
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Many Ways Forward

**Report of the inquiry into capacity building and service delivery
in Indigenous communities**

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

June 2004
Canberra

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Barry Wakelin's Foreword

The ATSI Committee has grappled with the issues of the well-being of the Indigenous population from the perspective of the key factors which will most offer a better life for individuals, families and communities particularly relating to administration and governance.

We listened to many worthy and reasonable proposals to which government, community and individuals could benefit if implemented, supported and simply accepted.

This is an ideal time, in my opinion, to place our deliberations before the Parliament with many changes in prospect for the management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

The best way I could think to sum up the last two years was to condense in my foreword a blending of comments from a small selection of our witnesses as a testimony to the commitment of so many Australians who assisted us in our inquiry.

Finally, I thank Committee members for their support and all staff for their untiring effort over the life of this Parliament.

Setting the scene

The Australian, in its Editorial of 27 May 2004 stated:

.....In his Sorry Day speech at the Sydney Opera House last night, former prime minister Malcolm Fraser persisted with an older way of speaking about Aboriginal disadvantage in which the root cause is white racism. We need to become far more compassionate, he said. It would be hard to argue with that, but easy to argue about just what it means. For example, what is the properly compassionate response to the riot on the Block in Redfern in February that caused \$1 million worth of property damage and injured 40 police? Ever since the riot, and again at this week's

NSW parliamentary inquiry into it, we have heard racism, especially among police, trotted out as the spark that lit the inferno. The riot had many causes, heroin not least of them, and suggestions that only racism was responsible get us nowhere....[the view put] that the solution is to decriminalise heroin and set up an injecting room at Redfern – beggars all belief. The real solution is something like the opposite: zero tolerance, and an urban version of the grog bans pioneered by Cape York leader Noel Pearson in far north Queensland.

... The abolition of ATSIC, which had turned into the most expensive and damaging sideshow in indigenous affairs, is a start. But we still need to empower Aborigines where they live and work. Top-down solutions imposed from Canberra, whether by white bureaucrats or indigenous representatives, only encourage welfare passivity. As the father of reconciliation, Patrick Dodson, said on Tuesday night, the abolition of ATSIC had unwittingly opened up a new opportunity for practical Aboriginal advancement. ***It is an opportunity that must not be missed.***¹
[emphasis added]

Employment

Mr Dick Estens, Vice-Chair, Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd., Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy has been going in Moree for six years.²

...Our whole project works on a good psychological game plan. It is about young Aboriginal people visiting businesses and building relationships. There are no problems with businesses employing Aboriginal people. They just want good units which have young Aboriginal community people working in them – young Aboriginal people who mix and socialise in the Aboriginal communities in the towns that they operate and live in.³

1 *The Australian*, May 27 2004, Editorial, 'Sorry tale of failed politics'.

2 Mr Richard Estens, Vice Chair, Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1468.

3 Mr Richard Estens, Vice Chair, Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1469.

I think we should be rewarding Aboriginal organisations, instead of the businesses for employing an Aboriginal person, for having business people on their board. If they have business people on their board, they will help get the corporate governance side right. You get creative thinking.⁴

Mr Dennis Davey, Elder, Ardyaloon Inc., Lombadina, 7 August 2003:

...I picked it [work skills] up on the road on the track. No school, no pencils there. So what is the difference? Work. Can you tell me how it happened? Where is it coming from? It was not from education for sure. I did not go to any school.⁵

Commissioner Klynton Wanganeen, South Australian Zone, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Adelaide, 23 September 2003:

I had three apprentices from the AP Lands. They were passing their tests but only with about 17 per cent of answers right. Once people started testing them orally they were getting 75 per cent, 76 per cent. They knew the practical work that was required, but they were having difficulty understanding or comprehending the way the questions were asked. Often in TAFE courses for trades the assessments are not written by people who are practically involved in the teaching or have a trade background. They are written by academics who really structure sentences which can confuse a person rather than help a person to comprehend.⁶

Ms Janina Gawler, Manager, Aboriginal Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd., Melbourne, 19 February 2003:

Some three years ago, in conjunction with the federal government and the local communities, we developed an employment strategy which has seen an additional 181 Aboriginal employees brought onto sites, with a high level of retention of between 75 per cent and 80 per cent... Those changes are becoming rapidly apparent in Western Australia- in the Hamersley Iron range and increasingly around the Argyle mine.⁷

4 Mr Richard Estens, Vice Chair, Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1489.

5 Mr Dennis Davey, Elder, Ardyaloon Inc., Lombadina, Transcript (07.08.03), p. 1057.

6 Commissioner Klynton Wanganeen, South Australian Zone, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Transcript (23.09.03), p. 1206.

7 Ms Janina Gawler, Manager, Aboriginal Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd, Transcript of discussion (19.02.03), p. 471.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Shephard, Commanding Officer, 19th Chief Engineer Works, Land Command Department of Defence (Army), Canberra, 10 September 2003:

The aspiration for education, the aspiration to knuckle down and attend training—to hang around to the end—and the aspiration to have a local or Indigenous business centre in their community. It might be tourism, it might be maintenance of the roads or it might be a small house maintenance concern from which they could generate their own income aside from the CDEP, the Work for the Dole program or their canteen. Then the young people could say, “Perhaps I could go to TAFE,” or “Perhaps I could go to university,” or “Perhaps I could join the Army.”⁸

Education

The Hon Bob Collins, Darwin, 27 November 2002:

People have been saying to me in this place for 30 years that it is going to take another generation. What keeps me awake at night is that the MAP test results that I have just given you are the next generation ...⁹

...One point I need to make is, if I had to nominate one single area where capacity needs to be built in Aboriginal communities, I would cite education without hesitation.¹⁰

Professor John Lester, Head, Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies; and Director, Umulliko Indigenous Higher Education Research Centre, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, 7 April 2003:

The reality, however, is that the best laid plans will not come to fruition unless you have on-the-ground skills.¹¹

Mr Richard Trudgen, Business Manager, Public Officer, Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc., Darwin, 27 November 2002:

8 Lieutenant Colonel Mark Shephard, Commanding Officer, 19th Chief Engineer Works, Land Command Department of Defence (Army), Transcript (10.09.03), p. 1144.

9 The Hon. Bob Collins, (private capacity), Transcript (27.11.02), pp. 167-168.

10 The Hon. Bob Collins, (private capacity), Transcript (27.11.02), p 168.

11 Professor John Lester, Head, Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies, and Director, Umulliko Indigenous Higher Education Research Centre, University of Newcastle, Transcript (07.04.03), p. 570.

...It means Indigenous people and people with English as their first language working together to what we call charter the English language, especially the cognitive, effective language. It is the main reason that education is failing absolutely in Aboriginal communities: people have just reached this state of ultraconfusion.¹²

Bureaucracy

Mrs Cathy Duncan, Chief Executive Office and Chairperson, Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd., Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

Our organisations get paid on what I used to say quite frankly is black bums on seats. Do you know how hard it is to get an Aboriginal person on that seat for 26 weeks and stay for life? It is not outcome based all the time. It is about the efforts to get to that outcome. What governments need to do is step back a little bit, which has been heard around this table.¹³

Ms Janina Gawler Manager, Aboriginal Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd., Melbourne, 19 February 2003:

If I was looking to provide some advice to the inquiry, it is needing flexibility from government and a responsiveness. The time frame for delivery on agreements in terms of contracts and in moving from the policy to the program has a huge delay. As you have indicated, productivity of companies is critical and the train is well out of the station. Our experience with government is that the needs of the communities are well articulated, and have been for some time. The corporation and the group working with them, the community relations group, agrees. Programs are designed and developed. We have some resources to put in. We need some resources from the other side. Our train is four stations ahead and we are just starting the discussions back at the beginning of the line. The level of frustration that occurs in those scenarios is quite high. However, we have people who are skilled in patience.¹⁴

12 Mr Richard Trudgen, Business Manager, Public Officer, Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc., Transcript (27.11.02), p. 240.

13 Mrs Cathy Duncan, Chief Executive Office and Chairperson, Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1477.

14 Ms Janina Gawler, Manager, Aboriginal Relations, Rio Tinto Ltd, Transcript (19.02.03), p. 475.

Ms Suzi Lodder, Special Adviser, Indigenous Policy Branch, Department of Family and Community Services, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

Briefly, on housing it seems to me that current programs will be unlikely to meet the backlog let alone the future needs of the growing populations, particularly in remote areas. So enabling self-provision and self-maintenance, including on communal title lands, needs more focus... We have a successful prototype in the Cape York family income management project but very little resources to expand this nationally...¹⁵

Mr Bryan Palmer, Assistant Secretary, Social Programs and Reconciliation, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

...[T]here is a long history of fads and searches for the holy grail and magic bullets in Indigenous affairs policy. While building the capacity of individuals, organisations and governments is important, it is just part of the wider picture of addressing Indigenous disadvantage and promoting social and economic wellbeing. It is not the total answer... I think that in making recommendations it is important to look at evidence based approaches that allow us to identify with confidence the policy expansions or changes that will make the most improvement. The discussion paper contains many ideas... I think it is important that as we pick through them and consider them individually we look for empirical examples of their success and the extent of the impact they will have as we build the optimum mix of effective strategies for building the capacity of individuals, families, organisations and government.¹⁶

Mr Anthony Roediger, Project Leader, Boston Consulting Group, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

It is... not the only system that you could have for accountability. It is not the system you use internally within government. You have a far more people driven, flexible, team based approach to accountability within government departments, yet as soon as it

15 Ms Suzi Lodder, Special Adviser, Indigenous Policy Branch, Department of Family and Community Services, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1449.

16 Mr Bryan Palmer, Assistant Secretary, Social Programs and Reconciliation, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1454.

gets to an outsourced model you use a kind of procurement approach that presumes some kind of corporate sophistication. So I think the challenge is to come up with a different system that does not presume that people have that sort of expertise.¹⁷

Ms Carolyn McNally, Assistant Secretary, Priority Groups Policy Branch, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

...One of the big issues for me has been who I talk to. In my role, I have numbers of people lobbying me and talking to me. I hear a different story every day. I hear a different story from people in the community. When I talk to the community representatives, I hear another story. When I talk to other government departments, I hear another story. Quite honestly, at a senior level in bureaucracy, it is very difficult to work your way not only through the maze of government bureaucracy but through the maze of representative organisational structures that we are expected to go through.¹⁸

Leadership

Professor Mick Dodson, Director, Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

...We all know that few people are born leaders. Leaders require nurturing, coaching and supporting. Leaders need exposure to experiences which build skills and role models to inspire and drive change. Leadership authority must be culturally sanctioned and transferable into wider environments and contexts.¹⁹

...The discussion paper might give the ignorant impression that the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre is funded by the Department of Family and Community Services... Of that 75 per cent, a substantial proportion – over 50 per cent – comes from offshore, which is probably damning in one way or another. That a big foundation in New York has to fund Indigenous leadership

17 Mr Anthony Roediger, Project Leader, Boston Consulting Group, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1479.

18 Ms Carolyn McNally, Assistant Secretary, Priority Groups Policy Branch, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1485.

19 Professor Mick Dodson, Director, Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre, and Chair, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1444.

development in Australia is shameful, in my opinion. But we are very much appreciative of Family and Community Services' contribution, along with those of many other government agencies, including state government agencies and, in some instances, local government, and also many Australian corporations.²⁰

Welfare

Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, Cairns, 7 July 2003:

The time scale point is very important. It was our assessment that welfare dependency is very entrenched. It kicked off 30 years ago so it is an intergenerational issue. Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships recognises the total structural change and community change that is required and it has made a 20-year commitment to the region. We spent two or three years think tanking and have really only been delivering services over the past 24 months. It is very early days, but we are quite impressed by some of the progress that has been made on Cape York. When we started we could identify two Aboriginal run businesses on Cape York; the rest were community run. Some of our business colleagues who visited the region likened the way that the community economies had been set up to communist ghettos, and probably no better than the communist ghettos that are currently being deconstructed in Eastern Europe. That is how solid the mindset was. The imposition of rule over those communities has affected them to the point that people are now scared to engage in business. They wonder whether they are permitted to engage in business.²¹

Mr Michael Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Housing Co. Ltd., Redfern, 8 April 2003:

...[T]his welfare mentality is poisoning our people's minds; that is why we have ended up with a vicious cycle of evil down there. It is time for a change. I really feel that it is time to move on. We

20 Professor Mick Dodson, Director, Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre, and Chair, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1482.

21 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, Transcript (07.07.03), p. 747.

have to think about the present and the future. A lot of our people still think about the present and dwell on the past. It is not very good for our people, and it is no good for the next generation.²²

Professor Stephen Cornell, Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, Canberra, 3 November 2003:

...What we have seen though is that the federal legislation on welfare has had less of an impact on welfare statistics among indigenous nations than have the economic initiatives that indigenous nations themselves have made. One of the things that we have discovered is that, as indigenous nations in the US take control of their own affairs, they tend to move from an attitude to welfare as being an entitlement towards a position of wanting to escape the dependency, because they have realised that that dependency has a political dimension to it. The decisions that are shaping economic conditions in Indian country are being made somewhere a thousand miles away, and these nations want to make those decisions for themselves.

They realise that one of the best ways to do that is to create sustainable economies that reduce their dependency on the federal government. I think the major progress that has been made in the US regarding welfare dependency has been through tribal economic initiatives and tribal assertions of self-governance, which have produced this desire to reduce that dependency.²³

Looking to the future

Mr Mike Fordham, General Manager, Torres Strait Regional Authority, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

...[I]t is not good enough for government agencies to simply appear in the region, having scant regard for real consultation or collaboration, and then proceed to deliver inappropriate services or programs as only they see fit. Believe me, that still does happen. People still try to do that. We see this too often in the Torres Strait, often ending with what I would call the culprits finally asking us to help when it is all too late. I often despair about such efforts of

22 Mr Michael Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Housing Co. Ltd, Transcript (08.04.03), p. 614.

23 Professor Stephen Cornell, Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, Transcript (03.11.03), p. 1368.

policy development and service delivery. Work such as ours cannot be hands-on and driven from Canberra or Brisbane.²⁴

Ms Olga Havnen, Manager, Indigenous Program, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

...**Quite frankly, I think we are sick to death of being the political football.** The problem is not intractable. We are talking about 200,000 or 300,000 people across the country. We are not talking about millions, as you do in Africa, when you talk about development and poverty alleviation. It requires some genuine goodwill and commitment on the part of the government. Forums and discussions such as these are very constructive. I think you need to be commended for having had the discussion. I urge that you actually find some way of perhaps considering in your report what might be the next steps in terms of widening the discussion and broadening the engagement from community sector organisations in Indigenous communities but also more broadly, as we mentioned today, from the corporate and private sector and from the NGO sector. I think there are some real opportunities there for finding... a better way forward.²⁵ [emphasis added]

Ms Laura Beacroft, Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations, Roundtable Discussion, Canberra, 13 February 2004:

... [O]ne of the important things that the Harvard model shows is that if you look at the content of their indicators, they are 80 per cent internal and 20 per cent bottom line. I think that is a pretty good formula for what outcomes reporting should be really focusing on.²⁶

Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, Roundtable Discussion, Cairns, 07 July 2003:

...In terms of achievements, I stress that we continually find new blockages and things that need to be done. It is constant. Often when we discover that, the barriers are so obvious. We saw that it was important to build the capacity of the Aboriginal

24 Mr Mike Fordham, General Manager, Torres Strait Regional Authority, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1461.

25 Ms Olga Havnen, Manager, Indigenous Programs, Fred Hollows Foundation, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1479.

26 Ms Laura Beacroft, Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations, Transcript (13.02.04), p. 1467.

organisations to deliver the services, to manage the corporate and philanthropic engagement and to set the priorities. To do that, the level of expertise in those organisations needed to be cranked up. For the corporate, philanthropic and business sectors to truly engage with the communities there needed to be an infrastructure platform within the communities and the remote regions in which they could participate. Those infrastructures needed to be under Aboriginal control. Those were critical issues. They needed to be under Aboriginal control so that Aboriginal people would take the credit for success in the programs and take responsibility for any failures in the programs or in the business development agenda. Working with Balkanu, a team came from Harvard which was overseen by the Boston Consulting Group. That team looked at a business facilitation model that included the creation of a series of business hubs in the community that would interface with the community. That is now established and it is a great achievement.²⁷

Mr Tony Lotton, Economic Development and Training Coordinator, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and Bungyarnda Community Development Employment Projects Co-op Ltd., Melbourne, 19 February 2003:

...We need to utilise advice, assistance and training from mainstream professionals in a mentoring capacity. I have found that the transfer of skills under a mentoring arrangement achieves better outcomes in the long run.²⁸

Mr Richard Trudgen, Business Manager, Public Officer, Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc., Darwin, 27 November 2002:

... [Y]ou start to find the teachers who are good at language and you value add to those again...We know that we can save the Territory government and the Commonwealth millions of dollars. We could probably drop the renal rates in Arnhem Land 20 per cent by just teaching people how to drink water and then going on to explain what renal failure is about. We know that we can get

27 Mr Michael Winer, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, Transcript (07.07.03), pp. 747-748.

28 Mr Tony Lotton, Economic Development and Training Coordinator, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and Bungyarnda Community Development Employment Projects Co-op Ltd, Transcript (19.02.03), p. 480.

massive changes because we have seen that face to face over the last 10 years.²⁹

Professor Stephen Cornell, Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, Canberra, 3 November 2003:

...[T]he closest thing to the issue that I can say is that past policy has often encouraged competition within groups among family units... the view that what tribal government is about is divvying up the goodies—who gets the jobs, who gets the money, who gets the welfare services, who gets this and who gets that... That has encouraged family units to see other family units as competition for scarce resources...

What happens when a tribal unit begins to rethink what government is about—to shift in thinking about government as the distributor of goodies to the vehicle by which the nation starts to reshape its future—is that it changes its thinking from an emphasis on distributive economics to an emphasis on productive economics. It gets people within the community to see the government less as the source of all the things that they need and more as the vehicle by which all of them can work together to produce more of what they all need. When we see that happen, we tend to see some of these family units that can no longer remember why they do not like each other begin to work together and begin to see themselves as participants in a larger enterprise.³⁰

The long view

Reverend William Edwards (private capacity), Adelaide, 23 September 2003:

At that time, Commonwealth finance was unavailable for Aboriginal work. The Presbyterian Board of Missions provided staff salaries—which were fairly low—and occasional extra funding for development work, such as fencing, well sinking et cetera. They also provided a budget in 1958 of \$9,600 for general running expenses. The South Australian government provided some rations for children, nursing mothers and aged persons.

29 Mr Richard Trudgen, Business Manager, Public Officer, Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc, Transcript (27.11.02), pp. 247-248.

30 Professor Stephen Cornell, Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, Transcript (03.11.03), p. 1374.

Child endowment was paid to the mission as a lump sum and used to provide meals for school and younger children.

The craft room brought in some income. In following years, men were employed in gardening, fencing, shearing, boring, brick making, building and other employment. Younger men were often employed as stockmen on nearby stations. Men without such employment were encouraged to hunt. Older couples were employed as shepherds. Women were employed as school and clinic assistants and in staff houses and in the craft room. During these years Ernabella was a place of relative peace and purpose. All children attended school regularly and the clinic provided good or adequate medical services. There were few social problems.³¹

Conclusion

I am not by nature an optimist. On the issue of the Indigenous people of Australia however I have gained strength through the despair from the capacity and humour of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Added to by the commitment of many knowledgeable people who have made it clear it is possible to make progress.

The opportunities exist for significant improvement. There is goodwill from Australians to the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and clearly the Parliament and the nation will take great pride in seeing all Australians enjoying an improved quality of life regardless of their background!

Barry Wakelin MP
Chair

31 Reverend William Edwards, (private capacity), Transcript (23.09.03), p. 1225.



Membership of the Committee

Chair Mr Barry Wakelin MP

Deputy Chair Ms Kelly Hoare MP

Members Mr John Cobb MP (from 06/02/03)
Mr Michael Danby MP (to 20/03/03)
Mrs Trish Draper MP
Ms Julia Gillard MP (from 20/03/03 to
18/08/03)
Mr Barry Haase MP
Mrs Kay Hull MP (to 06/02/03)

The Hon. Dr Carmen Lawrence MP
Mr Jim Lloyd MP
Mr Daryl Melham MP (from 18/08/03)
The Hon. Mr Warren Snowdon MP
Mr David Tollner MP

Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Ms Catherine Cornish Mr Paul McMahon (from 07/02 to 01/03)
Inquiry Secretary	Mr Mark McRae (from 13/02/04) Dr Jacqueline Dewar (from 16/09/02 to 13/02/04) Mr James Catchpole (to 02/09/02)
Research Officers	Ms Teena Crocker (from 02/10/03) Ms Zoe Smith (from 28/10/02 to 26/09/03)
Administrative Officers	Ms Sulie Tay (from 03/06/03) Ms Carly Rogers (to 06/06/03)



Terms of reference

Inquiry into Capacity Building in Indigenous Communities

The Committee will inquire into and report on strategies to assist Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders better manage the delivery of services within their communities. In particular, the Committee will consider building the capacities of:

- a) community members to better support families, community organisations and representative councils so as to deliver the best outcomes for individuals, families and communities;
- b) Indigenous organisations to better deliver and influence the delivery of services in the most effective, efficient and accountable way; and
- c) government agencies so that policy direction and management structures will improve individual and community outcomes for Indigenous people.



List of abbreviations

AACAP	ATSIC-Army Community Assistance Program
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ACCHS	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services
ACRA	Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AES	Aboriginal Employment Strategy
AHMRC	Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AILC	Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
AMSANT	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
ANU	Australian National University
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investment Commission
ATSIA	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ATSIS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
BCG	Boston Consulting Group

CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CARHDS	Central Australian Remote Health Development Services
CAT	Centre for Appropriate Technology Inc.
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGC	Commonwealth Grants Commission
CHINS	Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
CHIP	Community Housing and Infrastructure Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPS	CDEP Participant Supplement
Cth	Commonwealth
CWP	Community Working Parties
CYP	Cape York Partnerships
CYSU	Cape York Strategy Unit
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
FaCS	Department of Family and Community Services
FAG	Financial Assistance Grant
FHF	Fred Hollows Foundation
FIM	Family Income Management
GIS	Geographic Information System
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HRSCAA	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs
IAD	Institute for Aboriginal Development
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia

ICCT	Indigenous Communities Coordination Taskforce
ICV	Indigenous Community Volunteers
IEC	Indigenous Employment Centre
IEP	Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships
IHANT	Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory
ISBF	Indigenous Small Business Fund
KWCCT	Katherine West Coordinated Care Trial
KWHB	Katherine West Health Board
LGANT	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
MBS	Medical Benefits Scheme
MCATSIA	Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACCHO	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
NAHS	National Aboriginal Health Strategy
NATSIHC	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council
NEIS	New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NICP	National Indigenous Cadetship Programme
NPY	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTU	Northern Territory University
OATSIA	Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
ORAC	Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations

PADV	Partnerships Against Domestic Violence
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
QLD	Queensland
RASC	Remote Area Service Centre
RTC	Rural Transaction Centres
SA	South Australia
SCRCSSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
SCRGSP	Steering Committee of the Review of Government Service Provision
SPP	Specific Purpose Payment
STEP	Structured Training and Employment Projects
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAS	Tasmania
TCU	Traditional Credit Union
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
VACCHO	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
VAEA	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia



List of recommendations

2 Setting the context

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that:

- (a) the Commonwealth Government, in consultation with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, take a lead role in the establishment of an agreement with State and Territory governments on the collection of uniform data in relation to Indigenous Australians; and
- (b) the process be given the highest priority.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs a permanent agenda item at future COAG meetings.

3 Building the capacity of government agencies

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government report to Parliament on an annual basis on the progress of the COAG Trial of the whole of government approach to service delivery in Indigenous communities and regions, and that procedures be implemented to ensure that the report presented in the House of Representatives stands referred to this Committee for its consideration and report.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that:

- (a) the Commonwealth Government present a national report to Parliament on Indigenous disadvantage, outlining progress against the Priority Outcomes, Headline Indicators and the Strategic Areas for Action established by the SCRGSP *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report, on an annual basis;
- (b) that a comprehensive report on these outcomes be presented every five years in accordance with the availability of census data; and
- (c) procedures be implemented to ensure that the reports presented to the House of Representatives stand referred to this Committee.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government investigate the utilisation of community development courses as an induction for agency staff and others working with Indigenous communities, especially in remote areas, with the purpose of ensuring agency staff have an understanding of Indigenous communities' history and culture, and relevant policy issues and development practices.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government, through COAG, convene a roundtable between Commonwealth, State and Territory government representatives, together with members of local government and Indigenous representatives, to clarify program and service delivery roles, responsibilities and issues of cost shifting.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, in relation to the provision of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the Commonwealth Government ensure a whole of government approach, together with the States and Territories and local government, in consultation with Indigenous Australians, including:

- (a) a shift in emphasis in service provision to a regional or location specific basis (in full consultation with the Indigenous communities involved);
- (b) the co-location of relevant Commonwealth Government and other agency staff;

- (c) enhancing communication and developing partnerships both with Indigenous communities and families, and between governments;
- (d) the incorporation of capacity building into the design and implementation of programs delivering services to Indigenous communities, including funds to enable mentoring of community members and organisations;
- (e) the further development of program benchmarks in terms relevant to Indigenous people, and the adoption of regular public reporting regimes on those benchmarks, including reporting to the relevant Indigenous communities;
- (f) the creation of frameworks for service delivery that are familiar and acceptable to Indigenous people;
- (g) the enhancement of the skills and capacity of agency staff (including cross-cultural and language training, and the placement of high level staff and policy makers 'on the ground' in Indigenous communities) and the placement of appropriately skilled field officers 'on the ground', and reducing the turnover rate of such staff;
- (h) a commitment to the creation of Indigenous specific positions in agency structures; and

that it report on progress to the Commonwealth Parliament on a regular basis (possibly in conjunction with the proposed report on Indigenous disadvantage) and procedures be implemented to ensure that the report presented to the House of Representatives stands referred to this Committee for its consideration.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that, as part of a better coordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of services to Indigenous communities, the Commonwealth Government investigate the development of pooled funding models whereby grants and entitlements that are formula funded can be combined into a single budget with a single reporting regime.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends, in relation to contracts to provide services to Indigenous communities, the Commonwealth Government ensure that:

- (a) appropriate consideration be given to the utilisation of providers from within the community (and should such a course eventuate, the fact be noted in the public reporting process); and
- (b) in seeking tenders to deliver services:
 - (i) the provision of capacity building to local people is a component of the tender; and
 - (ii) local knowledge is a condition of the awarding of the tender.

4 Building the capacity of Indigenous organisations

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government continue to support research into governance in Indigenous communities with a view to developing a body of knowledge that can be utilised to assist in the development of effective institutional governance in Indigenous communities.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government:

- (a) investigate building a governance training and mentoring component into the provision of funding to Indigenous community organisations, and that the programs funded this way be monitored against agreed benchmarks and targeted outcomes; and
- (b) continue to invest in and further develop appropriate training and mentoring programs in partnership with Indigenous people and, in particular, increase funding support for the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre and other similar programs.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that, in relation to Indigenous communities and organisations employing staff from outside their communities in service delivery roles, the Commonwealth Government initiate action to establish a central register to accredit people available to work for Indigenous communities and organisations in order to provide those communities and organisations with confidence in the selection of reputable staff. In particular, the register should:

- (a) be compiled in collaboration with representatives from Indigenous communities and relevant State and Territory bodies responsible for the funding of Indigenous communities; and

(b) be maintained centrally, either through an agency such as the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, or a central employment agency.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government:

(a) promote and further develop initiatives such as Indigenous Community Volunteers to enhance mentoring and skills development in Indigenous communities and organisations; and

(b) take a leadership role in encouraging partnerships and joint ventures between the private/corporate sector and Indigenous communities, organisations and individuals.

5 Building the capacity of individuals, families and communities

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government's Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) produce a report to Parliament on the impacts of PADV initiatives funded to address Indigenous family violence and that procedures be implemented to ensure that the report presented to the House of Representatives stands referred to this Committee.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the issue of strategies to address alcohol and substance misuse in Indigenous communities be referred to this Committee for inquiry and report.

