



**BUDGET**★  
CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND  
NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

**STATEMENT BY**  
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AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The 2009–10 Budget marks another milestone in our commitment to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Government regards closing the gap as an urgent national priority. As the Prime Minister said in his speech to Parliament on 26 February 2009:

*... we stand at an extraordinary moment in the history of Indigenous affairs. A time of despair, but also a time of hope. A time of great challenge, and equally a time of great opportunity.*

*Let us, always, start with hope.*

On this occasion the Prime Minister tabled the first annual report on progress in Indigenous affairs following the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Stolen Generations, in February 2008.

The Apology created momentum and a sense of hope. This historic event provides a context for our initiatives – initiatives directed at overcoming disadvantage while respecting Indigenous culture and acknowledging Indigenous people's unique position within Australia.

Closing the gap is necessarily a long-term project – decades of neglect cannot be fixed overnight. We are continuing to put the fundamental building blocks in place so all Indigenous people can have access to the same choices and opportunities as other Australians.

To tackle the unacceptable inequalities that have become entrenched in our society, the 2009–10 Budget provides nearly \$1.3 billion to build on substantial reforms and commitments already made by this Government. It provides the strategic investment necessary to establish the appropriate policy and legislative environment, as well as the impetus and determination to meet the targets for closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians agreed by all Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

The Budget will advance the substantial Indigenous reform agenda led by the Commonwealth through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), aimed at ensuring government interventions are better coordinated and more accountable.

The Budget measures support our reform agenda of:

- making a significant investment and improving the way governments deliver services;

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

- resetting our relationship with Indigenous people through engagement and new forms of partnership;
- restoring personal responsibility at the individual level and expanding economic opportunities for Indigenous people to stop the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage; and
- intervening when the circumstances demand to protect vulnerable individuals.

The solution to one of the greatest policy challenges in modern Australia does not depend solely on money. Good governance, accountability and genuine engagement with Indigenous people, and input from across the Australian community, are all preconditions for success.

Indigenous people hold the key to their own future – all Australians can and must support and enable this.

We all must work together to close the gap.

### **Closing the Gap — Targets and ‘building blocks’**

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

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

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

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

The building blocks are interconnected. Improvements in one area will affect outcomes in other areas.

## **THE POLICY CHALLENGE**

The Prime Minister's February 2009 report to Parliament, *Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage: The Challenge for Australia*, outlined the evidence on which the Government's closing the gap commitments are based.

The Prime Minister's report described a population that is young and growing, and therefore facing different demographic challenges to other Australians. It is also a population facing unacceptable levels of disadvantage in living standards, education, health and employment. The continuing large disparity in life expectancy is the most telling statistic.

Indigenous disadvantage has many causes. It is, in part, a legacy of our nation's history, including the historical acts that prompted the National Apology in February 2008.

Entrenched disadvantage is also a product of failed policy. Our Indigenous reform agenda seeks to redress decades of underinvestment, buck-passing, confused responsibilities within our Federal system, and piecemeal and poorly targeted investments.

Chronic underfunding over many years has left remote Indigenous Australia, in particular, with little in the way of an economy, quality services or infrastructure.

Children born in remote communities over the last decade have the worst life prospects of any Australian children. They have a greater risk of being born with foetal alcohol syndrome. Many begin life with poor health due to poor maternal nutrition. They are likely to live in overcrowded housing, and have little education – no early childhood education, erratic schooling and little opportunity to finish secondary education. Limited skills make getting a job difficult. Female children are likely to become mothers at a young age, and children born to these mothers may have similar low life chances.

To turn this around we must restore the personal responsibility that is at the heart of family life and the foundation of strong communities. Jobs and economic development are fundamental to parents taking responsibility for their family's wellbeing and economic security and their children's health, safety and education. That is why this Budget delivers initiatives to enhance the capacity of Indigenous people to participate in the economy, as well as accessing the economic benefits of land-owning. Working together, we must harness a critical mass of support to overcome the complex strands of disadvantage.

A focus of all our strategies is on breaking down the social and economic isolation of Indigenous people, wherever they live, and tackling the inter-generational transfer of disadvantage.



At the same time we must respect and build on Indigenous cultures as a source of social strength and a platform for economic development. Indigenous people must be empowered to find and embrace their own solutions.

## **COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS — THE WAY FORWARD**

The Australian Government is working with the States and Territories to remedy the long-term systemic failures that have marginalised Indigenous Australians.

Since the 2008-09 Budget the Government has worked within COAG to lay the foundations for coordinated efforts to close the gap.

The COAG National Indigenous Reform Agreement, agreed in November 2008:

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

The Australian Government is providing \$3.6 billion in funding and the States and Territories are providing \$1.0 billion over ten years to drive these fundamental reforms in remote housing, health, early childhood development, jobs and improvements in remote service delivery.

This represents an unprecedented level of funding, cooperation and commitment to long overdue change.

The five National Partnership Agreements established so far provide the context for many measures in this Budget.

A COAG meeting focused on closing the gap will be held later this year to progress the reform agenda.

In addition, significant investments in universal health, housing and education initiatives, also negotiated within the COAG framework, will flow through to Indigenous people, particularly those living in urban and regional areas. Ensuring increased funding to improve universal services for Indigenous Australians is integral to our strategy.

Improvements in data collection and analysis will be necessary at both a Commonwealth and State level to enable meaningful reporting against Closing the Gap

targets. The Government is currently negotiating improved Indigenous data collection and collation at a Commonwealth and State level to support the implementation of a national performance reporting framework. This will enhance public accountability for funding under the new framework for federal financial arrangements agreed through COAG.

## **National Partnerships to Close the Gap**

Five National Partnership Agreements on Indigenous issues were agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2008. All agreements incorporate detailed performance indicators and benchmarks, so that progress can be monitored and governments held accountable.

### **Remote Indigenous Housing**

The Australian Government has secured a ground breaking agreement with the States and the Northern Territory which will enable desperately needed investment and reform in the supply and management of housing in remote Indigenous Australia. The additional Australian Government investment of \$1.9 billion over ten years brings total funding for remote Indigenous housing to \$5.5 billion over 10 years. This funding will enable up to 4,200 new houses to be built and around 4,800 to be repaired or upgraded. The new arrangements will require Indigenous houses to be properly managed and maintained by State and Territory housing authorities. Tenants will be required to sign up to and adhere to standard tenancy agreements. The Commonwealth has agreed with jurisdictions to undertake a national audit of municipal and essential services in relevant Indigenous communities in 2009. The audit will inform clearer roles and responsibilities and funding for services and ongoing maintenance, with new arrangements between the Commonwealth, the States and the Northern Territory to be in place from 1 July 2012.

Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional areas will benefit from a dramatic improvement in Australia's social housing stock funded through the Australian Government's \$6.4 billion injection into Social Housing as part of our Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan. This is in addition to the \$1.2 billion in new housing and homelessness services committed through COAG with the aim of halving homelessness in Australia over the next 12 years. This will enable the repair of around 47,000 houses, and construction of up to 20,000 new houses.

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## **Indigenous Health Outcomes**

The Commonwealth will contribute \$805.5 million over four years to the COAG \$1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes. This major investment aims to prevent and better manage chronic disease by tackling risk factors; improving chronic disease management in primary care; improving follow-up care; and increasing the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective health care to Indigenous Australians. Over four years, around half of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults will benefit from this package. More than 133,000 additional health checks and 400,000 additional chronic disease management services for Indigenous Australians with a chronic condition will be provided, and more than 54,000 Indigenous people with a chronic disease will also receive support to better manage their health through targeted self-management programs.

## **Indigenous Early Childhood Development**

In July 2008 COAG agreed to an integrated policy framework as a basis for investment and reform by all governments in Indigenous early childhood development. The first vehicle for implementing this policy framework is the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement. The National Partnership was agreed at the October 2008 COAG meeting which committed \$564.0 million over six years in joint funding of which the Australian Government contribution is \$490.0 million. The Commonwealth and States and Territories are collaborating on the National Partnership, with jurisdictions taking the lead role in program implementation.

The National Partnership consists of three elements. Element one will establish a minimum of 35 Children and Family Centres across Australia in areas of high Indigenous population and disadvantage. Element two focuses on increasing access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy, and teenage sexual and reproductive health programs by Indigenous young people. Element three aims to increase access to, and use of, maternal and child health services by Indigenous families.

## **Indigenous Economic Participation**

The Australian Government is investing \$172.7 million over five years and the States and Territories are providing \$56.2 million to help up to 13,000 Indigenous Australians find and keep a job, strengthen government procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment and expand Indigenous employment opportunities in the public sector. Around 2,000 jobs in government service delivery, previously subsidised by the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, will be fully funded.

Continue

## **Remote Service Delivery**

The Australian Government and the States and Territories will invest \$291.2 million over six years to better coordinate and harness the benefits of investment in early childhood, health and welfare services in remote communities. This funding, including a \$187.7 million commitment from the Australian Government, will enable governments to establish coordinated service delivery mechanisms in priority locations across remote Australia.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: CLOSING THE GAP CLEARINGHOUSE**

Our new approach to Indigenous policy delivery also requires a robust evidence base to help measure progress and point the way to innovative solutions.

In April 2007 COAG agreed to establish a clearinghouse to provide a single national repository of reliable evidence (including best practice and success factors) on a broad range of topics related to improving Indigenous outcomes.

The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse will:

- conduct systematic reviews of the research and evaluation evidence;
- improve the coordination of research and identify priorities for future research and evaluation;
- provide public online access to a centralised repository of quality information; and
- provide policy makers and program managers with an evidence base for achieving the Closing the Gap targets.

The Clearinghouse is being jointly funded by the Australian, State and Territory governments at an estimated joint annual cost of \$1.0 million. The 2008–09 Federal Budget provided \$1.0 million in Australian Government funding over two years. Supplementary funding of \$1.5 million is provided in this Budget for an additional three years.

## **Jobs and Economic Participation**

A major commitment of new funding in this Budget will target economic development for Indigenous people. These measures are part of our ambitious commitment to substantially increase Indigenous people's involvement in Australia's economy, and halve the gap in employment outcomes within a decade.

Economic participation provides a route out of poverty and an important means of meeting the closing the gap employment target. Increasing economic inclusion is the basis for inter-generational wealth transfer and for reducing disproportionately high levels of welfare dependency.

Last year we consulted Indigenous people about the future of two key government programs supporting employment: the CDEP program and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). Reforms to both programs, announced on 19 December 2008 to commence on 1 July 2009, will provide better linkages to the new employment services system for all Australians, Job Services Australia, which also commences on 1 July 2009.

Central to these reforms is the conversion of former CDEP positions into jobs in government service delivery and greater private-sector involvement in generating Indigenous employment.

The COAG National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation focuses on:

- creating government employment through the conversion of CDEP positions with the Commonwealth supporting up to 1,280 jobs, to be in place by 1 July 2009, and the States providing support for 720 jobs;
- strengthening current government procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment. As major purchasers of goods and services, governments can require contractors to implement Indigenous training and employment programs within projects;
- incorporating strategies to build Indigenous workforces in all the major COAG reforms. The Commonwealth, States and Territories are investing significantly in capital development, procurement and service delivery in areas such as infrastructure. This investment will be leveraged to drive Indigenous employment outcomes; and
- expanding Indigenous employment opportunities in the public sector with the aim of increasing Indigenous employment to 2.6 per cent or more by 2015, reflecting Indigenous representation within the broader population.

## **INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Government will soon be releasing a public discussion paper outlining its approach to Indigenous economic development. The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy to be launched later in the year will incorporate feedback received on the discussion paper.

The Government recognises that the barriers to Indigenous economic participation and development have become entrenched over many years. Overcoming these barriers requires a focus on:

- developing supportive regulatory and institutional arrangements;
- building the economic base, particularly in remote Australia;
- developing the capabilities of Indigenous people and communities to get jobs and establish businesses; and
- creating sustainable opportunities through effective partnerships and genuine engagement.

Our discussion paper will seek input on the actions required in these four areas to overcome barriers and to support economic development.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: REFORMS TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS (CDEP) PROGRAM AND THE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (IEP)**

Reforms to CDEP and IEP are key to progressing the target of halving the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade. These reforms complement changes to the universal employment services (Job Services Australia) which will provide Indigenous job seekers with more tailored assistance as well as training and work experience.

CDEP is being restructured with a strong focus on both work readiness and community development in remote areas with emerging and limited economies. CDEP will cease in non-remote areas with established economies.

Under the reformed CDEP program the work-readiness stream will give people access to life/foundation skills support, English literacy and numeracy training, basic work skills, mentoring, case management and mobility support as required. It will provide individual assistance for CDEP participants to prepare for and find long-term employment outside CDEP.

The community development stream will build the capacity of Indigenous communities and organisations. It will support projects that are identified as a priority by local people, are aligned with local job opportunities and expand the skills of participants. It will also provide support for community development workers and local engagement officers.

The Government will provide a net increase of \$202.4 million to implement these reforms. Savings of \$326.7 million over five years from the CDEP reforms will be

redirected to fund the creation of more employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people.

\$203.1 million over three years will be provided to ensure the sustainability of more than 1,600 jobs supporting the delivery of Australian Government services already created in the Northern Territory and 40 jobs in the four Cape York welfare-reform trial communities that were previously supported by CDEP. This is in addition to jobs being created under the Jobs Package agreed through the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation. This package is funding the creation of around 2,000 properly paid jobs in government service delivery that were previously supported by CDEP. Real jobs provide tangible benefits to Indigenous employees, including access to training and professional development and superannuation.

Four hundred new traineeships across government services sectors and 60 additional land and sea management positions in remote communities will be created as part of the new Indigenous remote workforce strategy, at a cost of \$53.6 million over four years.

\$190.6 million over five years will be provided for the reformed and expanded IEP. This program will allow government to work with Indigenous communities, organisations and individuals to deliver employment outcomes suited to local circumstances and priorities.

We will equip employees with the skills and knowledge that will support sustainable employment for Indigenous people, with a new focus on assistance to small and medium enterprises. IEP will prepare Indigenous Australians to take up employment opportunities and improve their skills, and will support Indigenous people to start and expand enterprises.

\$21.6 million over four years will also be provided for the Workplace English Language Literacy program to support these reforms.

Another significant part of the CDEP/IEP reform package is the creation of a new network of 87 Indigenous Community Support Service providers, at a cost of \$60.2 million over four years. The Community Support Service is being established in localities with significant Indigenous populations where CDEP has ceased. These include capital cities, major regional centres and some smaller regional communities.

The new providers will create links and make referrals to a range of mainstream or Indigenous-specific services, in areas such as welfare and social support, early childhood, education, training, employment, financial management, housing, health and legal services. They will also help people deal with issues including family violence and drug and alcohol abuse.

This initiative will enhance social inclusion and community cohesion and assist in closing the gap in access to services. Social inclusion is a basic prerequisite for economic participation.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: BUSINESS ACTION AGENDA**

A Business Action Agenda has been funded in this Budget recognising the key role of the private sector in creating jobs, investing in local economies, and promoting innovation and capability. The agenda will build on the work already being undertaken by the private sector to increase Indigenous economic participation by:

- further engaging the corporate, not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors to take action in closing the gap; and
- establishing a national advisory group to provide strategic advice to government on improving Indigenous economic participation.

The Business Action Agenda will receive funding of \$3.0 million over four years. It acknowledges that closing the gap can only be achieved with the initiative and support of the wider Australian community.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT**

The Australian Public Service (APS) Indigenous Employment Strategy is being funded for a further three years at a cost of \$6.0 million. The Commonwealth will continue to model best-practice employment conditions while promoting employment retention and career opportunities for Indigenous people.

This strategy supports the Australian Government's commitment under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation to increase APS Indigenous employment from 2.1 per cent to 2.6 per cent or more, reflecting Indigenous representation within the broader population.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NATIVE TITLE SYSTEM**

The native title system has the potential to provide long-term and sustainable benefits for more Indigenous people, but has been hampered by a lack of resources and processes that are too rigid and legalistic.

The Budget provides additional funding to help realise the potential of native title in closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. This commitment is part of a wider strategy to make the system less adversarial, working through agreement-making rather than costly and protracted litigation. Agreements also help to forge positive and



enduring relationships across the community. It includes \$62.1 million over four years in additional funding for the operations of Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRB), the legal representatives of most claimant groups - \$16.3 million by diversion of continued lapsing funding from other agencies in the native title system, and \$45.8 million in new additional funding.

A further \$4.3 million has been allocated to improve claims resolution. This includes initiatives to increase the quality and quantity of anthropologists working in the native title system, and to develop partnerships with State and Territory governments for new approaches to the settlement of claims through negotiated agreements.

The faster and more efficient resolution of native title claims will provide certainty to all stakeholders and remove barriers to investment and the building of infrastructure on Indigenous land.

The additional funding was recommended in a review of the native title system undertaken last year by the Attorney-General's Department. The review estimated that without additional resources it would take more than 30 years to clear the existing backlog of native title claims.

The under-funding of NTRB has long been recognised as a major impediment to the resolution of claims, as noted by major mining company Rio Tinto in its submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Native Title.

The Government is also considering how to make the outcomes of native title agreements more lasting and comprehensive, providing benefits across the community.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: INDIGENOUS VISUAL ARTS**

The Indigenous visual arts sector is a growing area with an annual turnover currently estimated at around \$500 million a year. Annual growth in the value of Indigenous art has been in the order of 40 to 50 per cent over the last decade.

Indigenous art centres are the focus of an industry providing what is, in many cases, the only commercial income generated by communities. This income is often reinvested locally, enabling flexible community-based solutions to social and health problems.

The Budget provides \$9.9 million over four years to increase operational funding for art centres and establish an Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct to guide ethical commerce in the sector. This delivers on a key Government commitment following the report from the Senate Inquiry into the Indigenous visual arts sector, *Indigenous art – Securing the future*.

The art centres will be able to boost staffing and staff training and salaries, helping to address staff retention problems. At least 30 professional development projects will be

supported annually. These will be tailored to local needs, providing business and governance skills as well as exchange, residency and mentoring opportunities.

The development of a Code of Conduct is an important step in helping industry to stamp out exploitation of Indigenous artists and to end unethical practices that affect both artists and art investors. A strong, ethical and sustainable Indigenous visual arts industry is an important driver of economic participation, particularly in remote Australia.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: TORRES STRAIT MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

\$29.0 million over three years is being provided for the fourth stage of the Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program, which matches the Queensland Government's contribution. This program has been jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments since 1998. The fourth stage of this program will fund local projects to improve community health and amenity, as well as provide employment and business opportunities for local contractors.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: EXPANSION OF THE SPORTING CHANCE PROGRAM**

\$10.0 million over four years from 2008-09 will be provided to improve the level of school engagement for Indigenous students through an expansion of the Sporting Chance Program. The program uses sport as a vehicle to improve student participation and engagement in schooling. This measure includes \$5.0 million to establish up to ten new school-based academies across Australia with the focus on involving girls in sport along with \$5.0 million for the Former Origin Greats, Queensland (FOGs) to establish school-based academies with a rugby league focus in Queensland and New South Wales. In general, the Australian Government contributes approximately one third of annual operating costs of academies with providers sourcing the balance from State and Territory governments, and corporate and other sponsors.

## **ADDRESSING DISADVANTAGE IN REMOTE AUSTRALIA**

This Budget continues our focus on providing better outcomes for Indigenous people living in communities across northern and central Australia. The appalling living conditions in remote Australia are the most visible and enduring evidence of past government failure. Building economic opportunities in these areas will also be a major challenge for our economic participation reforms.

The Government is providing substantial resources in this Budget to continue the measures begun in 2007 under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). Details are provided below under 'Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory'. In addition, COAG has committed to major reforms in service delivery in remote Australia.

### **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON REMOTE SERVICE DELIVERY**

For too long remote communities have been the recipients of disjointed, ad hoc and uncoordinated actions and responses from governments at all levels. The Remote Service Delivery Strategy will change the way governments invest in remote areas, providing coordinated, concentrated and accelerated development across all levels of government.

Our benchmark will be to progressively deliver in communities or townships the facilities and services you would expect to have in other Australian towns of comparable size and circumstances.

Resources will initially be concentrated by the Australian and State and Territory Governments on the first tranche of priority locations across Australia.

These locations include 15 Northern Territory townships: Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Hermannsburg, Lajamanu, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Nguiu, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Wadeye, Yirrkala, Yuendumu, Angurugu and Umbakumba. In Western Australia, priority locations will be Fitzroy Crossing and surrounding communities; Halls Creek and surrounding communities; and the Dampier Peninsula, focused on Ardyaloon and Beagle Bay.

The locations in Queensland are Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Aurukun (together with continuing work in Mossman Gorge and Coen which are also part of the Cape York welfare reform trial). Amata and Mimili are the South Australian locations and Walgett and Wilcannia in New South Wales are also included.

In identifying where to concentrate government investment, COAG has developed a range of practical criteria including:

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

- significant concentration of population;
- anticipated demographic trends and pressures;
- the potential for economic development and employment; and
- the extent of pre-existing shortfalls in government investment in infrastructure and services.

Governments will provide integrated engagement and service planning through a single interface. Conditions in communities will be mapped to provide a baseline, and detailed local implementation plans developed for each location in partnership with Indigenous people and other local stakeholders.

Another important aim – and the basis for any sustainable improvement – is to strengthen Indigenous leadership and governance and increase economic and social participation.

Communities and townships not initially covered by this strategy will continue to receive government support and services, including housing, employment services and CDEP. The intention is to maximise the role of priority communities as service hubs that support improved outcomes for both residents in those communities and those living in neighbouring areas.

Transforming these communities will require a two-way commitment to change. Governments will provide the resources and planning to build physical infrastructure and bring services up to standard. Communities and the individuals within them will, in many cases, have to work to change the way they function. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for their family wellbeing including their children's health, safety and education.

The restoration of social norms is also a focus of the current welfare reform pilots being conducted around Australia: income management in the Northern Territory; Cape York Welfare Reform; and the Child Protection Measure in the Kimberley and in Cannington, Midland, Mirrabooka and Joondalup in Perth. Similarly, the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure being piloted at a number of locations in the Northern Territory is also aimed at increasing personal responsibility and improving the welfare of children.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: COORDINATOR-GENERAL FOR REMOTE INDIGENOUS SERVICES**

To deliver our remote strategy, the Australian Government is appointing a Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services to drive the implementation of reforms across a range of areas including service delivery, employment and housing. The Coordinator-General will work across all agencies and report directly to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Coordinator-General will also report to COAG annually on systemic issues arising from implementation of the remote strategy.

Focusing initially on the first tranche of priority communities, the Coordinator-General will:

- cut through any problems arising out of the development or implementation of coordinated service delivery;
- report issues requiring urgent remedy directly to agency heads and, if necessary, to the Minister;
- take action to deal with these issues if they are not resolved quickly by responsible agencies;
- oversee planning and strategic investment in communities; and
- provide guidance on good practice.

The functions of the position will be supported by \$9.0 million in funding over four years.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: NATIONAL INDIGENOUS VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE INTELLIGENCE TASKFORCE**

The Government is providing \$5.5 million in 2009-10 for the National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Taskforce. The measure will provide Government with unique intelligence to help decision makers address the challenges to effective disclosure, reporting and information sharing on crime in remote communities. It will improve access to information through the Australian Criminal Intelligence Database (ACID) for Australian Crime Commission stakeholders working in remote communities, and fund empirical research on service delivery for problem sexual behaviour in Australia.

## **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON REMOTE INDIGENOUS HOUSING**

Improved housing is central to our agenda for remote Australia. This is because decent housing is essential for protecting children, improving health, education and employment and restoring community norms.

Under the landmark National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, the Australian Government is providing \$1.9 billion over 10 years in new funding to four States and the Northern Territory. This will bring total funding for remote Indigenous housing to \$5.5 billion over 10 years. This is the largest single outlay any government has made to address the living conditions of remote Indigenous people and will lay the foundations for major reform in remote communities.

The housing reforms will provide as many as 4,200 new houses and 4,800 major upgrades in remote communities. More than 9,000 Indigenous families will benefit from improved housing over the next 10 years. The first tranche of works is expected to see up to 980 new or replacement houses built and up to 2,500 houses refurbished.

Old housing models have not served communities well. The way we deliver housing and associated services in remote communities will change fundamentally. The Australian Government's contribution will not depend on additional funding by the States and the Northern Territory. The agreement does, however, require the States and the Northern Territory to take on additional responsibilities, recognising their important role in driving change.

Under this new approach, the States and the Northern Territory have agreed to take responsibility for the management of housing assets. Australian Government funds will be used to upgrade and make good housing assets around the country.

The Australian Government is also working on a rigorous and planned approach to support responsibility being accepted by the States and the Northern Territory for municipal and essential services (such as water, power and sewerage) in remote areas. In the short term, the Australian Government will continue to fund \$145 million over three years in municipal services to remote Indigenous communities pending the auditing of services and associated costs across Australia. The new arrangements will be finalised no later than 1 July 2012.

The new arrangements will require houses for Indigenous people to be properly managed, maintained and upgraded by State and Territory housing authorities or contracted community organisations on a regular and ongoing basis. Tenants will be expected to show increased personal responsibility for their houses and pay fair rent.

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

Also incorporated in this ground-breaking reform are:

- a requirement that new and existing housing assets be held under secure tenure, including long-term leases negotiated with Traditional Owners;
- economic development opportunities through training and jobs for local Indigenous people in construction and housing management; and
- affordable accommodation in regional centres to enable Indigenous people to travel to access jobs, education or services.

Our housing reforms underpin all aspects of closing the gap in remote Australia.

### **BUDGET INITIATIVE: EYE AND EAR HEALTH**

Many Indigenous children suffer from hearing impairment, due to persistent middle ear infections, which affects their educational achievement. Indigenous people are also at increased risk of avoidable blindness or vision loss through conditions such as trachoma.

The Australian Government is providing \$58.3 million over four years to expand eye and ear health services to improve health outcomes as well as support education and employment outcomes.

The main components of this measure are:

- training of health workers for hearing screening and purchase and maintenance of audiology equipment;
- expansion of the Visiting Optometrist Scheme;
- expanded trachoma services;
- additional ear and eye surgery, particularly for remote Indigenous patients; and
- health promotion activities.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: MOBILE DENTAL SERVICES**

Poor oral health can affect a person's education and employment and exacerbate other chronic diseases. Indigenous oral health is significantly worse than that of the general population. Indigenous children have twice the rate of tooth decay and are less likely to visit a dentist than other Australian children. Many Indigenous people living in regional and remote Australia do not have access to dental treatment facilities.

The Australian Government is providing \$11.0 million over four years to pilot the use of mobile dental facilities to deliver dental care to regional and remote Indigenous communities.

Improving dental care for all Australians is a policy priority of this Government.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MEDICAL SERVICES PATHOLOGY PROGRAM**

The Australian Government is providing \$3.8 million over four years to enable more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have access to pathology testing within their own communities, and assist in self-management of diabetes. The measure will increase access to pathology testing by expanding the number of health service sites from the current 120 up to 170.



## **CLOSING THE GAP IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

The Budget provides funding of \$807.4 million to continue the measures initiated under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). The Australian Government is moving the NTER to a sustainable development phase to ensure measures will be effective in the long term. This includes stronger engagement and partnership with Indigenous communities.

Significant inroads have been made. Outcomes in the Northern Territory as of 1 May 2009 include:

- 83 community stores licensed so they are better managed and provide a better range of healthy food;
- four new stores created in Yuendumu, Epenarra, Ti-Tree and Manyallaluk;
- School Nutrition Programs in 69 communities providing breakfast and lunch to school-aged children – this initiative is improving school engagement, attendance, contributing to better nutrition outcomes and employing 129 local Indigenous people;
- the establishment of five new crèche facilities and upgrades to six existing crèches;
- more than 13,000 child health checks undertaken, with extensive follow-up services;
- up to 66 extra police deployed in communities to ensure community safety;
- four permanent police stations upgraded and 18 temporary stations established;
- 69 active night patrols;
- 13 additional safe houses to provide refuges from violence;
- a Mobile Child Protection Team established;
- Remote Aboriginal Family Care Workers employed in eight communities;
- more than 15,000 people on income management – income management promotes responsible behaviour by setting aside the whole or a part of a person's welfare income for the priority needs of children and families;
- wide take up of the BasicsCard to facilitate spending income-managed money;
- more than 2,000 jobs funded in government service delivery. These jobs include superannuation and access to training and professional development;

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

- Work for the Dole activities in 54 communities, 40 town camps and four outstations;
- 60 Government Business Managers (GBMs) serving 73 communities as well as town camps in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs – the NTER Review found that GBMs are critical to effective engagement and whole-of-government coordination at the community level; and
- 20 Indigenous Engagement Officers selected to support GBMs and assist government engagement with local communities.

The critical priority for the Australian Government in continuing this initiative has been the safety of vulnerable women and children.

In shaping the way forward in the Northern Territory, we have been guided by the independent review of the NTER completed in October 2008. The Review found that the wide range of activities being undertaken in the Northern Territory were positive and should, in the majority of cases, continue. In announcing the Australian Government's initial response to the Review, the Government accepted the Review Board's three overarching recommendations, that:

- Governments recognise the need to continue to address the unacceptably high levels of disadvantage in Indigenous communities and town camps across the Northern Territory;
- Governments reset their relationship with Indigenous people based on genuine consultation, engagement and partnership; and
- Government actions respect Australia's human rights obligations and conform with the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*

Measures such as compulsory income management and alcohol and pornography controls are being redesigned in consultation with Indigenous communities to ensure they are either clearly a special measure under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* or are non-discriminatory. Legislation lifting the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* suspension in the current NTER Acts will be introduced in the Spring 2009 sittings of Parliament.

Many Indigenous women and pensioners have reported that they have greater control over their finances, and are more able to provide for children as a result of income management.

As promised, the Australian Government introduced legislation into Parliament on 18 March 2009 to ensure people subject to income management have access to the full range of appeal rights, including through the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The Australian Government has also asked the Northern Territory Valuer-General to determine a reasonable rent for all existing five-year leases that were compulsorily acquired by the previous Government. This process is nearing completion and payment will then commence.

## **CLOSING THE GAP IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: BUDGET INITIATIVES**

**Engagement and Resetting the Relationship:** \$34.6 million over three years to engage and involve Indigenous people at the community and local level in policy development and service delivery.

Fifteen community members will be employed as full-time Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs) in positions initially established under the 2008-09 Budget, while COAG funding will provide additional IEO positions in the Northern Territory as part of its Remote Service Delivery Strategy.

A Community Transition Program for each community with an IEO will help equip these communities into a sustainable development phase. A range of communication activities and products will support better engagement at the face-to-face level.

**Remote policing and substance abuse:** \$156.6 million will be provided over three years for additional police officers and to transform five temporary police stations into permanent structures, and support the continuing operation of ten temporary police stations. This is a major investment reflecting the priority placed on community safety.

**Law and order:** \$80.2 million over three years to consolidate the operation of 81 night patrol services, enhance the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service and expanded law and justice services.

**Community safety - youth diversion:** \$28.4 million over three years for youth projects, services and infrastructure to promote positive behaviours among young people.

**Extension of income management and financial management support services:** \$105.9 million to continue comprehensive and compulsory income management, which has demonstrated benefits for women and children. This comprises:

- \$89.2 million for income management and associated Centrelink delivery costs and for the continued operation of the BasicsCard until 30 June 2010;

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

- \$4.9 million to continue financial management support services started in 2008-09 in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine town camps, Hermannsburg, Groote Eylandt, Wadeye, Central Desert Shire, Barkly Shire, Roper Gulf Shire, Laynhapuy Homelands and Maningrida which will continue to help people build their money management and budgeting skills; and
- \$11.8 million for the development of a new point of sale delivery mechanism to replace the BasicsCard from 1 July 2010.

The Australian Government is also working to redesign income management in consultation with Indigenous communities so that it is consistent with the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.

**Community stores:** \$18.3 million over three years to continue and strengthen the community stores licensing regime to provide communities with a varied range of fresh, healthy food at competitive prices.

**Supporting families:** \$46.3 million over three years to support children and parents comprising:

- \$32.9 million over three years to support 22 established safe houses in 15 remote communities to continue the operation of the Mobile Child Protection Team, and support the existing Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers;
- \$9.1 million in operational funding for eight newly established crèches, capital and operational funding for a ninth crèche and capital funding to upgrade two more existing crèches;
- \$2.8 million for the extension of playgroups; and
- \$1.5 million to support early childhood services to improve the skills of families and educate young people about pregnancy, birth and parenting.

This additional support builds on the Australian Government's agenda for early childhood education and child care aimed at providing all Australian families, including Indigenous Australians, with access to high quality, affordable early childhood education and child care. Early childhood programs improve the whole-of-life outcomes for young children and assist the transition to education.

**Enhancing education:** \$56.9 million over three years to continue the Australian Government's commitment to remote schools and address the poor education outcomes of Indigenous students in these communities. This includes \$45.7 million to assist children to gain critical foundation skills through intensive on-site tuition and professional development of a high-performing workforce with an emphasis on developing a local Indigenous education workforce; and \$11.2 million in 2009-10 to build up to 22 additional teacher houses, recognising that housing shortfalls have been impacting on teacher recruitment and retention.

**School Nutrition Program:** \$37.5 million over three years will fund the continuation of the School Nutrition Program.

**Language, literacy and numeracy:** \$3.0 million over three years for additional training places for job seekers wanting to improve basic skills.

**Improving child and family health:** \$131.1 million over three years to continue the Government's commitment to expanded primary health care and health-related services. The continued regional reform of remote Indigenous primary health care services will ensure these services provide comprehensive and coordinated care. The continued operation of the Remote Area Health Corps will deliver more doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Follow-up services for dental and ear, nose and throat conditions identified through the NTER child health checks will be completed, the current Mobile Outreach Service dealing with child-abuse-related trauma will be expanded, and alcohol and other drug treatment and rehabilitation services will be continued.

The child health checks identified a large unmet need for primary health care services, with more than 88 per cent of children having one or more health conditions identified and more than 69 per cent of children being referred for follow-up care.

**Coordination and Field Operations:** \$105.2 million over three years to support effective implementation by addressing a broad range of local priorities such as:

- environmental health and safety initiatives such as local dog control measures; and
- the purchase of Information Technology (IT) equipment for community use, essential maintenance and repairs to community facilities and minor community infrastructure projects.

The funding will also support ongoing strong administration on the ground through continuation of Government Business Managers, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure the strategies are relevant and effective in meeting community needs and Closing the Gap targets. It will also enable the provision of infrastructure for managers, Indigenous Engagement Officers and visiting government employees.

**Ombudsman support:** \$3.3 million over four years to continue the Commonwealth Ombudsman's independent oversight of the NTER and government service-delivery in the Northern Territory. The Ombudsman will continue handling complaints, identifying systemic issues and working with Australian Government agencies to improve public administration.

The continuation of these initiatives in the Northern Territory will benefit around 45,000 people in the 73 prescribed communities, including around 16,000 children under the age of 16 years.

The Australian Government is also investing \$1.7 billion in remote Indigenous housing in the Northern Territory over the next 10 years through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. Since the end of 2007, some 80 houses have been completed in remote communities with funding from Indigenous housing programs and a further 20 houses are expected to be completed by June 2009.

## **RESETTING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS**

The Australian Government's bold reform agenda in Indigenous affairs is underpinned by our determination to forge a new relationship with Indigenous Australians based on trust and respect.

These measures build on the National Apology to Indigenous Australians, in particular the Stolen Generations, and the Australian Government's statement of support for the *United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. They build on our commitment to move to a sustainable development phase in the Northern Territory and introduce legislation to lift the suspension of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country, there are courageous voices for change. There are people prepared to take on the responsibility of leadership.

In turn, it is the responsibility of governments to back them – recognising that business as usual is no longer a viable policy response for government.

Our partnership with Indigenous peoples will be respectful and collaborative as well as allowing an open and frank exchange of views.

We want Indigenous people to work with us with confidence and with the knowledge that their cultures and perspectives are respected as a source of strength, and not perceived as a barrier to change.

### **DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

On 3 April this year the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs made a statement on behalf of the Australian Government in support of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The Declaration was more than 20 years in the making within the UN system. Many distinguished Indigenous Australians contributed to its development.

The Declaration reflects and pays homage to the unique place of Indigenous peoples and their entitlement to all human rights as recognised in international law. While it is not legally binding in itself, it sets important international principles for nations to aspire to.

In supporting the Declaration, this Government took another important step in respecting Indigenous rights and resetting the relationship. It gives us new impetus to work together in trust and good faith.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVES: HEALING AND THE STOLEN GENERATIONS**

The Budget continues the Australian Government's commitment to healing, counselling and family reunion services for the estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Stolen Generations survivors in Australia.

To strengthen the Link-Up services that work to unite families separated by past government policies, the Australian Government will provide \$13.8 million over three years. The funding will provide additional case workers and administrative support, and enable up to 140 'Return to Country' or institutional reunions. This measure complements the additional \$15.7 million over four years provided for Bringing Them Home counsellors and Link-Up services in the 2007-08 Budget.

A major initiative in this Budget is the establishment of a Healing Foundation to broaden support to the Stolen Generations and address trauma and healing in the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Foundation will be an Indigenous-controlled non-government organisation that will receive \$26.6 million over four years.

The Foundation will provide grant funding for healing initiatives at the community and grass-roots levels. International experience shows that more collective healing processes can help to restore the social and emotional health of individuals and communities.

The Australian Government has appointed Stolen Generations Elder May O'Brien and academic expert, Mr Gregory Phillips, to lead a team that will consult and develop a framework for the Foundation by the end of 2009.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: OPERATIONAL FUNDING FOR RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA**

The Australian Government is providing \$10.8 million from 1 July 2010 for core operational costs to Reconciliation Australia. This funding provides security for Reconciliation Australia's continuing operations over the three years to 30 June 2013. Reconciliation Australia also works to attract substantial corporate and philanthropic investment for its projects.

Reconciliation Australia encourages groundbreaking new relationships at the corporate, school, organisational and individual levels as well as promoting awareness of Indigenous issues. This funding supports Reconciliation Australia to build on the success of its Reconciliation Action Plan program.



## **NATIONAL INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIVE BODY**

The Australian Government is committed to establishing a National Indigenous Representative Body to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a voice in national affairs and policy development. This commitment acknowledges that Indigenous people are a small minority within our nation with special interests and a need to provide input to decisions affecting these interests.

The Representative Body will be another means of resetting the relationship and enabling a collaborative approach to improving outcomes for Indigenous people.

An initial public consultation phase on a National Indigenous Representative Body was conducted from July to December 2008. More than 2,000 Indigenous people put their ideas forward through meetings and written submissions.

In December 2008, the Australian Government agreed to extend the consultations in response to feedback from communities. At the Government's request, Mr Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, convened an independent steering committee to assist in the second phase of consultations.

As part of the extended consultation process, a national workshop attended by approximately 100 Indigenous people from across Australia was held in Adelaide on 11-13 March 2009.

Mr Calma will provide a report outlining recommendations for a National Indigenous Representative Body to the Australian Government by the end of July 2009.

## **BUDGET INITIATIVE: ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms Indigenous rights to be involved in the democratic process. The Australian Government wants all eligible Australians to participate fully and freely in our national political life.

Many Indigenous people have not been exercising their democratic rights due to isolation or lack of knowledge. The Budget provides \$13.0 million over four years to the Australian Electoral Commission for an Indigenous Electoral Participation Program, aimed at increasing levels of enrolment, voter turnout and formal voting in urban, regional and remote areas.

The program will proceed on a consultative basis with outreach to communities to determine the most appropriate education and enrolment activities for each locality. Field staff and local Indigenous liaison agents will be engaged to build partnerships with Indigenous people and organisations.

## **MOVING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PHASE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

In continuing our work in the Northern Territory we know that we must better engage Indigenous people in developing and driving solutions.

If the improvements achieved in the Northern Territory are to be sustained, we know we must foster local leadership and encourage greater personal and community responsibility.

In this Budget we are investing in community engagement and development so that Indigenous people are better equipped to work with government in dealing with the challenging and confronting issues still facing the Northern Territory's Indigenous communities and town camps.

We are about to embark on a formal community engagement process about those measures affected by the former Government's suspension of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. We will be consulting on income management and the restrictions on alcohol and prohibited material, prior to the introduction of legislation lifting the suspension of the Act.

As part of our commitment to move from compulsory five year leases over Aboriginal townships in the Northern Territory, we are already talking to Traditional Owners about long-term leases which will provide the basis for better housing and services. Agreements have already been reached in relation to housing areas at Wadeye, Galiwin'ku, Gunbalanya and Maningrida in anticipation of major housing investment to flow there this year. In the meantime, the area covered by the five year leases has been reduced substantially and we have moved to make rental payments to the land's owners.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2009 Budget invests nearly \$1.3 billion to underpin the Australian Government's urgent reform agenda to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

It is central to meeting the targets agreed by the Council of Australian Governments and it builds on the substantial investment and reform agenda agreed by all Australian Governments in 2008 through the five Indigenous specific National Partnerships - in health, housing, early child development, economic participation and remote service delivery.

Better outcomes for Indigenous people, particularly those in urban and regional Australia, will also flow from the \$13.2 billion in additional spending committed by governments in universal health, education, training and public housing services over the period to 2012-13.

All Governments will be required to be accountable for the outcomes achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council.

The Budget also reflects the Australian Government's recognition that boosting Indigenous economic participation is essential to closing the gap. Budget funding will continue the reform of existing employment programs to make them more effective and responsive. It encourages increased involvement from the corporate sector in improving employment opportunities and it paves the way for the implementation of the forthcoming Indigenous Economic Development Strategy.

Additional resources are also being provided to harness the potential of the native title system to expand economic opportunity and deliver long-term, sustainable benefits for more Indigenous people over generations.

To support and encourage the growing Indigenous arts sector, the Budget is funding Indigenous art centres and the development of a Code of Conduct to end unethical practices impeding the industry.

To tackle acute and entrenched disadvantage in remote communities, the Australian, State and Territory Governments, working in a new partnership, will reform the provision and delivery of essential services and infrastructure.

The Budget continues the Government's strong focus in the Northern Territory to protect children, make communities safer, develop positive social norms to build strong families and communities and boost economic participation – with the aim of moving to a sustainable development phase where people and communities take responsibility for their own welfare.

*Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

Resetting the relationship with Indigenous people underpins all Government efforts to end decades of disadvantage and despair. The Budget supports practical measures to build a new relationship and encourage increased Indigenous participation in the Australian democratic process.

This Budget recognises that all Australians wherever they live are equally entitled to the basic foundations of economic independence and social wellbeing – healthy living, a safe house, a good education and training and the opportunity to get and keep a job.

It reflects the Australian Government's commitment to a comprehensive reform agenda – to achieve the ambitious targets we have set in health, education and employment and provide Indigenous Australians with the essential building blocks that are vital to transforming their life chances.

## **APPENDIX A: 2009-10 INDIGENOUS BUDGET MEASURES**

| <b>2009-10 Budget Measure</b>   | <b>Description</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Economic Participation</b>   |   |
| Additional Funding for the Native Title System  | \$50.1 million over four years to settle claims, improve agreement-making and provide certainty for all stakeholders. Recognising native title in this way breaks down barriers to investment and infrastructure on Indigenous land.  |
| Business Action Agenda  | \$3.0 million over four years for a Business Action Agenda. The Government will actively engage the private sector, including Indigenous business leaders, to progress Indigenous economic development and to close the gap.  |
| Major Infrastructure Program Stage Four   | \$29.0 million over four years to fund the fourth stage of the Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program, which will provide vital local projects to improve health and wellbeing, and also create business for local contractors. This program has been jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments since 1998.   |
| Strengthening Australia's Indigenous Visual Arts Industry   | \$9.9 million over four years to strengthen Australia's Indigenous visual arts industry by providing increased operational support for Indigenous art centres through the national Arts and Crafts Industry Support program. Funding will also introduce a voluntary Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct.   |
| Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program and Indigenous Employment Program Reform | \$202.4 million over five years (from 2008-09) to reform the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program. The reforms are designed to assist more Indigenous Australians to prepare for and take up work. The reforms to these programs are supported by the creation of more training and employment opportunities for Indigenous job seekers and the establishment of a new Community Support Service. |
| Australian Public Service Indigenous Employment Strategy  | \$6.0 million over three years to continue the Australian Public Service Indigenous Employment Strategy to increase Indigenous employment in the APS.   |

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

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| Sporting Chance Program  | The Government will provide \$10.0 million over four years from 2008-09 to expand the Sporting Chance Program including \$5.0 million to establish up to 10 new school-based academies across Australia with the focus on involving girls in sport, and \$5.0 million for the Former Origin Greats, Queensland (FOGs) to establish school-based academies with a rugby league focus in Queensland and New South Wales. |
| <b>A focus on Remote Australia</b>   |  |
| Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services   | \$9.0 million over three years to fund a Coordinator-General position within government to improve service delivery and cut through administrative barriers to deliver real results for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas.   |
| Closing the Gap Clearinghouse  | \$1.5 million over three years for a national Indigenous clearinghouse to collect and disseminate evidence on best practice and success factors for closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.  |
| Commonwealth investment in closing Indigenous data gaps  | The Government has made provision in the Budget to support work with the States in the development of a revised national performance reporting framework and to improve the quality of Indigenous data to enhance public accountability for funding under the new framework for federal financial arrangements agreed through COAG.  |
| National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Taskforce                                | \$5.5 million in 2009-10 for the National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Taskforce to provide a more complete picture of the nature of Indigenous family violence and abuse.   |
| Indigenous dental services in regional and remote areas.   | \$11.0 million will fund dental treatment and prevention services to regional and remote Indigenous communities and assess the effectiveness of transportable dental facilities in communities where dental professionals and infrastructure are scarce.   |
| Improving eye and ear health services for Indigenous Australians                                   | \$58.3 million for ear and eye health services, which will expand the Visiting Optometrist Scheme, train health workers for hearing screening, maintain and purchase medical equipment for hearing screening and additional ear and eye surgery, particularly for remote Indigenous clients.   |
| Quality Assurance for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services Pathology Program | \$3.8 million over four years to enable more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with diabetes to have access to pathology testing within their own communities by expanding the number of health service sites from the current 120 to up to 170.   |

*Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

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| <b>Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory</b> | A funding package of \$807.4 million over three years to close the gap in the Northern Territory and support the safety of women and children.   |
| <i>NT – Community Engagement</i>                 | \$34.6 million over three years to facilitate more effective engagement between the government and Indigenous people through providing: ongoing funding for 15 Indigenous Engagement Officers who are Indigenous community members; leadership development and engagement activities and developing a new Community Transition program to increase the capacity of Indigenous communities to engage in decision making; and audio, television and printed communication. |
| <i>NT - Policing</i>                             | \$156.6 million over three years to fund 66 additional police officers and related training, transportation, communication and freight costs; build five permanent police stations; continue operation of ten temporary police stations; and support activities linked to implementing and compliance of the alcohol and pornography laws.   |
| <i>NT - Law and Order</i>                        | \$80.2 million over three years to support existing law and order measures, through continuing: the Northern Territory Welfare Outreach Rights Projects; night patrol services in the 73 Northern Territory prescribed communities and expansion to an additional eight external communities; funding for the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service; and increasing legal assistance service provision to six communities.                                   |
| <i>NT - Youth Diversion</i>                      | \$28.4 million over three years to fund the Northern Territory Youth Development Network, establish a Community Responsive Youth Support and Recreation Fund for infrastructure, and youth services to address problem behaviours. Projects will involve consultation with communities and provide longer-term support for young people engaging in substance use and other high risk activities.  |
| <i>NT - Family Support Package</i>               | \$32.9 million over three years for 22 safe houses, 13 Remote Aboriginal Family and Community (RAFC) workers, and a Mobile Child Protection Team with 12 workers.  |

## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

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| <i>NT - income management – additional funding</i>                          | \$105.9 million to continue the compulsory income management including \$89.2 million for income management and associated Centrelink delivery costs and for the continued operation of the BasicsCard until 30 June 2010; \$4.9 million to continue financial management support services in 2009-10; and \$11.8 million for the development of a new point of sale delivery mechanism. The Government is also working to redesign income management in consultation with Indigenous communities so that it is consistent with the <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> . |
| <i>NT - Community Stores</i>  | \$18.3 million over three years to continue assessing, licensing and monitoring stores; provide training and improve the capacity and operations of community stores; and provide food to communities where a store licence has been revoked.   |
| <i>NT - Early Childhood</i>   | \$1.5 million over three years to continue funding three projects from the Invest to Grow Program and an Indigenous Children Program project which aim to build culturally strong parenting skills and stronger Indigenous families and communities.  |
| <i>NT - Playgroups</i>  | \$2.8 million over three years to fund two existing and one additional Intensive Support Playgroup which deliver mobile playgroup services that can operate with little or no infrastructure; and three existing and two additional Locational Supported Playgroups, which focus on providing Indigenous parents/caregivers effective parenting support and Indigenous children with access to age appropriate play based activities.   |
| <i>NT - Crèches</i>   | \$9.1 million over three years to support operational funding for eight new crèches established under the Northern Territory Emergency Response; and construction and operation of a ninth crèche.  |
| <i>NT - enhancing education – quality teaching and accelerated literacy</i> | \$45.7 million over three years to overcome barriers to accelerating literacy and numeracy achievement by Indigenous students in the Northern Territory, provide professional development for staff, increase retention of teachers and relieve pressure on existing school infrastructure. Funding for 15 classrooms will be provided from the Building the Education Revolution program.  |
| <i>NT - enhancing education – teacher housing</i>                           | \$11.2 million over three years to attract and retain teachers by providing a contribution to the construction of 22 additional houses for teachers at schools in prescribed Indigenous communities.  |
| <i>NT - enhancing education – school nutrition</i>                          | \$37.5 million over three years to improve Indigenous student attendance, performance and health by providing nutritious meals  |



## *Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

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|   | and the continued delivery of a breakfast and lunch program at 68 or more sites in communities along with the progressive establishment of sites in 45 town camps.   |
| <i>NT - language, literacy and numeracy training for Indigenous job seekers</i> | \$3.0 million over three years to continue the Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Program using community-based delivery to increase cost-efficiency. The program aims to assist Indigenous job-seekers to build their language, literacy and numeracy skills and become job ready.   |
| <i>NT - Indigenous health and related services</i>                              | \$131.1 million over three years to continue the expanded primary health care and health-related services. The continued regional reform of remote Indigenous primary health care services will ensure these services provide comprehensive and coordinated care. It will also continue the Remote Area Health Corps, and fund follow-up services for dental and ear, nose and throat conditions identified through the NTER child health checks and expand the Mobile Outreach Service. Alcohol and other drug treatment and rehabilitation services will be continued. |
| <i>NT - field operations</i>  | \$84.1 million over three years for 50 Government Business Managers; four staff to establish a Regional Operations Centre in Alice Springs; and interpreter services and cultural competency training for Government staff.  |
| <i>NT - local priorities fund</i>   | \$10.0 million in 2009-10 to address minor service and infrastructure gaps as part of the planning and community engagement process.   |
| <i>NT - coordination and policy Advice</i>                                      | \$11.0 million over three years for: baseline mapping of town camps, impact studies and reporting and an evaluation of the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory initiative in 2011-12.  |
| <i>NT - Commonwealth Ombudsman support</i>                                      | \$3.3 million over four years (from 2008-09) for the Ombudsman's office to handle complaints; support complaint handling in Government agencies delivering programs to Indigenous communities; and identify systemic issues.   |

### **Resetting the Relationship with Indigenous Australians**

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| Reconciliation Australia – continuation | \$10.8 million over three years to secure the sustainability of Reconciliation Australia operations, which will allow Reconciliation Australia to continue education and awareness programs to build the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. |
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*Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

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| Healing Foundation  | \$26.6 million over four years to deliver grants for initiatives to help Indigenous Australians address the impacts of trauma and grief.   |
| Addressing the Recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report | \$13.8 million over three years to expand Link-Up Services for members of the Stolen Generations, their descendants, families and Indigenous communities affected by past government removal policies and practices. This will provide approximately 140 Return to Country or Institutional Reunions, and improve the preservation of and access to records for family tracing and reunions. |
| Indigenous Electoral Participation Program                      | \$13.0 million over four years to improve electoral knowledge and encourage Indigenous people to participate in the electoral system.  |

## **APPENDIX B: COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS INDIGENOUS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Indigenous Early Childhood  
National Partnership

The National Partnership commenced on 1 January 2009 with joint funding of \$564.0 million over 6 years to 2014, of which the Commonwealth contribution is \$489.6 million. It consists of three elements. Element one will establish a minimum of 35 Children and Family Centres across Australia in areas of high Indigenous population and disadvantage. Element two focuses on increasing access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual and reproductive health programs by Indigenous young people. Element three will increase access to, and use of, maternal and child health services by Indigenous families.

National Partnership on  
Closing the Gap in Indigenous  
Health Outcomes

\$1.6 billion over four years, with the Commonwealth contributing \$805.5 million, to address the Council of Australian Governments agreed Closing the Gap targets for Indigenous Australians, closing the life expectancy gap within a generation and halving the mortality gap for Indigenous children under five within a decade. This measure will tackle chronic disease risk factors, improve chronic disease management in primary care, improve follow up care and increase the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective health care.

Over a four year period, around half of the adult Indigenous population (around 133,000 people) will receive a health check with about 400,000 chronic disease services delivered. More than 54,000 Indigenous people with a chronic disease will be provided with a self-management program, while over 70,000 Indigenous people will have improved access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines.

Remote Indigenous Housing

The Commonwealth will provide an additional \$1.9 billion over ten years towards remote Indigenous housing to address significant overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and the severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities. This brings the total investment to \$5.5 billion over 10 years which will enable up to 4,200 new houses to be built in remote Indigenous communities; and upgrades to around 4,800 existing houses, with a program of major repairs commencing in 2008-09. The States will be the main deliverers of housing in remote Indigenous communities providing standardised tenancy management and support consistent with public housing tenancy management.

*Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

Indigenous Economic  
Participation National  
Partnership

\$228.8 million over five years, with the Commonwealth contributing \$172.7 million, to assist up to 13,000 Indigenous Australians into employment. Jobs will be created in areas of government service delivery that have previously relied on subsidies through the Community Development Employment Projects program. Public sector Indigenous employment and career development strategies will also be reviewed to increase Indigenous public sector employment to reflect Indigenous working age population share by 2015, and government will also strengthen current procurement policies to maximise Indigenous employment, skills development and business creation.

Indigenous Remote Service  
Delivery National Partnership

\$291.2 million over six years with the Commonwealth contributing \$187.7 million to improve access to services by Indigenous Australians in remote areas. This measure will implement a new service delivery model that clearly identifies service standards, roles and responsibilities and service delivery parameters to ensure that Indigenous Australians living in twenty-six selected remote locations receive and actively participate in services to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.