



BUDGET

INVESTING TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN
INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS
AUSTRALIANS

STATEMENT BY
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MINISTER FOR FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES
AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
10 MAY 2011



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INVESTING TO CLOSE THE GAP

Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage is a goal shared by all Australians.

The 2011-12 Budget affirms our commitment to address Indigenous disadvantage. It provides \$526.6 million over the next five years focused on:

- **Delivering investment to Close the Gap** – we are building on the unprecedented reforms and investments already in place to boost education, health and family services and encourage personal responsibility for Indigenous Australians.
- **Increasing opportunities for economic participation and employment** – we believe that economic participation and employment are fundamental to the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, their families and communities.
- **Building mutual understanding and respect** – we are supporting key initiatives to build mutual understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. We understand that a strong partnership and engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is the basis for long-term change.

Closing the Gap is a long-term challenge facing the nation. It calls for sustained effort over many decades.

The Australian Government's agenda to close the gap is driven by three important imperatives: to overcome decades of under-investment in services and infrastructure; to encourage and support personal responsibility as the foundation for healthy, functional families and communities; and to build new understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

We know that Closing the Gap cannot be achieved by Government alone. We are working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, families, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government to tackle this. But to do so, we need Indigenous people to take responsibility for nurturing healthy and functional families and communities.

All of this work is underpinned by a clear framework for change. In 2008, Australian governments agreed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to establish the **Closing the Gap framework**, laying down ambitious targets to close the gap on a range of life outcomes.

Closing the Gap Framework

The Australian Government, together with the States and Territories through the COAG, has set specific and ambitious targets to end Indigenous disadvantage:

- To close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2031;
- To halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018;
- To ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities by 2013;
- To halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement for Indigenous children by 2018;
- To halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates for Indigenous young people by 2020; and
- To halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018.

These targets are underpinned by seven building blocks – priority areas where action is required:

- Early Childhood;
- Schooling;
- Health;
- Healthy Homes;
- Economic Participation;
- Safe Communities; and
- Governance and Leadership.

Delivering Investment

The Australian Government is already investing more than \$5.75 billion over the next three years, before new measures included in the 2011-12 Budget, to help turn around decades of under-investment and to make lasting long term improvements for Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Government, working with State and Territory Governments through COAG, has made historic investments across Australia in early childhood, schooling, health, housing, jobs, safety and leadership.

These landmark agreements with the States and Territories are critical to overcoming decades of under-investment in essential infrastructure and services for Indigenous people, including:

- \$5.5 billion over ten years from 2008-09 to 2017-18 to build and refurbish homes and related infrastructure under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing;
- \$1.6 billion over four years from 2009-10 to 2012-13 to improve the health of Indigenous people under the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes;
- \$564.6 million over six years from 2008-09 to 2013-14 to help ensure Indigenous children get a good start in life under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development;
- \$228.9 million over five years from 2008-09 to 2012-13 to create real jobs in Indigenous communities in government service delivery, along with additional measures to help Indigenous people get jobs and generate business income, under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation;
- \$291.2 million over five years from 2009-10 to 2013-14 to improve remote services under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery; and
- \$807.4 million over three years from 2009-10 to 2011-12 to continue work in the Northern Territory under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement.

We recognise that this significant investment must be accompanied by substantial reform actively involving Indigenous people.

Under the **National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery**, governments are working together to improve the delivery of services to Indigenous people in 29 priority remote locations across the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia.

Investing to Close the Gap

We have developed Local Implementation Plans with each community so investment priorities can be set in response to local needs.

We are determined to make these investments work. The 2010-11 Budget established a Remote Service Delivery Flexible Funding Pool of \$46.0 million over three years to cut through red tape and fund a broad range of projects. We also appointed the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services in July 2009 to monitor and report on the progress of our commitments in the priority locations.

We have also demonstrated our commitment to reform under the **National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy**, agreed by COAG in 2009. Three quarters of Indigenous Australians live in urban and regional areas. While the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is less marked in these areas than in remote locations, many urban and regional Indigenous people are significantly disadvantaged compared to non-Indigenous people. We are working with State and Territory Governments to ensure services delivered in these areas are effective, accessible and culturally appropriate for Indigenous Australians.

The **National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy** commits governments to coordinate and target the substantial funding already provided under mainstream and Indigenous-specific initiatives so that it effectively addresses Indigenous disadvantage in urban and regional locations.

We are continuing our significant investment in enhancing services to improve the lives of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory, through the \$807.4 million provided under the **Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement**.

Following extensive consultation with Indigenous people across the Northern Territory, the Government made changes to the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) to recognise the dignity of Indigenous people and their role as partners in creating change. We have repealed laws suspending the operation of *the Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. We have redesigned five-year leasing arrangements, alcohol and pornography restrictions, community store licensing and law enforcement powers. We have also introduced a new non-discriminatory income management scheme across the Northern Territory to protect children, help disengaged young people and better support families at risk.

Action to Close the Gap in the Northern Territory

Through targeted investment to address Indigenous disadvantage in the Northern Territory, including the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership, we have already delivered:

- Extra police – more than 60 extra police have been placed in more than 20 communities;
- Night patrols – 80 communities have Government-funded night patrol services;
- Safe houses – 22 safe places are operating in 15 communities to provide a place for children, women and men to go when it is unsafe at home;
- Mobile child protection team – over 2,455 cases investigated in over 55 communities between July 2008 and November 2010;
- School Nutrition Program – more than 7,000 meals (breakfasts and lunches) are provided to around 4,500 children daily;
- Child health checks – 10,600 child health checks and more than 24,000 follow-ups for audiology, dental and ear, nose and throat procedures;
- More health professionals – more than 450 Remote Area Health Corps placements; and
- Extra teachers – 146 extra teachers funded by the Government.

Building Mutual Understanding and Respect

This year we celebrated the third anniversary of the Australian Government's Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples. The Apology was a long-overdue acknowledgement of past harm. It marked a new beginning in our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and in our efforts to deal with unacceptable life inequalities. Recent developments underline the Government's commitment to mutual understanding, respect and genuine engagement with Indigenous people as we work to close the gap.

The **National Congress of Australia's First Peoples** to be fully established this year, with funding of \$29.2 million over five years from 2009-10 to 2013-14, is central to building new partnerships based on mutual respect and understanding. The Congress is a representative body that will engage and partner with governments, the corporate and community sectors on policy design. We expect the Congress to provide effective and well-developed policy advice, which reflects the views of its members.

The Government's commitment to progress **recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Australian Constitution** is another important step. We have appointed an expert panel, with funding of \$11.2 million over two years from 2010-11 to 2011-12, to lead

Investing to Close the Gap

discussion about Indigenous constitutional recognition, encourage the public to put forward their views and develop possible options for constitutional change in a report to the Government in December 2011.

The Government recognises that ending the disadvantage caused by decades of under-investment will take time. In the third annual Statement to the House on Closing the Gap in February of this year, the Prime Minister said:

The framework is in place and delivery has begun...

Parliament should be in no doubt. Prime Ministers will be reporting on Closing the Gap for decades to come.

This work will go on.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

2011-12 Budget – Investment in Indigenous Affairs	
Delivering Investment to Close the Gap	Increasing Opportunities for Economic Participation and Employment
<p>We are building on the significant reforms already in place to deliver new investments and services and encourage personal responsibility to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape York Welfare Reform Trial – extension (\$16.1 million over two years) to build on the gains already made in education and social responsibility and allow further work on home ownership, in partnership with the Queensland Government, regional organisations and local Indigenous communities • Bringing Them Home and Expanding Link Up Programs for the Stolen Generations – continuation (\$54.4 million over five years) to consolidate counselling, family tracing and reunion services under an social and emotional wellbeing program to better support Indigenous communities including members of the Stolen Generations • Establishing Quality Health Standards in Indigenous Health Services – continuation (\$35.0 million over four years) to strengthen the Indigenous health sector to achieve clinical and organisational accreditation • Health and Hospitals Fund Regional Priority Round (\$113.4 million over five years) to provide 15 new or expanded Indigenous health clinics and 40 new renal dialysis chairs • Indigenous Education Targeted Assistance – extension (\$171.3 million over two years from 2012-13) to ensure funding certainty for all students, parents, communities and organisations currently funded or supported through the suite of targeted programs under the Act 	<p>Economic participation and employment is fundamental to improving wellbeing and quality of life for Indigenous Australians, their families and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways Program (\$50.7 million over four years) to provide school based traineeships and other support to help up to 6,400 Indigenous students make an effective transition to work or further study • Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Ranger Cadetships – pilot program (\$4.1 million over three years) to trial a nationally recognised vocational education and training qualification for Indigenous school students in natural resource management, heritage related activities and cultural studies • Community Development Employment Projects program – eligibility for the Approved Program of Work Supplement (\$25.5 million over five years) to extend to CDEP participants the fortnightly \$20.80 supplement for job seekers on income support payments who participate in an approved program of works, providing an additional incentive to participate in the CDEP program • Building Australia's Future Workforce – Employment Services Arrangements – Job Services Australia in non-remote areas – continuation and new initiatives (\$6.1 million over four years) to pilot culturally appropriate mentoring support for Indigenous job seekers when they commence work

UNDERPINNING THESE INVESTMENTS WE ARE:
Building Mutual Understanding and Respect
<p>Building mutual understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians underpins our commitment to closing the gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Australian Government's Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector – interim response (\$15.2 million in 2011-12) to contribute to a sustainable future for Indigenous broadcasting
Investing in Service Delivery Improvements Benefiting Indigenous Australians
<p>Removing barriers to accessing non-Indigenous-specific services is critical to closing the gap by enabling Indigenous Australians to receive the full benefit of services they are entitled to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Mental Health Reform – expansion of Access to Allied Psychological Services (\$205.9 million over five years, including \$34.9 million in Indigenous-specific funding) to provide access to mental health services for up to an additional 184,500 people, including around 18,000 Indigenous people • National Mental Health Reform – expanding community mental health services – additional personal helpers and mentors and respite services (\$208.3 million over five years) to expand support for people with severe mental illness including specialist services focusing on the needs of Indigenous Australians living in remote areas • Primary Care – redirection of the domestic violence referral points project (\$8.5 million over four years) to expand and reform the support available for women experiencing domestic violence • Regional Aviation Access Program – airstrip upgrades – extension (\$28.0 million over two years) for critical safety upgrades at remote and isolated airstrips across Australia, including in remote Indigenous communities • Service Delivery Reform – improving services – increased support for people needing assistance (\$74.4 million over four years) to trial a case coordination approach to the delivery of core health and social services, such as Medicare and Centrelink, which is tailored to customers' individual circumstances • Service Delivery Reform – improving access – extension of rural mobile services and outreach support for the homeless (\$24.5 million over four years) to improve service delivery to people living in rural and regional areas and those who are socially isolated • Building Australia's Future Workforce – Employment Services Arrangements – Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services in remote areas – contract extension and new initiatives (\$1.0 million over two years) to allow employment service providers to work better with job seekers in remote areas, many of whom are Indigenous, to secure sustainable jobs and meet employers' needs • Family Support Program – indexation changes (\$2.9 million in this Budget in addition to existing funding of \$490 million over three years) to support families, improve child wellbeing and safety, and build more resilient communities, with the additional funding of \$2.9 million to help make sure the program can keep pace with increasing costs in future years

INVESTING TO CLOSE THE GAP

Budget Initiative – Cape York Welfare Reform Trial – extension

The Government is providing \$16.1 million to extend the current trial of welfare reform in Cape York until 31 December 2012. To ensure the trial continues to meet the needs of local people, the Queensland Government will lead a process of consultation with Cape York communities on the extension.

The extension will build on partnerships established with the Queensland Government, the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, regional organisations and local Indigenous communities.

The Cape York Welfare Reform Trial is an Indigenous-led approach to improving social and economic outcomes and aims to restore positive social norms, reestablish local Indigenous authority, and support economic engagement.

Since it began in July 2008, Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge have seen improvements in community safety, school attendance, and care and protection of children.

A key plank of the Trial is the Family Responsibilities Commission, made up of Local Commissioners, who are respected local people, and the Commissioner who is a retired senior magistrate. The Commissioners hold conferences with community members and refer people to support services and income management if required.

The Australian Government is determined to improve parental responsibility, combat welfare dependence and ensure welfare payments are spent in the best interests of children. The trial extension through this additional funding will allow government to build on gains already seen in education and social responsibility by continuing measures including case managers to work with families in partnership with the Family Responsibilities Commission to remove barriers to school attendance; income management through Centrelink when recommended by the Family Responsibilities Commission; and Student Education Trusts to help families save for their children's educational needs. More than 610 trusts have been set up across the four communities to date, with all children in Coen and Mossman Gorge signed up to the program.

Funding is also provided for new activity to advance home ownership opportunities in Cape York.

The Cape York Welfare Reform trial will continue to be evaluated this year, to inform future directions in consultation with the four communities.

Budget Initiative – National Mental Health Reform – expansion of Access to Allied Psychological Services

The Government is providing \$205.9 million over five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16 including \$34.9 million in Indigenous-specific funding to deliver much-needed mental health services under the ATAPS Program to up to an extra 184,500 Australians, including around 18,000 Indigenous Australians.

The ATAPS Program provides short-term, targeted psychological services for people with a diagnosed mental illness who have been referred by a General Practitioner. It targets hard-to-reach people who would otherwise miss out on mental health services. They include low-income earners, people in rural and remote areas and Indigenous Australians. The expansion of the ATAPS Program will allow for the provision of more culturally appropriate services for Indigenous people.

Budget Initiative – National Mental Health Reform – expanding community mental health services – additional personal helpers and mentors and respite services

The Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMS) Program supports people with severe mental illness. The 2011-12 Budget is providing \$208.3 million over five years for an additional 425 new community mental health workers, called Personal Helpers and Mentors, to work one on one with an additional 3,400 people with severe mental illness including 1,200 people with mental illness who are referred to employment services. The initiative will also assist family members and carers of people with mental illness. The new workers will join the 1,000 workers already providing practical support in PHaMS services across the country.

Along with services around Australia that are accessible to Indigenous people, PHaMS delivers specialist remote services that have a strong focus on cultural, mental and physical healing for Indigenous people.

Budget Initiative – Establishing Quality Health Standards in Indigenous Health Services – continuation

To improve the quality and safety of health services delivered to Indigenous Australians, the Government will provide \$35.0 million over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15 to continue the Establishing Quality Health Standards program.

This program assists eligible Indigenous health organisations to achieve clinical accreditation from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and other important health accreditation standards, through the assistance of one-on-one expert advice and accreditation support grants.

Budget Initiative – Bringing Them Home and Expanding Link Up Programs for the Stolen Generations – continuation

These programs provide counselling, family tracing and reunion services to Indigenous communities including members of the Stolen Generations. The Government is continuing to support the programs with \$54.4 million over five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16 to consolidate services under a cohesive social and emotional wellbeing program. This will ensure more people in need can access the services and allow more flexible models of delivery. The number of clients receiving Link Up services doubled from approximately 5,500 in 2006 to approximately 11,500 in 2010, leading to a substantial increase in reunions.

This measure complements the Government's investment in mental health and suicide prevention, and supports connection to family, country and culture, which are key determinants of good mental health for Indigenous people.

Budget Initiative – Service Delivery Reform – Improving Services

The Government is providing \$74.4 million from 2011-12 to 2014-15 to trial a new approach to service delivery, known as 'case coordination'. The new approach will assist Indigenous and other people to access services appropriate to their personal circumstances.

Human Services staff will be trained to recognise and respond to customer needs with sensitivity and compassion, and with a focus on early intervention. The assistance provided will range from simple referrals to more intensive support, such as multiple coordinated appointments with local community and non-government services.

The Government is also continuing to support mobile and outreach work, providing \$24.5 million over four years to improve service delivery to people living in rural and regional areas and those who are socially isolated. Two existing mobile offices will continue to visit rural and regional areas, with a third to be introduced by 2014-15. Thirty three extra Community Engagement Officer and Social Worker positions will be created, focussing on those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including Indigenous Australians.

The Government is also funding further Human Services reforms to improve access to services across Australia. It will work in partnership with key stakeholders, including Indigenous Australians, to redesign service delivery.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Budget Initiative – Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways Program

From the start of the 2012 school year, up to 6,400 Indigenous students over four years will have the opportunity to undertake a school-based traineeship as part of the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways Program at a cost of \$50.7 million over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15.

The program will provide young people with personal mentoring and case management to help them deal with any issues make moving from school to work difficult. They will also work one on one with participating employers who provide additional mentoring, work experience and employment. Traineeships will be available for students in years 11 and 12 in targeted high schools and year 10 in some circumstances.

The program will also assist younger high school students through aspiration building, mentoring and case management to encourage them to stay at school and aspire to completing a School Based Traineeship, further education or employment.

Budget Initiative – Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Ranger Cadetships – pilot program

The Government is providing \$4.1 million over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14 to give Indigenous students the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to become a ranger. Cadetships in natural resource management, heritage related activities and cultural studies will provide a nationally recognised qualification at the Certificate II level. This qualification will encourage students to finish school and help them qualify for jobs in local land management initiatives, for example with the Working on Country Indigenous ranger program and the Indigenous Land Corporation.

The training program will be developed in partnership with six pilot schools, the relevant Industry Skills Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational representatives and commence in the 2012 school year. Upon completion of the pilot, a further six schools will be invited to conduct the program in 2013.

Budget Initiative – Community Development Employment Projects program – eligibility for the Approved Program of Work Supplement

The Government is extending the fortnightly \$20.80 Approved Program of Work Supplement to all job seekers on income-support payments who participate in the CDEP program, at a cost of \$25.5 million over five years from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

The payment of this supplement to CDEP participants will help them meet the cost of participating in activities and brings the payments into line with payments provided to job seekers in Work for the Dole and other employment programs.

The new arrangements will provide job seekers in remote areas with an additional incentive to participate in the CDEP program.

Budget Initiative – Building Australia’s Future Workforce – Employment Services Arrangements

The Government is further improving support for Indigenous Australians to help them find and keep work.

The Government is providing \$227.9 million to provide additional wage subsidies and support to help very long-term unemployment job seekers get involved in participation activities such as job training and Work for the Dole. About 17 percent of very long term unemployed job seekers are Indigenous people.

A further \$6.1 million over four years is being provided to Jobs Services Australia to pilot the provision of culturally appropriate mentoring support for Indigenous job seekers when they commence work under the measure Building Australia's Future Workforce – Employment Services Arrangements – Job Services Australia in non-remote areas – continuation and new initiatives. An additional \$1.0 million over two years, under the measure Building Australia's Future Workforce – Employment Services Arrangements – Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services in remote areas – contract extension and new initiatives, will allow greater flexibility for employment service providers in remote areas to work better with job seekers, many of whom are Indigenous, to secure sustainable jobs and meet employers’ needs.

BUILDING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT

Budget Initiative – Review of the Australian Government's Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector – interim response

The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is fundamental to the identity of Indigenous people. Its messages reach Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences around Australia. A 2010 survey found that more than half of all Indigenous people surveyed (and six per cent of all Australians surveyed) had listened to an Indigenous radio station in the last month.

The 2010 Review of Australian Government Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector considered how to ensure that resources allocated to Indigenous broadcasting deliver the best results for Indigenous people. The review highlighted the importance of empowering and building the capacity of the sector. It also highlighted the need for governance and structural reform, particularly in the case of National Indigenous Television (NITV).

As part of an interim response to the review in April 2011 the Government announced that NITV would receive operational funding of \$15.2 million for 2011-12. The Government also announced that responsibility for the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector would move to the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. During 2011-12, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy will work with NITV to develop a more sustainable model to achieve the sector's goal of providing more original Indigenous content on free to air television.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Through the 2011-12 Budget, and the unprecedented reforms and investments already in place, the Government is investing in the seven Building Blocks – priority areas of action to Close the Gap.

CLOSING THE GAP: EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood is a critical time in every person's development.

The Government is funding a number of initiatives to help Indigenous families take responsibility for the health, education and security of their children. Research shows that investment in early childhood, especially for disadvantaged children, can yield substantial longer-term benefits for them and the whole community.

Budget Highlights to Close the Gap in Early Childhood

Family Support Program – Indexation Changes

In April 2011 the Government announced a simplified and strengthened Family Support Program which provides funding of \$490.0 million for Family and Children's services over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14. The 2011-12 Budget includes additional indexation funding of \$2.9 million over four years to help make sure the program can keep pace with increasing costs in future years.

The program aims to support families, improve child wellbeing and safety and build more resilient communities. There is a strong focus on identifying and meeting the needs of Indigenous people in every aspect of the program. Communities for Children, for example, provides prevention and early intervention services in disadvantaged communities including remote Indigenous communities in the West Pilbara and Katherine regions and regional communities such as Kempsey and Taree.

Activities coordinated by the West Pilbara Communities for Children service include early learning and literacy programs, child nutrition advice, parenting and family support programs, and celebrations of community events to highlight the importance of children in their early years.

A healthy pregnancy and delivery are essential for a child's later development. The Government wants to ensure Indigenous children are as healthy as non-Indigenous children and meet COAG's commitment to halve the gap in Indigenous infant mortality within a decade.

Two programs have continuing funding over four years from 2011-12:

- the Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program (\$44.5 million over four years), which helps mothers of Indigenous children to engage in good preventive health

Investing to Close the Gap

practices, supports parents to improve child health and development, and encourages parents to develop a vision for their own future, including continuing education and finding work; and

- the New Directions Mothers and Babies Services Program (\$133.8 million over four years), which delivers services including antenatal and postnatal clinics, hearing and child health checks, immunisations and information sessions on topics such as nutrition and breastfeeding.

The Government has also funded two Indigenous Mothers' Accommodation Fund (IMAF) facilities in Katherine and Cairns, and a third facility in Darwin is scheduled to open in November 2011. Indigenous mothers from remote areas use the facilities to access medical and related services in the final weeks of their pregnancy and immediately following childbirth.

The Government is working with the States and Territories to provide young Indigenous children with the full range of learning and development opportunities available to other Australian children.

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education provides \$970.0 million from 2008-09 to 2012-13 to ensure that by 2013 every Australian child, including Indigenous children, can access a pre-school program delivered by a university-qualified early childhood education teacher in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling. This agreement is key to meeting COAG's target of making early childhood education available to all Indigenous four year olds living in remote areas by 2013.

The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development provides a further \$564.6 million over six years from 2008-09 to 2013-14 to improve outcomes for Indigenous children. States and territories are establishing 38 planned Children and Family Centres by mid-2014 to deliver integrated early childhood services for Indigenous families, including childcare, early learning and parent and family support. The centres will also link to other services for children and families at risk.

CLOSING THE GAP: SCHOOLING

A good education gives children the chance to reach their potential, opens up employment opportunities and encourages personal responsibility and independence. Governments at all levels are taking action to improve numeracy and literacy levels for Indigenous Australians through both mainstream and Indigenous-specific initiatives.

Budget Highlights to Close the Gap in Schooling

Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Ranger Cadetships – pilot program

The Government is providing \$4.1 million over three years to give Indigenous students the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to become a ranger. Cadetships in natural resource management, heritage related activities and cultural studies will provide a nationally recognised qualification at the Certificate II level.

Indigenous Education Targeted Assistance – extension

The *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* (the Act) will be extended from the current 2009 – 2012 quadrennium to incorporate the 2013 calendar year.

The Government will provide \$171.3 million to continue the Act in 2013. This funding will be used to continue programs that target Indigenous students in schools across the country.

Currently the Act encompasses a range of programs including the Sporting Chance Program, the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program, the Parental and Community Engagement Program, Supplementary Recurrent Assistance for both non-Government VET and Early Childhood as well as ABSTUDY Away-From-Base.

The Government is currently conducting a Review of Funding for Schooling, which will consider programs for Indigenous students delivered under the Act. The review will be finalised later this year. The one year extension will allow time for the Government to implement any recommended changes, while also meeting its responsibilities around proper planning, engagement, consultation and change management with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and funded organisations in preparation for the next quadrennium of school funding.

Central to the Indigenous education reform agenda is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan – a long-term national approach to Closing the Gap in Indigenous educational outcomes, developed collaboratively with the States and Territories and non-government education authorities.

The Plan is supported by significant funding from National Partnership Agreements and additional funding of \$15.4 million announced in the 2010-11 Budget.

Investing to Close the Gap

The Government is expanding intensive literacy and numeracy programs, and providing for personalised learning plans at a cost of \$56.4 million over four years from 2008-09 to 2011-12. The funding supports teachers to address the individual learning goals and capabilities of each Indigenous student.

The Australian Government is also providing \$32.0 million for the Parental and Community Engagement (PACE) Program over two years from 2011-12 to 2012-13. PACE projects reach more than 42,000 parents of Indigenous children helping them to engage with and support their children's education.

The Government is also partnering with states and territories to implement three Smarter Schools National Partnerships: to help low-socio-economic schools, raise literacy and numeracy standards, and improve teacher quality. The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions provides \$623.0 million over five years from 2009-10 to 2013-14 as well as \$100.0 million in reward payments to the states and territories to increase the educational engagement and attainment of young Australians and support them to move from school to further education, training and jobs. All these agreements commit governments to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

The Government is also providing \$2.5 billion over 10 years from 2008-09 to 2017-18 to enable all secondary students to access vocational education through the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program. School communities with students from regional or other disadvantaged communities receive priority, with intensive support for Remote Service Delivery locations.

The Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement is providing \$44.3 million over three years from 2009-10 to 2011-12 to develop career pathways for Indigenous school staff, increase the number of Indigenous staff with education qualifications, and improve literacy and numeracy. The Australian Government is also assisting the Northern Territory Government to recruit, deploy and retain up to 200 extra teachers in remote areas at a cost of \$107.8 million over five years from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

The Government is assisting Indigenous students who leave their home communities to study in a range of ways.

- Non-government boarding schools that enrol and support Indigenous students from remote areas are receiving increased Indigenous Supplementary Assistance at a cost of \$22.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14;

- The Australian Indigenous Education Foundation Scholarship Program is receiving \$20.0 million in government funding over three years from 2009-10 to 2011-12 to match other external funding. Over 20 years, the Foundation will provide more than 230 six year secondary school scholarships for Indigenous students.
- The Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, with funding of \$69.9 million from 2011-12 to 2014-15 and Indigenous Youth Mobility Program, with funding of \$60.0 million from 2011-12 to 2014-15, support Indigenous students who choose to attend vocational education and training, secondary school or university away from their home communities.

The Government is also building hostels for secondary students from remote areas so they can receive a quality education in a supportive environment. These include an extension to the Wiltja hostel in Adelaide for school students from the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjara Land, opened in June 2010; a 120 bed residential campus at Weipa in Cape York opening from the 2012 school year for Indigenous children from remote and isolated areas of far north Queensland; and three boarding colleges planned for the Northern Territory.

CLOSING THE GAP: HEALTH

Indigenous Australians suffer unacceptable inequalities in health.

The Government is working to ensure Australia's health system meets the needs of Indigenous Australians. Significant new investment is focused on tackling life threatening chronic diseases and other conditions that contribute to the current life-expectancy gap between Indigenous and other Australians.

Budget Highlights to Close the Gap in Health

Health and Hospitals Fund Regional Priority Round

The Government is investing \$1.8 billion to improve regional health infrastructure through Health and Hospitals Fund Regional Priority Rounds. Indigenous Australians will particularly benefit from \$113.4 million of this funding invested in 15 new or expanded Indigenous health clinics and 40 new renal dialysis chairs over 5 years from 2011-12.

National Mental Health Reform – expansion of Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS)

The Government is providing \$205.9 million over five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16, including \$34.9 million in Indigenous-specific funding, to deliver much-needed mental health services under the ATAPS Program to up to an extra 184,500 Australians, including around 18,000 Indigenous Australians.

National Mental Health Reform – expanding community mental health services – additional helpers

The Government is providing \$208.3 million over five years for an additional 425 new community mental health workers called 'Personal Helpers and Mentors' to work one on one with an additional 3,400 people with severe mental illness including 1,200 people with mental illness who are referred to employment services. These new workers will join the 1,000 workers already providing practical support in PHaMS services across the country. PHaMS services in remote areas have a strong focus on cultural, mental and physical healing for Indigenous people.

Establishing Quality Health Standards in Indigenous Health Services – continuation

The Government is providing \$35.0 million over four years to strengthen the Indigenous health sector by helping Indigenous health services to achieve clinical accreditation (from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners) and organisational accreditation.

Bringing Them Home and Expanding Link Up Programs for the Stolen Generations – continuation

The Government is continuing to support these programs with ongoing funding of \$54.4 million over five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16 to consolidate services under a cohesive social and emotional wellbeing program.

Budget Highlights to Close the Gap in Health (continued)

Regional Aviation Access Program – airstrip upgrades – extension

The Government is providing additional funding of \$28.0 million under the Regional Aviation Access Program over two years from 2011-12 to 2012-13. The funding is for critical safety upgrades at remote and isolated airstrips across Australia, including in remote Indigenous communities as required. Remote airstrips provide access for essential medical and emergency personnel such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and are sometimes the only way to get food, mail and other supplies into communities. Airstrips are also a lifeline for residents who travel for work, education, medical treatments and other services.

The primary health care system is the first line of defence in helping Indigenous Australians look after their health. Ongoing funding of more than \$400 million in 2011-12 will support primary health care services delivered by Indigenous health organisations. The availability of good primary health care reduces the burden on hospitals by helping people identify and address emerging health problems early.

The Indigenous Chronic Disease Package is providing \$805.5 million over four years from 2009-10 to 2012-13 for primary health services as part of the \$1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes. The package includes better coordinated care, assistance with the cost of medicines, access to follow-up health care and an expanded workforce to provide effective, culturally sensitive services.

The package also builds the capacity of Indigenous patients to self-manage chronic diseases in partnership with their health providers. A training program for at least 400 health professionals is delivering about 50,000 support sessions for Indigenous people suffering from chronic disease over three years from 2010-11 to 2012-13.

Smoking is a major threat to the health of Indigenous people. Almost half of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over smoke, more than double the rate for the wider Australian population. The Government has engaged Dr Tom Calma to develop a national network of 57 Tackling Smoking and Healthy Lifestyle teams to cut smoking rates. The complementary Indigenous Tobacco Control Initiative is trialing innovative approaches to preventing and stopping Indigenous smoking across urban, regional and remote areas with funding of \$14.5 million over four years from 2008-09 to 2011-12.

The Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative provides up to \$182.1 million over four years from 2008-09 to 2011-12 for improved primary health care in remote Northern Territory communities. The Government also committed \$15.6 million over four years from 2008-09 to 2011-12 to expand counselling, support and related services in remote areas of the Territory to deal with trauma related to child abuse. In the last three years, the mobile teams deployed under this measure made 597 visits to provide

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casework, community meetings, community education and professional development services in 87 communities.

Mental health supports individual, family and community wellbeing. The increased investment in this Budget reflects the Government's commitment to improving mental health for Indigenous people and all Australians, including the three measures highlighted above with a particular focus on Indigenous Australians.

CLOSING THE GAP: ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Economic participation and employment provides a pathway for Indigenous Australians to enjoy the same opportunities as other Australians. For most Australians, economic participation begins with a job. A secure income allows individuals to build their standard of living, provide a stable home for their families and save for the future.

Budget Highlights to Close the Gap in Economic Participation

Budget Initiative – Building Australia’s Future Workforce – Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways Program

The Government is providing \$50.7 million over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15 for the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways Program providing up to 6,400 young Indigenous people with personal mentoring and case management to help them deal with any issues making the transition from school to work difficult. They will also work one on one with participating employers who provide additional mentoring and work experience. Traineeships will be available for students in years 11 and 12 in targeted high schools and year 10 in some circumstances.

Budget Initiative – Community Development Employment Projects program – eligibility for the Approved Program of Work Supplement

The Government is extending the fortnightly \$20.80 Approved Program of Works supplement to all job seekers on income support payments who participate in CDEP, at a cost of \$25.5 million over five years from 2010-11 to 2014-15. The new arrangements will provide job seekers with an additional incentive to participate in the CDEP program.

Budget Initiative – Building Australia’s Future Workforce – Employment Services Arrangements

The Government is further improving support for Indigenous Australians to help them find and keep work. The Government is providing \$227.9 million over four years to provide additional wage subsidies and support participation in job training, Work for the Dole and other activities for very long term unemployed job seekers, around 17 percent of whom are Indigenous people. A further \$6.1 million over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15 is being provided for Jobs Services Australia to pilot the provision of culturally appropriate mentoring support for Indigenous job seekers when they commence work. An additional \$1.0 million over two years from 2011-12 to 2012-13 will allow greater flexibility for employment service providers in remote areas to work with job seekers, many of whom are Indigenous, to secure sustainable jobs and meet employers’ needs.

Reforming Remote Employment and Participation Services

In addition to new Budget initiatives, to support economic participation and employment for Indigenous people, the Australian Government will consult with people in remote communities, service providers, non-Government organisations and

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employers on possible reforms to the delivery of employment and participation services. We want to strengthen employment services so that all Australians with the capacity to work, wherever they are located, are able to participate and contribute to their communities.

The unique nature of labour markets and the available workforce in remote Australia requires an innovative approach to improve economic participation and employment in those regions. The best outcome is for local job seekers to fill local vacancies, but in areas where there are few jobs available, activities are needed to build the capacity of job seekers by helping them improve their skills and get them ready for work.

We urge people who work closely with job seekers in remote areas to provide their views on how employment and participation services can be enhanced to meet better the needs of remote communities. Details on the consultations will be released shortly.

This will build on the reforms already in place to drive economic participation and employment. The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation has established cooperative arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories to improve opportunities for Indigenous people and help meet COAG's commitment to halve the gap in Indigenous employment outcomes by 2018.

An Indigenous Economic Development Strategy is currently under development. Preliminary work has identified five focus areas: supporting education and building the capacity of individuals; creating sustainable job opportunities; supporting business and enterprise development; facilitating financial security and independence; and strengthening the foundations to provide an environment that supports economic development.

The Government supports Indigenous Australians to prepare for and find sustainable jobs through Jobs Services Australia (JSA) and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). JSA provides employment services across the country, including in urban and regional areas, where about 75 per cent of Indigenous people live, where most job opportunities exist and where the most significant gains in closing the employment gap can be realised. JSA service providers work with individuals to build skills that are in demand but also focus on the needs of employers, helping them find job seekers who are ready for work.

In March this year the Government allocated \$3.5 million from the IEP to support training and employment projects for Indigenous Australians in flood- and cyclone-affected areas of Queensland. The Government is also continuing to provide training and development for Indigenous young people in remote areas, through the Defence Indigenous Development Program at a cost of \$25.1 million over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15, to improve their employability and introduce Defence careers.

Indigenous people living in remote areas face special challenges in finding and keeping jobs. Developing economic opportunities in these areas is a government priority but also a complex policy challenge. A key priority for reform is ensuring that Government services such as JSA, the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program and Centrelink work together effectively to get people into employment.

The CDEP Program has been the subject of an ongoing reform process since 2008. The long term aim is to prepare Indigenous people in remote areas for employment when it becomes available. CDEP providers are receiving development and support funding of \$172.4 million over three years from 2009-10 to 2011-12 to employ community development officers and mentors, to increase community participation and to link people with the services they need.

Money Management Services are being delivered in remote locations with high Indigenous populations. Education and intensive coaching is provided so people can make more informed financial decisions, budget for their families' needs, and access technology such as ATMs, phone and internet banking.

The East Kimberley Development Package is an example of how governments are working together to ensure Indigenous people can benefit from emerging economic opportunities. The package is providing \$195.2 million over five years from 2008-09 to 2012-13 to improve facilities and services in the region. The projects will provide a foothold in the job market for Indigenous people that may lead to further opportunities in the region's booming mining industry.

The Government provides a range of targeted support for Indigenous involvement in primary industry and other land management activities. In the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector, the Government is:

- improving access to FarmReady grants so Indigenous land managers can prepare to and respond to impacts of climate change;
- funding Indigenous research and development projects through the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation; and
- encouraging Indigenous participation in forestry under the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy; and
- increasing Indigenous engagement and employment in the pastoral industry, including through the Northern Australia Beef Industry Strategy.

Environmental management is funded through the Caring for Country initiative. The Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) Program supports Indigenous groups in managing and protecting more than 23.9 million hectares of Indigenous-owned land, with significant health, education, economic and social benefits to Indigenous communities.

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In addition to the 42 groups currently managing IPAs, a further 48 groups are working towards an IPA declaration, or other co-management arrangements. In the Great Barrier Reef region, a partnership program costing \$10.0 million over five years supports Indigenous people to take part in planning and enter into agreements about the use of traditional marine resources.

CLOSING THE GAP: HEALTHY HOMES

Healthy homes are the basis of healthy lives. They provide children and families with a safe and healthy place to grow and study and to learn the habits of good health and hygiene. Improved housing for Indigenous citizens is a central strategy of the Government in achieving the targets for Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

Most Australians, who live in urban and regional areas, including the majority of Indigenous Australians, have access to a range of housing services and opportunities.

The Government provides housing assistance that is available to low- to medium-income Indigenous households, including Rent Assistance, along with funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement to support the social housing system administered by State and Territory Governments.

The Government's Home Ownership Program is a stepping stone into the private housing market for Indigenous people who can afford to pay off a house, but may not qualify for a mainstream mortgage. The program has provided low-cost loans to over 14,000 Indigenous households throughout Australia since 1975. As a result of this program and their own efforts, about 40 per cent of Indigenous households in urban and regional areas now own or are purchasing a home.

Through the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH), the Australian Government, states and territories are providing \$5.5 billion over 10 years from 2008-09 to 2017-18 to deliver major reforms to Indigenous housing.

The NPARIH is:

- delivering up to 4,200 new houses and up to 4,800 refurbishments over ten years;
- driving reform to increase certainty about land tenure, to facilitate home ownership, economic development and improved service provision;
- developing better ways of managing new construction; and
- improving property and tenancy management services for residents.

The NPARIH has set ambitious targets for Indigenous employment. Companies involved in construction and refurbishment are expected to hire 20 per cent of their workforce from the local community. Local people are now accessing accredited

training and real job opportunities, learning trades through construction work and working on property management and maintenance.

Secure land tenure is necessary to protect assets and to make sure repairs and maintenance are carried out. It underpins the responsibility of residents to pay the rent and maintain and care for their home.

In regional areas, Indigenous people are benefiting from the significant new investment in social housing under the mainstream Social Housing Initiative that is constructing more than 19,300 new social housing dwellings and has delivered repairs and maintenance to about 80,000 existing dwellings. About 8 per cent of social public housing residents nationally are Indigenous.

Indigenous people are also over-represented in the homeless assistance services system. The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness provides \$1.1 billion over five years from 2008-09 to 2012-13 in joint Commonwealth and State and Territory funding. This includes \$300 million over five years allocated to the A Place to Call Home initiative which is delivering more than 600 new homes for individuals and families who are homeless, including Indigenous people who experience high rates of homelessness compared to other Australians.

The Government continues to work in partnership with the Australian Army to improve living conditions in individual communities. The Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) undertakes one project each calendar year in a remote Indigenous community. The projects target housing, essential services, other infrastructure and environmental health, while providing training to community members. In 2011 AACAP will be delivered in the Fitzroy Crossing region in Western Australia.

Budget Highlight to Close the Gap in Cape York

Budget Initiative - Cape York Welfare Reform Trial – extension

The extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, at a cost of \$16.1 million over two years from 2011-12 to 2012-13, will build on the gains already made in education and social responsibility and allow further work on home ownership, in partnership with the Queensland Government, regional organisations and local Indigenous communities. The measures in the Trial contribute to a number of building blocks, including Schooling, Healthy Homes and Safe Communities.

CLOSING THE GAP: SAFE COMMUNITIES

All Australians have the right to live in a safe community, free from violence and abuse. While State and Territory Governments are primarily responsible for ensuring that Indigenous citizens enjoy the same level of safety as other Australians, the Australian Government also has a role to play. The Government recognises that without safe and stable communities, investment in areas such as housing and education will fail to make a difference.

Budget Highlight to Close the Gap in Community Safety

Budget Initiative – Primary Care – redirection of the domestic violence referral points project

The Government is providing \$8.5 million over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15 to expand and reform the support available for women experiencing domestic violence. Aboriginal Health Workers and Practice Nurses will now be able to access training to help them feel more confident about recognising domestic violence and be more effective in referring women to support services. This reform will particularly benefit women in rural and remote areas, who are less likely to have access to domestic violence support services.

The Government has provided leadership through the National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, announced in February 2011. The Action Plan establishes a long term direction for unified efforts by all levels of government to combat violence, in partnership with the community.

The Government also launched the Indigenous Family Safety Program in July 2010, providing \$64.4 million over four years with a supporting agenda to help reduce family violence. The \$6.0 million over three years Strong Fathers Strong Families initiative is an example of a national initiative under the Agenda, recognising the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in families.

Substance abuse contributes significantly to violence and poor health, as well as poor education and employment outcomes.

The Breaking the Cycle election commitment is providing \$20.0 million over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14 to support new community solutions for fighting alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities, including development of alcohol and substance abuse management plans.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Use Initiative funds culturally appropriate substance-use prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare. In 2011-12, the initiative will provide about \$67.4 million for drug and alcohol services in regional and remote areas.

The Government owned non profit company Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) offers a wide range of affordable and flexible accommodation services for Indigenous people accessing education, training and health services away from their home communities. AHL has a national network of over 100 hostels along with 14 group houses for students. As part of this network, AHL funds 23 community-operated rehabilitation hostels around the country offering safe and culturally sensitive accommodation support to Indigenous people participating in rehabilitation programs.

The Petrol Sniffing Strategy is working to achieve sustained reductions in rates of petrol sniffing in targeted areas. It provides support and diversion services for young people at risk of, or involved in, petrol sniffing. The Government is providing \$91.5 million over four years from 2011-12 for the rollout of Opal fuel from 110 sites to around 150 sites nationally. The availability of Opal fuel will be expanded in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland. Petrol sniffing has been reduced by as much as 94 per cent in communities with Opal fuel.

A major component of the Government's commitment to building safe communities is the \$150.0 million Alice Springs Transformation Plan (ASTP).

The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Northern Territory Government to transform the town camps of Alice Springs into suburbs like any other in the town and reduce homelessness through short-term accommodation options, housing and infrastructure upgrades and provision of suitable support services, including:

- the Ampere Mwerre Visitor Park, providing short-term accommodation for up to 150 visitors to Alice Springs;
- an extra eight beds for emergency accommodation for homeless people;
- thirty-five extra rooms for people visiting Alice Springs for medical treatment; and
- twenty-eight transitional accommodation units for people on the waiting list for public housing in Alice Springs.

Construction of 85 new houses in the town camps is well under way. The Australian Government is also funding the rebuilding and refurbishment of the 200 existing houses on the town camps, as well as infrastructure works.

Social-support services in Alice Springs are also being increased with \$25.0 million of projects in priority areas such as alcohol rehabilitation, family support, violence prevention, early childhood services, tenancy management, life skills and case management.

The Government remains committed to its significant safety investments in the wider Northern Territory. We are providing \$47.8 million in 2011-12 for an increased police

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presence in remote communities including five new permanent police stations. The first station at Yarralin opened in April 2011 with the remaining stations at Arlparra, Gapuwiyak, Imanpa and Ramingining to be built by June 2012. The Northern Territory Government is being funded for 60 new police officers recruited and trained over the previous two years. An additional \$3.4 million over two years is being provided for sworn community engagement officer positions in eight remote communities, to improve the relationship between police and local Indigenous people.

CLOSING THE GAP: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Every Australian should have the ability to make decisions about how they live their lives and participate in their communities. The Government is working with Indigenous people to support personal responsibility as the foundation for healthy, functional families and communities and greater life opportunities

It is also recognised that good governance is about the way governments deliver services and engage with the community.

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, a new representative body that will be fully established this year, will engage and partner with governments, the corporate and community sectors on policy design. The Government is providing funding of \$29.2 million over five years from 2009-10 to 2013-14 to assist the Congress in meeting the Government's expectation that it will provide effective and well-developed policy advice which reflects the views of its members from around Australia.

The Government's commitment to progress recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Australian Constitution, with funding of \$11.2 million over two years from 2010-11 to 2011-12, is being carried forward by an Expert Panel responsible for leading discussion about Indigenous constitutional recognition and encouraging the public to put forward their views. The Expert Panel will develop possible options for constitutional change and report to the Government in December 2011.

The Government develops and delivers Indigenous leadership programs around Australia, with a focus on communities identified under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement. The training is assisting Indigenous people to develop the skills and capacity to engage effectively with government on the programs and services that affect their lives. More than 400 community members from these communities have participated in 22 regional workshops.

The 2009-10 Budget provided \$26.6 million over four years to establish an Indigenous Healing Foundation to address the traumatic legacy of forced child removal and other past government policies.

The Government's Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) provides free, tailored corporate governance training to Indigenous corporations, helping

organisations remain viable and building the capability of Indigenous people for future opportunities.

Reconciliation Australia, an independent organisation funded by government, promotes reconciliation at the community, school and organisational level through activities such as the Reconciliation Action Plan program and its community awareness strategy. In less than four years, \$750 million worth of contracts have been awarded to Indigenous businesses, and organisations participating in the program have created 6,000 positions for Indigenous people, and filled 3,000 of them. Major companies involved include BHP Billiton, the ANZ Bank and Rio Tinto.

Budget Highlight to Close the Gap in Governance and Leadership

Budget Initiative – Review of the Australian Government's Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector – interim response

The Indigenous broadcasting sector has an important role to play in increasing understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

National Indigenous Television (NITV) is an independent national Indigenous television service funded by the Government. As part of the Government's response to the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector Review, in April 2011 the Government announced that NITV would receive operational funding of \$15.2 million for 2011-12. During 2011-12, the Government will work with NITV to develop a more sustainable model, to achieve the sector's goal of providing more original Indigenous content on free to air television.