation processes that are acceptable to Aboriginal people, families and communities.
- ⇒ Service providers do not always provide a range of options for Aboriginal family members to be involved at all levels of decision-making and cross-cultural communication training and development is required. The silence of Aboriginal people is often misinterpreted as an indication of agreement, instead of indicating that agreement is yet to be reached.
- ⇒ Many Aboriginal people report that service providers are very quick to report incidents of inappropriate behaviours and rarely focus on positive exchanges.
- ⇒ Service providers need to understand the importance of making time to talk with Aboriginal families and work flexibly with families, eg out of hours service delivery.
- ⇒ Aboriginal people frequently comment that written information uses ‘jargon’ which is intimidating and does not foster cross-cultural communication and common understandings.
- ⇒ Many Aboriginal people do not think that they can be involved in decision-making forums, unless their participation has been specifically called for or otherwise highlighted.

Barriers to Aboriginal Enterprise Development

In recent years, the SA Government has been actively promoting the need for Aboriginal communities to move away from entrenched reliance on income support (welfare dependency) and move towards a greater focus on economic development for communities. Building sustainable partnerships between major stakeholders to create economic development initiatives is now a priority. This concept has general support and it is recognised that Aboriginal communities have distinctive resources and talents. However, there remain a number of barriers to Aboriginal communities achieving successful business enterprises. Some of these barriers are outlined below.

Lack of collateral

Lack of capital and limited access to it are major barriers to the establishment, acquisition or development of indigenous controlled businesses or joint venture partnerships. Problems with access to capital falls into two main categories.

Aboriginal families do not generally enjoy substantial income savings, wealth inheritances or the proceeds from family trusts which could be offered as a deposit or security for a start-up loan. Some families have a generational history of unemployment and therefore have not had the opportunity to accumulate wealth or employment skills.

Banks are generally reluctant to extend loans to such individuals to give them a chance to reverse their dependence on welfare. There can also be mutual

difficulties for indigenous people and lending institutions due to a lack of common understanding and communication skills.

Poor educational outcomes and skill development

Educational outcomes in Aboriginal communities are still far from optimal. Stronger effort is needed in skill training and getting people job ready to allow them to engage meaningfully in enterprise ventures.

Inadequate skill levels and a lack of formal training in business also create barriers for participating in business. Good business ideas might not be pursued due to a lack of fundamental skills such as business planning and cash flow management.

Networks

Successful businesses thrive on accessing or owning extensive networks. Many of these linkages are derived from being part of a like-minded 'social set'. Aboriginal family/community economies still have a tendency to be welfare-based and consequently, strong commercial linkages are often lacking. These networks will take time, or require intervention, to develop and become established.

4.2 Service Delivery Gaps and Unmet Needs

Local Government Services

There are instances where Aboriginal households do not receive municipal services despite being ratepayers. There are five such communities in SA that fall within local government boundaries – Umoona, Point Pearce, Raukkan, Davenport and Koonibba, and the lack of service equity requires attention. Improved representation and participation of Aboriginal people in local Government will assist in improving responsiveness to needs of Aboriginal constituents.

Water supply services to some of these communities stop at the edge of the community and both ATSIC and the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs are relied upon to provide this community infrastructure. As a consequence, Aboriginal Community Councils become debt collectors in a user-pays system. The same principles can apply to road construction and maintenance, where the bituminised road ends at the perimeter of the Aboriginal community.

The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs has commenced discussions on the development of a statewide strategy to overcome these service delivery issues to large Aboriginal communities near regional urban centres, with support from ATSIC and local Governments.

Coordination in Infrastructure Development

The Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and South Australia for the provision of essential services to Aboriginal communities is based on the principle of promoting coordination of effort in funding and program development. However, in practice major capital works continue to proceed in an uncoordinated way.

Infrastructure reform is much needed to bring current activities into line with supply authority jurisdictions. For example, in some areas housing development is outstripping infrastructure development as a result of the lack of coordination.

The Bilateral Agreement is currently under review and the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs is awaiting notification of the terms of reference from ATSIC. Triennium funding ended last financial year and an interim fourth year of funding has been provided for 2000/01.

Vocational Education and Employment Opportunities

The lack of employment opportunities and the inadequate provision of appropriate education and training, has impacted on the health, unemployment rate, self esteem, crime rate and homelessness of indigenous young people. Support for Aboriginal students frequently requires cross service collaboration.

Future strategies with appropriate support from the Commonwealth could include:

- ⇒ reducing the age for Aboriginal students to take part in vocational education and training programs
- ⇒ mandatory training in cultural awareness for all teachers working with Aboriginal students, Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers.

Other Unmet Needs of Urban Dwelling Aboriginal People

- ⇒ There is a need to benchmark circumstances affecting urban dwelling and remote living indigenous people to better understand key differences between the two groups (eg, socio-economic status and accessibility to programs and services) so that Government programs can be tailored to better target differing needs.
- ⇒ A pressing need exists for coordination and networking at both a State Government level and local level between various organisations, agencies and services that touch the lives of Aboriginal people with disabilities and their carers.
- ⇒ Aboriginal people are currently under-represented in mainstream agencies that provide mental health services. Service options need to adapt to reflect the special importance of factors like culture, gender, age, relationships and circumstance when providing mental health services to Aboriginal people.
- ⇒ The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs is currently engaged in discussions to address service integration frameworks across Government. Continuous improvements can still be made to service sector responses to Aboriginal families' needs and can be better coordinated and managed through improved collaboration between State and community agencies.
- ⇒ A strong desire exists in the community to provide culturally appropriate support and services for Aboriginal families that complement and enhance their participation in community life.

- ⇒ Respite support for families with children who have disabilities is a critical element in the coping strategies of these families. Culturally appropriate respite care for Aboriginal people with disabilities is still difficult for families to find and access.
- ⇒ Culturally appropriate accommodation for young people, adults and families will become a significant issue for the Aboriginal community if the population across Australia continues to urbanise.

5. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Council of Australian Governments' meeting on 3 November 2000 recognised that reconciliation is a priority issue for all governments that will require a concerted and sustained effort over many years.

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 (eg, life expectancy) and by improving governance and service delivery arrangements with indigenous people.

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 with indigenous communities, program flexibility and coordination between government agencies, and a focus on local communities and outcomes. It agreed priority actions in three areas:

- ⇒ investing in community leadership initiatives
- ⇒ reviewing and re-engineering programs 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
- ⇒ forging greater links between the business sector and indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

The SA Government will continue to pursue established and alternative directions to improve service delivery to Aboriginal people and communities across all funded programs. In doing so, it will be honouring its commitments to reconciliation in a practical way and will also align with the six recommendations from the Iga Warta Rural Summit held in May 1999, which determined that good services are characterised by:

- ⇒ sustainability in terms of funding, leadership and coordination, and are continuously evaluated
- ⇒ inclusion of a pro-active, preventative approach to address the need to 'get in early'
- ⇒ recognise the environmental determinants of health (eg, food, water, housing, unemployment, etc)
- ⇒ have an Aboriginal community and family approach, that is, address the need to empower Aboriginal communities and families, while respecting and enhancing traditional guiding principles

- ⇒ respect Aboriginal time and space and in general should be culturally sensitive
- ⇒ address the need for coordination and continuity between regions and Adelaide.

The Iga Warta recommendations should be progressively reflected in planning for services to Aboriginal peoples and communities in South Australia.

Integral to the above direction is the need for a trained, supported Aboriginal component of the workforce, both within Government and Aboriginal managed organisations. For community empowerment to have meaning, Aboriginal communities require effective management structures and practical training if they are to negotiate complex funding and bureaucratic systems.

Two example of emerging areas of coordination between Aboriginal people and the SA Government are expanded upon below.

5.1 Opportunities for Economic Independence in Urban Areas

Economic development of South Australian Aboriginal communities has been a focus of the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Industry and Trade since 1996, when the first statewide workshop was held on the matter. A proposal to establish an Enterprise Generation Forum is currently being considered, as a means to bring together the Aboriginal and business communities, with the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs acting as a conduit to secure business advice, funding and expertise.

Increased income from stable Aboriginal employment or business enterprise is typically invested back into the health, education and housing of the family unit and provides younger family members and the wider community with greater confidence to engage in independent economic activity.

However, there are a range of structural hurdles that must be overcome by indigenous communities and individuals in business, as outlined in Section 5 of this submission (see pages 28-29).

Given the adverse socio-economic circumstances faced by a number of indigenous people, participation in mainstream commercial activity offers a means for indigenous people to break free of welfare dependency and to improve their standard of living.

To address the need to provide a sound skill base for Aboriginal people to develop successful career paths and business enterprises, the following initiatives have been identified by the SA Government as means to overcoming current barriers.

Business Planning and Management Training

While necessary for all businesses, in most cases training in business planning and management alone is not sufficient to enable an indigenous person to establish a successful business. Structured training courses are not always suited to Aboriginal people, reflecting problems relating to cultural issues and training providers not being sensitive to specific needs.

Following the establishment of an indigenous business enterprise, ongoing advice and mentoring in an informal setting is often valuable. Ongoing training should be integrated with the development of the business and mentoring is often most effective when an appropriately skilled Aboriginal person is used.

This approach to planning and management enhances the transfer and retention of business skills, while ensuring the business operator moves towards independent management of most day-to-day business affairs, save the usual specialist advice (eg, taxation, legal).

Culturally Appropriate Training

Indigenous people require trainers who are sensitive to Aboriginal culture. Ideally, trainers should be Aboriginal people. In the long term, Aboriginal people who become trainers and business advisers would be available to benefit the wider Aboriginal community in larger urban settings. In the meantime, while non-indigenous people are taking on this role, cultural sensitivity is of paramount importance to their acceptance by Aboriginal people and ultimately, to the development of Aboriginal business skills.

Training programs which use Aboriginal people as trainers, or which allow trainees to come into contact with successful Aboriginal business people will also have the positive effect of providing young Aboriginal people with positive role models.

Training Flexibility

Indigenous business training needs to be flexible in its delivery. This would include providing short training sessions in small groups – a traditional method of teaching which is more readily accepted in the Aboriginal community. Literacy and numeracy training may need to be incorporated where these have been identified as an existing barrier.

Business Incubators

Ongoing support in the early stages of a new indigenous business is a critical determinant of its long term success. Business incubators have been shown to provide strong assistance in this regard.

The number and dispersal of indigenous businesses, at least in the shorter term, means that a 'central' incubator model is unlikely to be the best solution. Advances in information technology present opportunities for a mix of face-to-face and on-line incubator services being delivered to indigenous businesses, especially those established in or near regional urban centres.

Business Networks

The establishment of formal and informal indigenous business networks can enhance opportunities for business success. Networks can facilitate learning through the sharing of experiences and provide encouragement and support to members. Members of networks can bounce ideas off one another, jointly solve common problems, take advantage of business opportunities, avoid common pitfalls and provide essential peer support.

Access to Finance

Like all businesses, Aboriginal businesses need to be 'investor ready' prior to obtaining finance and the development of a sound business plan is a critical factor. However, the lack of capital security or a continuous banking history may be serious obstacles. It is in these instances that organisations such as ATSIC can play a role in filling the finance gap to help the economic independence of an Aboriginal community get off the ground.

Financial institutions need to be aware of the potential opportunities offered by aboriginal businesses and ensure staff deal with indigenous clients in a culturally appropriate manner.

Innovative means of providing finance might need to be pursued, including ATSIC facilitating finance brokerage between investors and indigenous businesses, perhaps using information technology, or by the establishment of an indigenous credit union.

Role Models

Young Aboriginal people exposed to the possibilities of a career in business, whether or not they pursue such a career for themselves, will appreciate that economic independence is an attainable goal for indigenous Australians. One of the best ways to expose young indigenous people to economic independence is through access to positive role models, such as successful Aboriginal business people or professionals.

5.2 Urban Regeneration

The urban regeneration process has a focus on reversing population decline in the middle suburbs of Adelaide through measures to increase the housing stock and improve the environment of run-down areas. Some of the areas of particular relevance to the urban regeneration process, such as the north-west and middle-

northern suburbs (Port Adelaide, Enfield) have some of the highest concentrations of Aboriginal residents in Adelaide. The social indices point to a considerable degree of socio-economic disadvantage amongst the Aboriginal population in these areas.

The urban regeneration process has the potential to improve the socio-economic and physical environment for Aboriginal people, provided that redevelopment of concentrated public housing areas takes adequate account of the social links between members of the Aboriginal community already living there.

The SA Urban Regeneration Projects Team is embarking on a strategy designed to maintain housing affordability in significant parts of the middle suburbs, so that lower income groups, including those Aboriginal people who have low incomes, can continue to have access to housing in these areas where community structures are already well established.

Urban regeneration also has the potential to deliver housing options to Aboriginal people that better meet their specific needs, such as housing designed for extended families, family groupings and community cohesion. In addition, meeting the housing needs of clusters of Aboriginal families living within suburban Adelaide in a coordinated way, could help to encourage the maintenance of Aboriginal culture and tradition. For example, the District Council of Ceduna is currently looking at zoning urban land specifically for Aboriginal living purposes.

Other proposed urban regeneration demonstration projects provide further opportunities to explore and develop housing options for urban dwelling Aboriginal people that facilitate better outcomes on a range of indicators, such as health, education, employment, family violence and contact with the criminal justice system.

6. USEFUL INFORMATION RESOURCES

The list of attachments below are provided to the Committee in hardcopy and contain further detailed information about some of the topics discussed in this submission.

Attachment A

Indigenous Population in South Australia

Attachment B

A focused step toward wellness and wellbeing in Aboriginal health – A State strategy and action plan for social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal people

Attachment C

A different view – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in contact with community services