

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and  
Public Administration

# Inquiry into Commonwealth funding of Indigenous Tasmanians

Submission by the Tasmanian Government

November 2016



Tasmania  
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*A note on referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this submission*

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are referred to collectively as Indigenous people. The Tasmanian Government recognises the preference of Tasmanian Aboriginal people to be referred to in this form, and that Aboriginal Tasmanians prefer not to be referred to as 'Indigenous'.

The matters referred to in this submission include services, supports and endeavours undertaken for and with people who are Aboriginal Tasmanians, as well as people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians who are resident in Tasmania but are not Tasmania's First People. The Tasmanian Government is also aware of the Australian Government's convention of the use of the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Given this submission is made to a Committee of the Australian Parliament and relating to Australian Government funding, the Tasmanian Government considers that clarity in the matters being referred to can best be achieved through use of the collective terms generally applied within the relevant domain and meaning. In referring to Indigenous people, the Tasmanian Government does not intend to give offence to Aboriginal Tasmanians, being Tasmania's First People and who have an enduring connection to country.

## **1 Introduction**

The Tasmanian Government is committed to improving the lives of Indigenous Tasmanians. This includes through improving Government's relationship and engaging with Indigenous Tasmanians, funding and delivering Indigenous specific programs and services in Tasmania and ensuring mainstream programs and services are appropriately designed and implemented to meet the needs of Indigenous Tasmanians and to overcome disadvantage.

This submission to the Inquiry into Commonwealth funding of Indigenous Tasmanians outlines the Tasmanian Government's recent commitments and activities aimed at overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in the State. It also details the recent change to the approach to determining eligibility for Tasmanian Government funded, Indigenous specific programs and services.

As it is understood that this Inquiry is considering access to Australian Government funded, Indigenous specific programs and services in Tasmania, this submission focusses on access to Australian Government funded Indigenous specific programs and services that have been delivered by the Tasmanian Government over the past 10 years.

## **2 Tasmanian context**

Tasmania has a relatively small Indigenous population. According to the 2011 Census, it is estimated that there were 24,165 people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Tasmania (4.7% of the population)<sup>1</sup>. Though small, the Tasmanian Indigenous population as a proportion of the total population, is the second highest of all states and territories, after the Northern Territory.

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<sup>1</sup> ABS 3238.0.55.001 - Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011. The Estimated Resident Population includes an estimated undercount of just under 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Tasmania is also geographically small, relative to other states and territories, and its population is decentralised, with the majority of the population living outside the capital city. A large proportion of Tasmania's Indigenous population lives in regional areas, including in very remote areas like Cape Barren Island.

Programs and services provided to Indigenous Tasmanians are funded by both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and delivered by the Australian Government, the Tasmanian Government and various non-government organisations.

Because of Tasmania's specific circumstances, the most efficient and effective approach to meeting the needs of Tasmania's Indigenous community is generally by providing services through mainstream programs, including those that are designed to address disadvantage in the wider community.

Mainstream programs in Tasmania are continuing to adopt practices that consider cultural appropriateness – such as cultural competency training, cultural awareness training and the establishment of Indigenous advisory committees and groups. Mainstream services are complemented in Tasmania by Indigenous specific programs and services in some areas.

The 2014 Indigenous Expenditure Report<sup>2</sup> indicated that in 2012-13, mainstream services accounted for 91 per cent of government expenditure on Indigenous people in Tasmania, with the remaining 9 per cent accounted for by expenditure on Indigenous specific (targeted) programs and services.

The vast majority of Indigenous specific programs and services are funded by the Australian Government. Australian Government funded programs are delivered directly by the Australian Government, delivered by the Tasmanian Government (refer to Section 5 of this submission) or delivered by non-government organisations (refer to Section 7) in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government also funds Indigenous specific programs and services across a range of areas, including the education, health, housing, recreation and culture sectors (refer to Section 6).

### **3 Tasmanian Government's commitment to Indigenous Tasmanians**

In January 2016, the Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Will Hodgman MP, committed to a range of initiatives to engage with and improve outcomes for Indigenous Tasmanians. This includes:

- recognising Aboriginal people in the Tasmanian Constitution;
- exploring opportunities for joint land management and land return;
- focussing on Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture in schools;
- closing the gap in outcomes for Indigenous Tasmanians; and
- developing and implementing a new approach to determining who is eligible for Indigenous programs and services offered by the Tasmanian Government.

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<sup>2</sup> Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2014, Indigenous Expenditure Report - Tasmania Factsheet, Productivity Commission, Canberra, <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/indigenous-expenditure-report/indigenous-expenditure-report-2014/ier-2014-factsheet7-tas.pdf>.

Progress on implementing these initiatives is outlined below.

### 3.1 Recognition of Aboriginal People as Tasmania's First People

On 26 October 2016, the Tasmanian Parliament passed a Bill for an historic amendment to the Preamble of the Tasmanian Constitution to recognise Aboriginal people as Tasmania's First People. The amendment inserts the following text into the Preamble:

*And whereas the Parliament, on behalf of all the people of Tasmania, acknowledges the Aboriginal people as Tasmania's First People and the traditional and original owners of Tasmanian lands and waters; recognises the enduring spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance of traditional lands and waters to Tasmanian Aboriginal people; and recognises the unique and lasting contributions that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have made and continue to make to Tasmania.*

The amendment of Tasmania's Constitution is a significant and symbolic step in advancing reconciliation and resetting the Tasmanian Government's relationship with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

### 3.2 Joint land management and return

Returning land to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community is a priority for the Tasmanian Government. To date, a total of 55,617 hectares of land have been returned, with all of this land freehold, except for the 10.4 hectares under a 40 year lease at Irapuna.

In December 2015, the Tasmanian Government was successful in returning *nirmena nala*, an important rock shelter and Aboriginal site of great cultural and spiritual importance in the Derwent Valley, to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Previous governments returned an initial tranche of 12 parcels of land in 1995, the Wybalenna historical site in 1999, and the remainder of Crown Land on Cape Barren Island and Clarke Island in 2005, and a 40 year lease was signed with the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) for land at Irapuna/Eddystone Point in 2006. In October 2006, the Government officially presented title to nine hectares of land on Bruny Island to the ALCT through the Crown Land Assessment and Classification Project. However, attempts by Government to return further land to the Aboriginal community in 2012-13 were unsuccessful.

The Tasmanian Government is currently investigating:

- joint land management arrangements to identify new ways for Aboriginal people to connect to country including economic and job opportunities (particularly in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA)); and
- the current Aboriginal land return model in Tasmania and recommendations on future enhancements to address issues that have impeded some previous attempts to hand land back to the Aboriginal community.

Under the 2016-17 Budget, the Tasmanian Government committed \$800,000 over four years for joint land management in the TWWHA and \$666,660 over four years to train and employ two additional Aboriginal Rangers. This builds on Government's existing Aboriginal Ranger and Trainee Ranger Program, which is funded in part through the Australian Government's Working on Country Program (refer to Section 6).

### 3.3 Including Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture in the curriculum

The Tasmanian Government is also working to include Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture in the school curriculum.

Under the 2016-17 Budget, the Tasmanian Government committed \$520 000 over two years to work with the Aboriginal community to develop resources and training to focus on Tasmanian Aboriginals in the history and culture component of the Australian Curriculum taught in our schools.

The Tasmanian Department of Education is consulting with Aboriginal organisations and schools about a draft Tasmanian Aboriginal Histories and Cultures Framework for delivering Tasmanian Aboriginal content in the Curriculum, addressing Tasmanian Aboriginal issues and acknowledging shared histories.

The Department of Education has also been working with Aboriginal people and organisations to create new multi-media resources and video case studies about Aboriginal history and culture for use in classrooms.

### 3.4 Closing the Gap

The Tasmanian Government continues to work to close the gap of disadvantage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Tasmanians. This includes through delivering mainstream programs in ways that are appropriate and achieve outcomes for Indigenous Tasmanians, but also through delivering Indigenous specific programs.

As outlined in Sections 5 and 6, the Tasmanian Government delivers a range of programs and services to Indigenous Tasmanians, including family violence services, education, sport and recreation, housing and health services, heritage, arts and culture, infrastructure in remote areas, parks and land management.

The Tasmanian Government is also working with other Australian jurisdictions to close the gap through the National Indigenous Reform Agreement. This Agreement sets out the objectives, outcomes, outputs, performance indicators and performance benchmarks agreed by the Council of Australian Governments with respect four priority areas of reform for Indigenous Australians – kids in schools, early childhood, adults in jobs and safer communities.

### 3.5 Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy

The Tasmanian Government is also working to create a greater understanding between Tasmanian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and to acknowledge Aboriginal history and culture. This is being progressed through Aboriginal and dual naming in the State, which assigns Aboriginal names to Tasmanian features and places, to assist in preserving the language and culture of Tasmania's First People and recognise their continued connection to the land.

The Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy provides direction for all naming authorities in Tasmania on the use of Aboriginal names for Tasmanian geographic features or places. The Policy allows for geographic features and places to be given both an introduced and an Aboriginal language name derived from the revived Tasmanian Aboriginal language, palawa kani. The Policy also gives preference to an Aboriginal name, where an official name has not been assigned. Since the release of the Policy, 13 features and places in Tasmania have been assigned names.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting the Policy as an effective contribution to the broader community understanding of Aboriginal history and culture in Tasmania.

## **4 Approach to determining eligibility for Tasmanian Government Indigenous programs and services**

On 1 July 2016, the Tasmanian Government changed its approach for determining eligibility for its Indigenous programs and services to be more consistent with the Australian Government's approach.

The revised, more inclusive approach to determining eligibility was developed through consultation with agencies across the Tasmanian Government that deliver Indigenous programs and services, as well as with the Tasmanian community and the Australian Government.

The new approach replaces the previous Tasmanian Government Policy on eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services.

Like the Australian Government, both the current and previous approaches use a three part test to determine eligibility for Indigenous programs and services. The test considers:

- Descent – If applicant has Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ancestry;
- Self-identification – If the applicant identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- Communal recognition – If the applicant is accepted as such by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community in which he/she lives or has lived.

While the Australian Government and other states and territories also use this three part test, it is understood that there are differences in how it is applied and administered, particularly in the evidence required for ancestry. It is understood that the Australian Government does not require the three part test to be applied rigidly, and generally does not require documentary evidence (such as archival or historical records) to prove ancestry.

Under the Tasmanian Government's previous policy for determining eligibility, documentary evidence was sometimes required in relation to the three part test (such as archival or historical records). This requirement excluded people who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander but were unable to provide verifiable documentary evidence of their ancestry. As that policy was inconsistent with Australian Government processes for determining eligibility, it also meant that some Tasmanians were eligible for Australian Government Indigenous specific programs and services, but not Tasmanian Government programs and services. Of note however, in practice, from February 2012 Tasmanian Government agencies applied the previous policy flexibly and developed varying requirements for meeting the three part test, including self-identification, letters of communal recognition, and in some cases, sighting archival or historical records.

As noted above, from 1 July 2016, a new approach has been implemented for determining eligibility for Tasmanian Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services that does not require archival or historical evidence of descent. The new approach relates to how the Tasmanian Government applies and administers the three part test and how an applicant is required to meet the three part test, rather than changing the three part test criteria.

Under the new approach:

- Programs and services which previously only required a person to self-identify as an Indigenous person continue to only require self-identification;

- Other Tasmanian Government Indigenous specific programs, services and permits now use a confirmation of eligibility form. The form includes a statutory declaration that the applicant meets the three part test and a statement of communal recognition from an incorporated Aboriginal organisation. No other archival or historical records are required; and
- Eligibility to participate in the use and management of Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995* will be considered at a later stage through the broader review of the land return model.

Statements of communal recognition are accepted from those organisations registered under the *Commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and Aboriginal organisations incorporated under the *Tasmanian Corporations (Tasmania) Act 1990*.

## **5 Tasmanian Government funded Indigenous specific programs and services**

In the 2016-17 Budget, the Tasmanian Government provided more than \$22 million over the forward estimates for Indigenous specific programs and services delivery in Tasmania.

This includes funding for family violence services, education, sport and recreation, housing, health services, heritage, arts and culture, infrastructure in remote areas, parks and land management.

The 2016-17 Budget provided almost \$3 million over four years in new funding including:

- \$333,000 over three years for culturally appropriate services for children and women experiencing family violence;
- \$661,306 over four years to employ two Aboriginal Liaison Officers as part of Strong Families, Safe Kids - the Tasmanian Government's commitment to improving the child protection system;
- \$520,000 over two years to work with the Aboriginal community to focus on Tasmanian Aboriginals in the history and culture component of the Australian Curriculum taught in Tasmanian schools;
- \$800,000 over four years to help ensure that the extraordinary Aboriginal cultural values of the TWWHA are appropriately recognised; and
- \$666,660 over four years to train and employ two additional Aboriginal Rangers.

While further information can be provided about Tasmanian Government funded Indigenous specific programs and services, it is understood that these are not the focus of the Inquiry.

## **6 Australian Government funded Indigenous specific programs and services in Tasmania**

As outlined, the Australian Government funds the majority of Indigenous specific programs and services in Tasmania. Some of this funding is provided to the Tasmanian Government to deliver programs and services in Tasmania, with other funding provided directly to non-government organisations (refer to Section 7).

Key Australian Government funded, Indigenous specific programs and services that have been delivered by the Tasmanian Government over the past decade, are outlined below. Access to the majority of these programs and services was available to people who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

#### 6.1 Child and Family Centres

The Australian Government is supporting 35 Child and Family Centres (CFCs) across Australia to improve the health and wellbeing, education and care of very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community. Each centre will provide a mix of services, responsive to local community needs, and include child care, early learning and parent and family support services.

In Tasmania, the Australian Government funded the establishment of two CFCs at Bridgewater (tagara lia) and Geeveston (wayraparattee). A key priority of these centres is to help close the gap between the health and education outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. The Centres have been established following the same processes as other CFCs.

Services provided at the CFCs are available to all families in the local area, although the Bridgewater and Geeveston centres focus on people who self-identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

#### 6.2 Allocation of funding to support Indigenous students in schools

Prior to 2014, under the Students First program, the Tasmanian Government received an allocation of funding from the Australian Government that reflected the number of students that self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the Tasmanian education system.

Prior to 2014, schools also received targeted funding to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through programs such as the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme where funding was based on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at each school who fell below the National Minimum Standard for reading, writing and/or numeracy in the previous year's NAPLAN testing.

However, since the development of the School Resource Package in 2014, a separate specific allocation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students has not been provided.

#### 6.3 Aboriginal training program

TAFE Tasmania received Australian Government funding under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative Program from 2000 to 2009. Funding supported the delivery of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to increase participation in VET.

This funding also provided tutorial support to individual Indigenous students to assist them with their studies and gaining a VET qualification.

In the first six years of the program, people who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander were able to access the service. Between 2007 and 2009, eligibility to access the service was determined using the Australian Government approach, with archival and historical records not required.



#### 6.4 Indigenous health

While the majority of funding provided by the Australian Government to deliver health services to Indigenous Tasmanians was delivered directly by the Australian Government, the Tasmanian Government received some funding to support public and community health programs for Indigenous people in Tasmania. In general, these health programs were provided to people who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

A number of small grants were provided to organisations, such as the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation and the Elders Council of Tasmania, to assist frail older people.

#### 6.5 Indigenous Sexual and Reproductive Health and Young Parent Support

Under the Indigenous Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Health and Young Parent Support program, Australian Government funding was managed by the Tasmanian Government and provided to Family Planning Tasmania and Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations, to support the Aboriginal Midwifery Outreach Project, a Pregnancy Support worker at Geeveston Child and Family Centre, and Core of life Program through Youth Health Services.

The Aboriginal Midwifery Outreach Project aims to improve access to culturally appropriate antenatal care for Indigenous women, through a community-based pregnancy support and outreach service. Midwives were appointed under the Program to provide outreach antenatal care, based within participating Aboriginal organisations and targeted Child and Family Centres around Tasmania.

Under this program, Australian Government funding was also provided to support the training of Aboriginal Health Worker trainees and workers with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and young parent support.

In some cases, these programs were targeted at schools or communities that had a high proportion of people who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, but services were also provided to non-Indigenous people.

#### 6.6 Aboriginal Healing Project

The objective of the Australian Government funded, Aboriginal Healing Project was to provide a series of workshops for men, women and young people to assist in addressing issues arising from exposure to family violence.

Under this Project, workshops were delivered to people who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

#### 6.7 Housing and municipal and essential services on Cape Barren and Flinders Islands

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, the Australian Government funded remote Indigenous housing on Flinders and Cape Barren Islands, in collaboration with the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association and Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association.

In August 2014, responsibility for the delivery of municipal and essential services on Cape Barren Island and remote Indigenous housing on both Cape Barren Island and Flinders Island was transferred from the Australian Government to the Tasmanian Government.

The Tasmanian Government is currently working with the Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association and the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association to establish management regimes for the long term delivery of these services on the Islands.

Municipal essential services are provided to all residents of these islands. The Flinders Island Aboriginal Association and Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association have historically allocated rental housing to residents on the Islands. However, it is unclear whether eligibility to access housing has, at any time, required documentary evidence of descent to be provided.

#### 6.8 Police and justice systems

While the Tasmanian Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management does not receive funding from the Australian Government to provide programs and services specifically for Indigenous people in Tasmania, whenever a person who self-identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is taken into custody by Police, Indigenous legal services (currently the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Legal Service) is notified. The Australian Government provides funding directly to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Legal Service (refer to Section 7).

#### 6.9 Aboriginal Trainee Ranger program

Since 2008, the Tasmanian Government has received funding from the Australian Government to support the Aboriginal Trainee Ranger program. Under the Program, Aboriginal Trainee Rangers are employed and trained for up to four years. They then become permanent employees of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment's Parks and Wildlife Service as Aboriginal Rangers. This Program not only maintains the connection to country for the trainees and rangers, it creates ongoing employment for Indigenous Tasmanians.

The Tasmanian Government provides support for this Program and recently committed to providing increased funding for additional Trainee Rangers until 2020.

Participants employed through this Program have been selected through the normal processes current at the time for employing Indigenous staff in the Tasmanian State Service. Prior to 1 July 2016, this included requesting documentary or archival evidence to confirm ancestry, as well as a statement of communal recognition.

#### 6.10 Needwonnee Walk

Under the Jobs Fund initiative, the Australian Government supported the award-winning Needwonnee Walk project – an Aboriginal interpretation walk at Melaleuca. This project was delivered in close partnership with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, which organised the participation of Aboriginal community members both in the original establishment of the walk, and in its ongoing maintenance and renewal.

#### 6.11 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

Over a number of years, both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments have funded management and research in the TWWHA. Some of this funding has been used for work related to maintaining the Aboriginal cultural values of the property.

The Tasmanian Government is currently completing the identification of Aboriginal cultural values in the TWWHA, which is being delivered in cooperation with the oversight of the Aboriginal Heritage Council, representing the Aboriginal community.

This work has benefits for all Tasmanians, including Aboriginal Tasmanians.

#### 6.12 wukalina - larapuna cultural walk

Both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments have been working over many months to support development of the wukalina - larapuna cultural walk project at Mt William National Park. Support provided for this project includes:

- Under the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Programme, Australian Government funding was provided to ALCT to fund consumer research to test market assumptions and support the proposed infrastructure, marketing and administrative arrangements for the project;
- A further Tasmanian Government grant was issued in January 2016, to support planning and development activities as detailed in the project business case;
- A client manager has been made available in the Tasmanian Department of State Growth to provide advice and assistance, particularly in regard to identifying funding options; and
- Australian Government funding was provided through the Regional Tourism Innovation and Infrastructure fund to support the infrastructure requirements of the project. The Tasmanian Government has agreed to match this funding.

This project, once delivered, will have benefits for all Tasmanians, and will contribute to improving understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture.

#### 6.13 Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative

The Tasmanian Government is a party to a three-year Memorandum of Understanding between Arts Tasmania and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board of the Australia Council for the Arts relating to a Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative.

The Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative is an Australian Government funded program designed to develop Indigenous skills and knowledge of traditional practices.

The Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative resulted from the very successful project, tayenebe: Tasmanian Aboriginal women's fibre work. This project brought many Tasmanian Aboriginal women together through statewide weaving workshops and research culminating in a hugely successful exhibition that has since toured nationally.

The Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative funded stage I of the shell necklace project luna tunapri and waypa tipilti (Men's Project). waypa tipilti was developed and delivered through the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. A steering committee of Indigenous men oversaw the project which involved a week-long residency held on the East Coast of Tasmania in which Indigenous men from across Tasmania were brought together to learn traditional skills, share knowledge and undertake a series of daily workshops.

The final component of the Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative is designed to provide artistic skills and knowledge development via arts workshops. This professional development program will provide a continuum for artists that participated in the previously delivered Community Cultural Development programs and that have expressed a desire and interest in pursuing their arts practice further. These workshops will be delivered throughout 2016.

Access to Strategic Indigenous Arts Development initiative programs is provided to people who self-identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

#### 6.14 Indigenous Repatriation Program

The Australian Government provides funding through the Indigenous Repatriation Program to major Australian museums (including the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery) and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to facilitate returns of both ancestral remains and secret sacred objects to communities. The collecting institutions work directly with communities to identify the origins of ancestral remains and secret sacred objects. This Program benefits all Tasmanians.

#### 6.15 Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program

Under the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program, the Australian Government funded an Indigenous Sport Development Officer in Tasmania. This Officer was selected through the normal processes for employing Indigenous staff in the Tasmanian State Service. Prior to 1 July 2016, this included requesting documentary or archival evidence to confirm ancestry, as well as a statement of communal recognition.

However, the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program was generally delivered to people who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## **7 Indigenous specific programs and services delivered by non-government organisations in Tasmania**

Some Australian Government funding is provided to non-government organisations to deliver Indigenous specific programs and services. Information about some Indigenous specific programs delivered by non-government organisations is outlined below.

However, details about Australian Government funding provided to non-government organisations and access to those programs and services, is a matter for the Australian Government.

#### 7.1 Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

Australian Government funding is provided to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre for programs such as the Integrated Family Support Services program, the Indigenous Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Health and Youth Parent Support program, as well as supporting training for Aboriginal Health Care Workers.

#### 7.2 Indigenous Legal Services

In July 2015, the Australian Government awarded the delivery of the Indigenous Legal Assistance Program in Tasmania to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Legal Service, under the auspices of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.

Further information on funding and provision of this service would need to be obtained from the Australian Government.

### 7.3 Natural resource management bodies

There are three natural resource management bodies in Tasmania (NRM South, NRM North and Cradle Coast NRM), which are part of a national network of 56 similar bodies. In Tasmania, these bodies are independent, non-statutory organisations that are responsible, under State legislation, for identifying the region's priorities for natural resource management, working with the community to prepare a regional natural resource management strategy and facilitating its implementation. Regional bodies receive funding from the Australian Government to implement these strategies and to deliver natural resource management outcomes, as well as base administrative funding from the Tasmanian Government.

Since 2002 and the establishment of the regional natural resource management system in Tasmania, there have been various Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust / Working on Country / Working on our Country programs delivered in Tasmania with an Indigenous focus, and delivered through the appropriate regional body. This includes the project that resulted in the establishment of Pakana services which is hosted by NRM South.

The Tasmanian Government has participated in these Australian Government programs through its membership on the boards of the regional bodies and cooperation with the Australian Government. Further information on these programs would need to be obtained through the natural resource management bodies and the Australian Government.

## **8 Conclusion**

As detailed in this submission, the Tasmanian Government is committed to engaging with Indigenous Tasmanians and closing the gap in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Tasmanians.

While the majority of programs and services provided to Indigenous people in Tasmania are mainstream services, there are some programs and services that are targeted specifically at Indigenous people in the State.

Over the past decade, Australian Government funded Indigenous specific programs and services have been delivered by the Australian Government directly, by the Tasmanian Government and by non-government organisations in Tasmania.

As outlined in this submission, Australian Government funded, Indigenous specific programs and services that have been delivered by the Tasmanian Government have generally been available to, or have benefited, all people who self-identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in Tasmania.