

Attachment A

Item No	Issue	Report Reference		Response Required
1	COAG National Partnership Agreements	Chapter 2 page 9 Para 2.15	<p>COAG has also agreed to a number of National Partnership Agreements which are new forms of payments to fund specific projects and to facilitate and reward states and territories that deliver on agreed reforms. The committee notes that the financial arrangements will include incentive payments to reward performance.</p> <p>The committee will attempt to monitor the amount and timing of these incentive payments as well as gauge the impact this approach is having on improving the effectiveness of state and territory government policies.</p>	Whether any incentive payments have been made to states and territories.
2	Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services	Chapter 2 page 16 para 2.42	<p>The committee will monitor the newly created role of the Commonwealth Coordinator-General in the implementation of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan. The committee asked the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) for information about the Transformation Plan at its Canberra hearing on 9 June 2009. FaHCSIA have advised the committee that the Transformation Plan is intended to support the Commonwealth's 'closing the gap' targets in Alice Springs and involves \$125 million in expenditure. \$100 million of this is already announced expenditure from the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing for housing and infrastructure upgrades and reforms in the Alice Springs town camps. An additional \$25 million will be allocated to service delivery and housing assistance in the greater Alice Springs area to address homelessness. This includes temporary accommodation facilities.</p>	Update on progress made on housing and infrastructure upgrades at Alice Springs Town Camps and the use of \$25M to reduce homelessness.
3	Expanding children's services and family support	Chapter 4 page 85 paras 4.76 - 4.85	<p>The NTER measures provided \$859 000 for five playgroups and \$400000 to expand current and early childhood programs. Around \$4.2 million was allocated to funding for 10 new crèches in communities that had no learning and child care services for children under five years. Funding was also directed towards upgrades for up to 16 existing crèches with identified urgent health and safety concerns.</p>	Update on progress made in delivering these services.

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		<p>The committee understands that four new crèche facilities have been completed at Areyonga, Papunya, Lajamanu and Kaltukatjara and six upgrades to existing crèche facilities have been completed at Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Borroloola, Ntaria, Santa Teresa and Nyirripi.</p> <p>FaHCSIA has provided funding for 13 Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers (RAFCWs). The stated aim of this program is to assist communities and families to access appropriate services, provide support to services regarding child safety concerns and to support Northern Territory child services workers in local Indigenous communities. The committee notes that between September 2008 and 31 January 2009, the Northern Territory government recruited eight RAFCWs. One team leader, one project officer and one acting manager have also been recruited.</p> <p>The NTER Review found that it was difficult to get accurate figures on the provision of pre-school services in communities. Although a number of government schools are registered to provide pre-school services, delivery appeared to be ad hoc or at best an early childhood class tacked on to the school. Most communities visited by the NTER Review expressed a desperate need for early childhood services and family support programs, such as parenting programs, particularly to support young women, pre-schools, nutrition programs, childcare services, playgroups and crèches.</p> <p>The NTER included funding for five new facilitated playgroups and an expansion of Indigenous Children Program (ICP) and Invest to Grow (ItG) services in the Northern Territory. The playgroup funding is for two mobile Intensive Support Playgroups (ISPs) based in Tennant Creek and Katherine and for three Locational Supported Playgroups in Numbulwar, Milingimbi and Yuendumu.</p> <p>NTER funding was also provided for the expansion of three 'Invest to Grow' projects which were to include child nutrition prevention and intervention sessions</p>	

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		<p>with families with children at risk delivered by the NPY Women's Council; 'Core of Life', a health education program providing information about pregnancy, breastfeeding and early parenting delivered by Menzies Inc. and the 'Let's Start', a project to develop a preschool program in communities to support parents; enhance parenting practices; strengthen family units; develop children's social skills and reduce problematic behaviour to be delivered by Charles Darwin University.</p> <p>The Monitoring Report states that funding agreements have been signed with service providers for the Tennant Creek and Katherine playgroups and that in the six months to 31 December 2008, 264 children and 92 parents and caregivers in the Tennant Creek and Katherine regions have participated in these playgroups. The Monitoring Report also states that at 20 May 2009, three of the five new playgroups were operational.[61] In addition, the Monitoring Report notes that funding agreements have also been signed with service providers for all three Locational Supported Playgroups. Yuendumu commenced operations in May 2009. The Milingimbi and Numbulwar services are still conducting consultations so these services have not yet commenced.</p> <p>The Indigenous Children Program was formed in 2006 by a merger of previously funded programs providing support to families. Between February and 30 June 2008, 21 children 0-8 yrs and 15 parents and caregivers used this program. Between July and December 2008, 19 children 0-8 yrs, 3 children 9-12, and 11 parents and caregivers used this program.</p> <p>Progress detailed in the latest Monitoring Report under the Invest to Grow projects includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition Program at NPY Women's Council: From June 2008 to December 2008, the nutrition team delivered 37 prevention and intervention sessions to 307 participants for children at risk and provided 65 children and their families with essential food and health requirements 	

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			<p>in emergencies. From June 2008 to December 2008, 122 parents and caregivers participated in the ItG Child Nutrition Program, compared to 75 parents and caregivers who participated in 18 nutrition education sessions in the period January 2008 to June 2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core of Life run by Menzies Inc: This program provides information about pregnancy, breastfeeding and early parenting. In the period January 2008 to June 2008 five community forums were conducted in Wadeye, Groote Eylandt, Darwin, Alice Springs and Tiwi Islands, and facilitator training was conducted for twelve participants. • Let's Start run by Charles Darwin University: This project aims to develop a preschool program in communities to support parents, enhance parenting practices, strengthen family units, develop children's social skills and reduce problematic behaviour. Let's Start has not yet commenced delivering the program. <p>The committee looks forward to reporting on the progress of these important services in its next report. The committee has found that there is a large amount of community support for improving access to these services and if provided in ways that take account of local circumstances, people will use them. The committee agrees that supporting children in the early years is critical to their long term life chances and wellbeing.</p>	
4	Safe Houses	Chapter 4 page 86 para 4.90	The committee will monitor the operation of safe houses and publish its findings when it tables its next report in November 2009.	Update on the operation of safe houses in the Northern Territory.
5		Chapter 4 page 89 para 4.97	The committee agrees with the NTER Review's recommendation that where safe houses have been installed, the Northern Territory government, the relevant service provider and each community should agree about their management, duty of care, liability and integration with associated services before they become operational, and as further safe houses are installed there be consultation with the	Update on community consultation process for management and operation of safe houses.

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			<p>relevant community on these issues. The committee notes that this recommendation was accepted by both the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments and the committee will monitor whether the construction of future safe houses follows this procedure.</p>	
6	Diversions activities for young people	Chapter 4 page 91 para 4.108	<p>The committee agrees with the NTER Review's recommendation that a comprehensive strategy needs to be developed and implemented for youth development services to address both capital infrastructure and recurrent funding, linked to a wider community development framework. This recommendation was accepted by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments and the committee will follow any progress made towards developing such a strategy.</p>	Whether strategy has been developed.
7		Chapter 4 page 92 paras 4.104 – 4.115	<p>This measure aimed to address the high levels of alcohol and drug abuse among young Aboriginal people living in remote communities and is largely a capital and infrastructure investment program with some funding directed to local youth activities. A three part youth alcohol diversionary implementation strategy was developed and FaHCSIA reported that \$8.5 million was funded across 95 projects.</p> <p>Due to insufficient capacity, the planned Alice Springs Town Camp Youth Diversion Project did not go ahead so the Commonwealth government funding for this component was reallocated to the Indigenous Youth Flexible Funding Component. The committee notes that non-capital projects funded under this measure included the establishment of a Youth Development Network, the conducting of 20 youth-specific activities across 15 non government providers, as well as school holiday programs across 10 communities.</p> <p>The NTER Review found that while a number of communities mentioned the benefits of upgrades to existing facilities there was also widespread comment about the persistent lack of ongoing youth services. This was especially so for communities that only received youth activities as part of a holiday program. Also, some communities, while benefiting from better sporting or recreational facilities, did not have the benefit of a youth worker.</p>	Update on progress made towards implementing diversionary activities for young people under the NTER measures.

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		<p>The committee notes that in its submission CAYLUS provided a list of ongoing youth service requirements across both the NTER prescribed communities and all other remote communities in the Northern Territory central desert region. CAYLUS' estimate was that \$7.2 million over three years is required for wages and \$11.15 million is required for capital.</p> <p>The committee agrees with the NTER Review's recommendation that a comprehensive strategy needs to be developed and implemented for youth development services to address both capital infrastructure and recurrent funding, linked to a wider community development framework. This recommendation was accepted by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments and the committee will follow any progress made towards developing such a strategy.</p> <p>In 2007-08 a total of \$8.5 million was allocated to establish the Northern Territory Regional Youth Development Network in the West Arnhem and Daly River regions (auspiced by Red Cross Australia). This network was intended to provide a flexible funding pool for youth diversion projects and provide holiday programs in central Australia.</p> <p>In 2008-09 a total of \$8.8 million was allocated to one youth diversion program, comprising two components. Component one consisted of \$2.1 million for the intended continuation of the Northern Territory Youth Development Network aimed at improving the quantity, quality and cohesion of its youth activities. The committee notes that funding for the Northern Territory Youth Development Network was released to Red Cross Australia on 29 October 2008.</p> <p>The Monitoring Report states that Red Cross Australia had consulted with a wide range of stakeholders and communities to develop a network of youth services and it employs local coordinators in 13 communities who work part time to assist service providers with the implementation of their programs. The committee notes</p>	

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		<p>that delays in implementation were impacted by recruitment of key Red Cross Australia project staff, the close down over Christmas and selection negotiations with providers.</p> <p>Component two of the program consisted of \$6.7 million intended for infrastructure and youth programs in Central Australia. Payments began in November 2008 after funding agreements were negotiated in the first part of the 2008-09 financial year. These projects target young people 12 to 18 years of age to build the youth services infrastructure, offer culturally appropriate social and recreational activities and provide local employment and training opportunities. A key priority for services this year is to work in partnership with the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training to support better attendance at school.</p> <p>The committee notes that Mission Australia was funded \$7.97 million to provide youth services over three years in just four communities, those of Aputula (Finke), Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Kaltukatjara (Docker River) through the Northern Territory Integrated Youth Services Project (NTIYS). Mission Australia noted in their submission that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The level of funding of the NTIYS acknowledges the true cost of providing sustainable services in remote communities. Mission Australia's experience in providing the NTIYS has demonstrated that a high level of financial resources is required in order to properly fund the provision of services that will have a sustainable impact on the lives of young people in the remote communities of Central Australia. Mission Australia's experience with this initiative also highlights that contractual arrangements for many of the programs delivered in the NT and other remote communities should be 5 to 10 years, rather than annual or even three year funding. The timeframes required for change, coupled with the necessary investment in staff and infrastructure requires such an approach.</p> <p>Central Australian Youth Link Up Service (CAYLUS) noted the importance of youth services, stating that increasing the facilities and resources would:</p>	

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			<p>...be very positive for the current safety and future potential of the at-risk group and for the wider society in which they live. The group would have access to safe, educational, socialising activities. Our experience gained in addressing inhalant abuse in this population has shown us that the majority of people will take other options if they are available in their communities. The existing models demonstrate this, especially the Mount Theo project, which has been going for 13 years and has made substantial improvements to the quality of life of young Walpiri people.</p> <p>The committee does not consider that it is able to form a view on the success or otherwise of youth program funding at this stage as the services appear to be in their infancy. The committee regards youth services as essential for community wellbeing and will report on progress in their next report.</p>	
8	School breakfast and lunch program	Chapter 4 page 85 para 4.128	The school nutrition program, which provides breakfast and lunch, is designed to increase attendance at schools. According to the Commonwealth government, the rationale was drawn from the Little Children are Sacred report which recommended that a school nutrition program be established. The Monitoring Report stated that as at December 2008, 71 schools across the 73 prescribed communities have a school nutrition program. This is up from the June 2008 figures where there were school nutrition programs established in 55 communities and 8 town camp areas. The committee will follow up on the number of schools that are in the prescribed areas that do not yet have a nutrition program and what the percentage increases are with each subsequent monitoring report.	Update on number of schools with an operational breakfast and lunch program and whether this is having a demonstrable impact on school attendance.
9	Support for carers	Chapter 4 page 132 paras 4.267 – 4.269	<p>The committee heard considerable and compelling evidence about the needs for increased aged care and disability services as well as additional support for carers. Carers Australia presented evidence on how much unpaid support carers, particularly young people and older people, were providing in communities and how their needs appeared to have been overlooked during the NTER.</p> <p>Carers Australia also asserted that many people who should be eligible for carers</p>	Update on process for ensuring that eligible carers receive appropriate payments.

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		<p>payments did not have access to them. The committee raised this with the Department of Human Services and Centrelink at their hearing in Canberra. It was acknowledged that there was likely to people who were eligible for carer's payment who were not accessing it and that this was an issue being addressed.</p> <p>...for a variety of reasons our Indigenous customers have accessed the Newstart payment in the past rather than disability or carer's and that that changed once the remote area exemptions were lifted in remote areas and people had to comply with the participation regime, and we saw Indigenous people starting to apply for other payments. I think—and I am sure my colleagues in FaHCSIA would agree with me—that together we have identified a number of barriers in the way the policy is formulated as well as the way the form is put together and service delivery occurs that makes it harder for some Indigenous people to access carer and disability. It has to do with not having access to doctors or shared care. Many of the Indigenous languages do not have a term for 'disability' or 'carer', because it is part of the family cultural network. We have been doing some work with our colleagues in FaHCSIA around ways to make those payments more accessible to our Indigenous customers. I would be happy to get you some more information on that and answer your specific questions. It is certainly an issue that in general we have been concerned about.</p> <p>Ms Jo Gaha, <i>Committee Hansard</i>, 9 June 2009, p. 22.</p> <p>The committee is pleased to note that Centrelink and FAHCSIA are aware of this issue and have a process in place to address it. The committee will further consider progress made on this issue in its next report.</p>	