

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

INQUIRY INTO THE NEEDS OF URBAN DWELLING ABORIGINAL &
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

ATSIC Northern Territory - North Zone

A. Introduction

It is commendable that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is holding an inquiry into the needs of country and metropolitan urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However the extremely short timeframe for submissions is culturally insensitive of the need for ATSIC Regional Councils to consult with their constituents.

This submission focuses on the ATSIC Northern Territory North Zone. Each of the Committees Terms of Reference is considered. The statistical information quoted in the submission is either sourced from the 1996 Census or the 1999 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS), unless otherwise stated.

B. Demographics

The estimated resident population of the Northern Territory at 31 December 1998 was 191,321 which is a 19.2% increase over the last 10 years. During 1998 the Territory's population increased by 1.6% (2,988). This was the 3rd highest growth nationally, with only Western Australia and Queensland recording higher growth rates.

At 30 June 1998 the indigenous population was 53,687 under the low series projection and 54,416 under the high series projection. This comprises about 28% of the Northern Territory's population compared with 2% nationally.

According to ATSIC Regional Information System which comprises data on Indigenous people from ABS and other Commonwealth and State government sources the following population breakdown for the Zone is:

Darwin	8,895
Jabiru	7,225
Nhulunbuy	7,000
Katherine	6,773

Total 29,893

In the Darwin figure a greater proportion of Indigenous people come from the Litchfield area followed by the Northern Suburbs, Inner Suburbs and Palmerston, respectively.

In the Jabiru area the majority of the population comes from Maningrida (including outstations), Wadeye and Nguuiu. These are followed by Oenpelli, Milikapiti, Jabiru and then fairly evenly spread amongst the remaining major communities.

The most populated community in the Nhulunbuy area is Galiwinku (including outstations), then Milingimbi, Angurugu, Laynhapuy homelands, Numbulwar and the rest of the major communities are fairly similar in size.

Katherine township has a large number of Indigenous people followed by Ngukurr, Borroloola (and surrounds), Lajamanu, and Victoria River. The remaining communities are about the same size.

C. Geographic Area

The landmass of the Northern Territory is some 1,346,200 square kilometres or one sixth of Australia. Of this, the ATSIC NT North Zone totals some 550,000 square kilometres extending from below Hooker Creek and Borroloola in the south to Bathurst and Melville Islands in the north and from the NT/WA border in the west to Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt in the east.

The Zone comprises many different language and clan groups with a mix of people living in remote rural and urban locations and includes Darwin/Palmerston and the following regional centres:

Jabiru
Nhulunbuy
Alyangula
Katherine
Borroloola

The Indigenous population of the NT is generally considered to be understated significantly in official ABS statistics due to difficulties in conducting censuses in remote locations, particularly where there are many isolated homelands and a very mobile population. As an example, the ABS figure for North East Arnhemland is in the order of 7,000 Aboriginal people whereas anecdotal evidence from the health service of community counts have the population in excess of 10,500. The presumed inaccuracy of the official census raises funding issues due to government funding being allocated on a population basis.

Furthermore, the ability to use available data for comparisons across regions and across State boundaries is severely limited due to both the reliability of the data and the fact that some states do not collect similar

data. This is particularly relevant in health statistics as only the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia have comparable long term records. The importance of reliable data for planning, priority setting and allocating funds cannot be underestimated, yet limited effort by all jurisdictions has been directed at addressing this issue.

1. The nature of existing programs and services available to urban dwelling indigenous Australians, including ways to more effectively deliver services considering the special needs of these people.

1.1. Indigenous Housing

Housing shortages and poor quality of housing remain significant issues within the NT North Zone. The total assessed housing need is \$182.6 million with an allocation to the NT of \$84.5million. The housing needs of the Indigenous citizens in the NT represent some 34% of the total national need (source NT Government). Detailed housing statistics for the NT are available in the ATSIIC publication, *Indigenous Housing 1996 Census Analysis Northern Territory*, May 2000.

The average household size in the NT is significantly higher than the rest of the country. For example: - Gapuwiyak outstations average 11 per dwelling, Minyeri and Yugal Mangi and Umbakumba average 11, Maningrida, Ngukurr, Galiwinku, Wadeye, Gapuwiyak, Marngarr average 10. Miwatj as a whole averages 8.3. The average national Indigenous figure is 3.7.

In addition, the cost of housing in the NT is substantially higher than other regions in Australia. An analysis of building costs across Australia, using an average regional cost factor for housing, has demonstrated that if Sydney has a factor of 100, Darwin is 122, Miwatj is 180, Jabiru is 185, Katherine is 165. These numbers are theory based on national construction indexes and are based on the larger towns only at this stage. Cost at community level will be higher again (work in progress ATSIIC Canberra August 2000).

Whilst current programs are producing outcomes they are at such a pace that they are barely keeping up with replacement needs without addressing the overall shortage. Stress caused to housing from overcrowding and the poor quality of many community houses is adding to demand at a rate greater than supply. In many parts of the Zone, particularly on remote communities, there is no opportunity for people to purchase homes due to the special nature of community tenure.

In the NT distance and climatic conditions exacerbate the high cost of infrastructure development and maintenance. A co-operative arrangement exists within the Territory between ATSIIC and NTG – however this does not overcome the need for a significant increase in funding to support adequate infrastructure.

In the Northern Territory there is a diversity of needs between regions and between groups.

The Territory was the first to enter into a bi-lateral agreement with the Commonwealth for the provision and management of housing and related infrastructure for Indigenous Territorians.

This establishes a partnership framework between the Northern Territory Government (NTG), Commonwealth Government and ATSIC. It provides for the pooling of funds for the construction of new dwellings, renovations and upgrades, repairs and maintenance and related infrastructure. It also provides related support, information, planning and program management as well as financial accountability and evaluation.

The agreement created the Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory (IHANT). IHANT membership includes the seven ATSIC Regional Council Chairpersons (or nominee), 2 ATSIC Commissioners, a representative from Department of Family and Community Services, and not more than 7 NTG representatives.

The role of the ATSIC Elected Arm is to provide approval for the IHANT strategic plan and funds for Aboriginal housing assistance and related infrastructure. They also determine priorities within regional allocations; prepare a 3 year rolling plan; review programs with the Program Manager (Territory Housing); and, promote coordination with ATSIC linked program.

The range and level of services provided by other agencies greatly affects ATSIC services. The lack of mainstream services within communities (eg. Facilities for the disabled) places an additional burden on ATSIC funded services and infrastructure.

The lack of adequate funding by other agencies for the provision of services may at times compromise ATSIC services as it places an unnecessary burden on already limited resources. In remote communities, there is a reliance on ATSIC programs by other funding agencies to compensate for their inability to provide an appropriate level of service.

Additional housing must be provided and the impact of rents considered.

Darwin has one of only 2 Indigenous housing association while there are 135 numerous discrete community housing associations in the Northern Territory representing 33% of these Australia wide.

The Yilli Rreung Regional Council has identified housing as a high priority. Darwin is the major urban centre in the Northern Territory and as such attracts both a transient and permanent population from outside of the region. This population movement to Darwin produces a situation of

overcrowding in the Urban Living Areas and shortages of welfare housing stock within the suburbs.

As a consequence the Regional Council has established the Indigenous Housing Association (IHA). The aim of IHA is to be the main housing provider for Indigenous people in the Darwin area. The organisation commenced in March 2000 and replaces the Aboriginal Housing Advisory Service. IHA will eventually encompass rental accommodation and home ownership.

The main focus of the organisation at present is to assist new Indigenous public housing tenants with their tenancies. IHA is connected with the Corporate CDEP and there is the potential for "spin off" businesses in repairs and ground maintenance. Apprenticeship opportunities have been built into the process.

The reality is that around 320 new houses are needed in the Territory every year to meet population growth and an outstanding need of 2,958 dwellings. The need for public or community housing organisations based on 1996 tenure data is 240 houses.

Aboriginal Hostels Limited 1999-2000 Annual Report indicates that there are 8 hostels run by AHL in Northern Australia with 353 beds and an occupancy rate of 64%. A further 6 are operated by organisations under the Community Hostel Grants Program. These provide 142 beds with an occupancy rate of 68%. Accommodation is offered in the following categories:

- ◆ Transient
- ◆ Medical Transient
- ◆ Homeless
- ◆ Substance Misuse Rehabilitation
- ◆ Prison Release and Diversion
- ◆ Tertiary Education and Training
- ◆ Secondary Education
- ◆ Primary Education
- ◆ Aged Care

Though only a few hostels are specifically designated for homeless people, many homeless people, including young people, use transient hostels.

1.2. Health

There is considerable evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to bear a much greater burden of poor health than do other Australians. The health disadvantage of Indigenous people begins early in life and continues throughout their life cycle.

Health servicing by mainstream service providers has not resulted in significant improvement in health outcomes and specialist services such as Miwatj Health (NE Arnhemland) and Danila Dilba Medical Services (Darwin area) have been established to assist in addressing the health needs of Indigenous people in a culturally appropriate context.

Within mainstream health providers, there is generally a lack of cultural understanding, inadequate funding levels to provide the range of medical services required, and an apparent reluctance to provide services to remote areas. Mainstream health providers also have difficulty in being able to attract or keep medical practitioners and health staff (particularly Indigenous health workers) in remote locations.

1.3. Education

Indigenous people generally have a lower rate of participation in the education system. In 1996, among children aged 16 years, the age at which involvement in post-compulsory secondary school education is most common, only 57% of Indigenous children in Australia were students compared to 84% of all 16 year olds in the total population. The proportion of Indigenous people in the 18-24 age group attending post-secondary was also lower.

There have been several significant reviews undertaken recently examining Indigenous education issues in the NT. The reviews, particularly the Collins Report: LEARNING LESSONS, An Independent Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory, have highlighted a number of concerns including:

- ◆ An overall decline in school attendance;
- ◆ Poor retention rates;
- ◆ Children having lower literacy and numeracy skills when compared to their parents and non-Indigenous students, and
- ◆ In addition to low literacy and numeracy levels, school attendance figures are poor across the Zone and the Northern Territory has the lowest educational outcomes in primary and secondary education in comparison with all the other states and the ACT.

The need for context in education and education tailored to the specialist needs of Indigenous people is an area requiring specialist investigation and some challenge methodology. Mainstream education does not appear to be providing for the specialist needs of Aboriginal people in many areas, both remote and urban. Education is based on the wider community theories of education leading to paid employment and careers. Like the health system, it is apparent that “mainstream” examples and systems are failing Indigenous people thus setting the challenge to comprehensively review underlying factors and modern needs rather than continuing to try and make a poor system fit the people or the people fit a poor system.

In June 2000 the NT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (Indigenous Advisory Council) on Education was disbanded and there does not appear to be any attempt to re-establish any formal body or mechanism to advise the Minister and the NT Department of Education on educational matters affecting Indigenous Territorians.

The reconvening of the Indigenous Advisory Council would see that the Minister was aware of the impacts and outcomes for Indigenous students.

In the remote areas of this Zone, most Indigenous students do not have access to secondary education within their home community. Secondary schools exist in Darwin, and Katherine, and the mining towns of Jabiru, Nhulunbuy and Alyangula. Many Indigenous students travel to Queensland, Darwin or other states to access secondary education. Indigenous leaders and parents have continuously demanded that secondary education be made available in their local community.

In June 2000 the NT Department of Education abolished the Bi-Lingual program which operated in some 12 remote schools in the NT. The Bi-Lingual program was established to assist Indigenous students that were non-English speakers to learn in their own language initially and progress to learning in English in the primary years. Many Indigenous parents and families perceived this action as an attack on their culture and language and are still pressuring the NT Department of Education to re-instate the program.

While education is not a functional program area of ATSIC, educational outcomes are a vital issue to the future of Indigenous Australians and ATSIC has a responsibility to act as an advocate on behalf of Indigenous people. The reviews have identified that a major effort needs to be made at the local level to involve school communities in making education work for them.

The Northern Territory Minister for Education has recently announced in Parliament that his government has committed itself to implementing 150 of 151 recommendations of the Collins Report. The NT Government is currently preparing an Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, which is expected to be signed off shortly by the Commonwealth and NT Education Ministers.

1.4. Employment

The unemployment rate at the time of the 1996 Census was higher for Indigenous people between 15 and 64 years (23%) than for all people in that age group (9%).

In January 2000 the NT unemployment rate was 4.5% with the Indigenous rate being 17.8 per cent. This increases to between 80% and 90% in regional centres and the remote communities outside of Darwin. If CDEP

participants are included as unemployed, the Indigenous rate for the whole NT is closer to 53% (source ATSIIC Canberra).

Employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the NT are severely limited as a high percentage of the Indigenous population reside in areas with little or no employment and limited economic opportunity. The Job Network is not ideally situated to redress this issue as the limited job opportunities does not lend itself to the active involvement of the Network in addition to the fact that there are substantial gaps in the coverage of the Network in the NT.

While the CDEP scheme masks the real level of Indigenous unemployment, it is a substantial program injecting some \$69 million into the North Zone economy, providing work opportunities for over 5,000 participants.

The CDEP scheme is well detailed in the 1998 "Spicer Review" which advises on the demand for the scheme, its benefits and options for maximising employment outcomes.

CDEPs in the NT have been provided to communities mainly on the basis of historic allocations and through demand for new CDEPs in locations such as Darwin and Coburg. As CDEP is a Regional Council program, the method of allocating participant places varies from region to region, as does the method of allocating on-costs. In the Darwin region, the Yilli Rreung Regional Council allocates on-costs on the basis of the national formula allocation. In other areas, allocation is by submission and relative need as assessed by the relevant Regional Council.

CDEP statistics for the Zone:

Regional Council-	Participant Ceiling	Allocation
Yilli Rreung		
Darwin Regional	106	1.38
Bagot	79	1.03
	185	2.41
Jabiru-		
Bawinanga	512	6.67
Deewin Kurim	77	1.00
Demed	73	2.25
Djabulukgu	122	1.59
Kardu Numida	144	1.87
Kunbarllanjnja	100	1.30
Milikapiti	137	1.78
Naiyu Nambiyu	142	1.85
Nguiu	248	3.23

Pine Creek	39	0.51	
Pirlangimpi	97	1.26	
Adjustments		0.15	
	1,691		23.46
Miwatj-			
Galiwinku	151	1.89	
Gapuwiyak	68	0.85	
Gumatj	118	1.49	
Laynhapuy	360	4.56	
Marthakal	272	3.43	
Millingimbi	185	2.04	
Milyakburra	49	0.16	
Ngadunggay	84	1.04	
Numbulwar	50	0.62	
Ramingining	204	1.54	
Umbakumba	127	1.61	
Yirrkala	110	1.39	
	1,778		20.62
Garrak-Jarru-			
Alawa	94	1.20	
Darguragu	153	1.96	
Gulin Gulin/Weemol	86	1.08	
Jilkmिंगgan	74	0.96	
Kalano	153	1.96	
Mabunji	200	2.49	
Manyallaluk	54	0.69	
Mungoorbada	92	1.18	
Ngaliwurru-Wuli	270	3.45	
Rrumburriya Malandari	75	0.96	
Walangari Ngumpinku	130	1.66	
Wugularr	186	1.94	
Yugal Mangi	275	3.52	
	1,842		23.05
Total	5,496		\$69.54m

CDEP on remote communities continues to focus on “mainstream” employment with the concept being that CDEP employment can/will lead to permanent “employment” over time. Like education and health this is a broader community paradigm being applied to a different cultural regime.

The fact is that on most remote communities there are limited mainstream employment opportunities and people do not have a desire to move from their home, culture and families to distant unfriendly locations even if employment opportunities were available (which they are not).

ATSIC NT considers that Commonwealth, State and Territory government agencies have benefited financially though the progressive withdrawal of positions and services in locations where CDEPs exists – this includes health and education staff, maintenance crews and the provision of municipal services etc. This process undermines the possible outcomes that can be achieved by effectively managed CDEPs and implies that the other levels of government are not meeting their responsibilities.

NAHS has provided some employment and training opportunities for community building teams. However these have usually been linked to CDEPs. The Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board pushes the pathway of VET from school to work in the absence of the range of high school subjects. The Board has a large employment and training program connected to the many enterprises on the islands and an integral part of a wider enterprise development strategy.

1.5. Itinerants

Indigenous community organisations have been concerned for many years over issues related to Indigenous itinerants throughout the NT.

In the Darwin and Palmerston region, there are a number of people, many of them Indigenous, from remote communities living “an itinerant lifestyle”. There are concerns about alcohol use, the health and well being and social behaviour of itinerants. Also of concern is the effect of this group’s behaviour on themselves and the lives of their relatives and acquaintances that reside in Darwin.

Indigenous community organisations acknowledge the involvement and concerns of government and non government agencies and welcomes the involvement of a range of stakeholders to address these concerns.

Northern Territory Government agencies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in conjunction with community based Indigenous organisations have engaged a consultant to conduct a study of the issues facing Indigenous itinerants and service providers in the Darwin region. The consultant will work in close association with the Larrakia Nation to visit, inform, educate and consult with selected communities regarding the project.

2. Ways to extend the involvement of urban Indigenous people in decision making affecting their local communities, including partnership governance arrangements.

ATSIC, the NTG and other Commonwealth agencies are working together and are exploring new approaches through bilateral agreements, MOUs and other collaborative arrangements to target outcomes and minimise duplication and overlap of service delivery.

Other avenues are also being explored including the reform of local government, models of regional autonomy and regional agreement making. It is the view of many that people in communities who are affected by programs and services delivered by governments should be more directive of the nature and type of services being delivered. Regional autonomy has the potential to be a “people” driven development providing the opportunity for priorities to be determined and implemented in a more collaborative manner. In the NT Northern Zone the Miwatj Regional Council, Jawoyn Association, Tiwi Council and Wadeye people are all involved in significant developments towards regional autonomy.

Grants to the Northern Territory Government by the Commonwealth Grants Commission have not kept pace with the increase in Commonwealth revenue. As costs are already high and increasing, the impact of this is evident in a number of areas where Indigenous programs to remote communities have been cut back significantly in the past decade. This has led to a greater burden being put back on service users in a “user pays” environment to meet costs. Shortfalls through either inability of municipal bodies to gather income, or inability of users to pay, is met through reduced service provision.

Of particular concern is the Community Service Obligation funding to the NT Power and Water Authority. The Authority has picked up ongoing responsibility for 16 sewerage systems provided under NAHS without extra funds and this impacts on the ability of the NTG to provide essential services to homelands. Recent examples of this are the Wurankuwu and Acacia Larrakia NAHS sewerage projects.

While the partnerships mentioned above have gone some way to identifying available resources, the untied funding for local government can be applied very broadly and as with other NTG departments, the Indigenous funding portion is unable to be readily identified.

ATSIC supports an approach where the needs assessment process of the Commonwealth Grants Commission should be further adjusted to reflect the disability factors faced by Indigenous Territorians. Distortions caused by a small population size should not contribute to a net loss of funds.

ATSIC NT has a strong view that Commonwealth funding for Indigenous Territorians should be channelled through ATSIC so it can be properly monitored to see that the desired outcomes are achieved. The recent criticism by the Northern Territory Auditor General concerning transparency and the absence of Freedom of Information legislation reinforces this point.

Greater involvement of Indigenous people in the ATSIC election process, regional authorities, IHANT, Indigenous housing associations and Local Government Reform would provide greater opportunities for improved governance arrangements for urban dwellers.

Aboriginal people are under represented as both elected members and employees of municipal councils throughout the Northern Territory. These councils may be useful targets to increased participation for Indigenous Territorians through partnership arrangements with ATSIC Regional Councils. Aboriginal advisory committees, as is the case with 60% of councils in Victoria, would be a good vehicle for this to happen.

Similarly, Indigenous Territorians are well positioned to enter partnerships with mining companies in resource development and resource management considering Aboriginal people own 42% of the Territory's land and 84% of its coastline under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. Much of the land and coastline is rich in natural resources.

The Northern Territory *Foundations For Our Future* Foundation Area 4 – 'Foster Partnerships In Aboriginal Development' states that Aboriginal Territorians will have the opportunity to:

- ❖ Achieve greater individual ownership of issues affecting their lives.
- ❖ Experience an increase in employment and enterprise.
- ❖ See more development of their natural resources.
- ❖ Enjoy improved health and education outcomes.

Foundation Area 6 – 'Encourage Strong Northern Territory Regions And Communities' states the Territory will:

- ❖ Encourage regional optimism with a focus on the needs and aspirations of our regions and communities.
- ❖ Retain and build the critical mass of Territory regional centres.
- ❖ Support local enterprise in social and economic development initiatives.

The monitoring of outcomes in these particular Foundation Areas on an on-going basis by the House of Representative Standing Committee would ensure that the Northern Territory Government continues to focus on achievements in step with Indigenous people.

3. The situation and needs of Indigenous young people in urban areas, especially relating to health, education, employment, and homelessness from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

3.1. Homelessness

In Australia over 68% of Indigenous people are under 30 years. Direct and indirect factors of homelessness include:

- Poverty
- Health
- Housing
- Social dislocation
- Domestic violence
- Cultural and social values

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disadvantaged relative to other Australians with respect to a number of social and economic factors, such as education, income, employment and housing. This places them at greater risk of poverty, violence, ill health and reduced wellbeing. These cover many of the routes to homelessness.

The available evidence suggests that the incidence of homelessness is increasing in Australia with between 35% and 50% of homeless people failing to access SAAP services.

When considering the relative young age of Indigenous people and the increase in homelessness it is reasonable to conclude that a fair amount of these must be youth and they must be equally affected in the Territory.

Urban Regional Councils such as Yilli Rreung would argue that current funding mechanisms often undermine the needs of its region. There is an assumption that urban areas have less need because it is perceived that they have access to mainstream services and also due to the statistical indicators of need are more difficult to collect in urban areas. The Council would also probably note that 'urban drift' is an example of how people who are counted for funding in other regions impacts on its own funding and services.

3.2. Indigenous child welfare or Juvenile Justice

There is a need for a complete overhaul of the juvenile justice system in the Northern Territory. The expansion of diversionary programs and other community based programs is a good starting point.

The Territory does not really have a juvenile justice system. There are no separate Juvenile Courts that are closed to the public. There is no Juvenile Justice Department or Office in Government. There are no specialist juvenile correctional services officers or juvenile magistrates. Community consultation on the subject is found wanting.

ATSIC NT supports a joint inquiry into the juvenile justice system in the

Territory so the government has some input into what structures need to be put into place and where funds need to go.

The leverage of the Commonwealth funding the inquiry subject to the NT repealing its mandatory sentencing legislation may work.

ATSIC is undertaking a project identifying good practice models concerning Indigenous child welfare and juvenile justice. A shortlist of projects will be put to the MCATSIA Reference Group and selection decided.

Projects are chosen selected on the following criteria:

- Conformity to one or more of the eight National Standards identified as Recommendations 44-53b of the *Bringing Them Home Report* (Appendix attached).
- The principle of Indigenous self-determination identified in Recommendations 43a-c.
- The model is widely accepted as the best available and not merely sound practice.

The outcome of this project may give some guidance to the Committee.

4. The maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in urban areas, including, where appropriate, ways in which such maintenance can be encouraged.

The zone comprises both urban and rural/remote people and communities with people living a variety of lifestyles with a common factor being the desire to maintain culture.

English is a second or third language for the majority of the Aboriginal population of the Zone and in some communities and out-stations is not spoken at all. Traditional ceremonies and responsibilities are a significant factor in maintaining culture - requiring time, resources and recognition. Indigenous lifestyles in the NT range between semi-traditional and contemporary.

ATSIC's Broadcasting and Language Program plays a vital role in the maintenance of Indigenous culture for urban dwellers in the Northern Territory. Funding to Imparja Television (outside of Darwin) and Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (Darwin) provides media coverage with specific Indigenous programming to most of the provincial areas in the Territory. The support of BRACS schemes and Language Centres in the major towns enhance the preservation of culture.

5. Opportunities for economic independence in urban areas.

The Northern Territory has 3 existing business incubators at Palmerston, Winnellie and Tennant Creek. Proposals are under consideration for the other main regional centres. The Tennant Creek incubator is one 'without walls', an Australian first and provides a mobile service to the more remote communities of the Barkly Tablelands and Borroloola. This incubator has formed a strategic alliance with the local Indigenous community.

Large major infrastructure projects such as the Australasia Railways provide specific employment and enterprise opportunities for Indigenous Territorians. Special provisions in contracts support local employment and accredited training. This should particularly benefit Aboriginal communities along the route, for example in providing skilled and semi-

skilled labour in sleeper factories, construction camp work and getting heavy rigid vehicle licences.

Large Horticulture and aquaculture projects of high yield supplying early markets offer potential. The establishment of these types of projects are suited to a 'whole of government' response to attract private sector investment. To work, some of these projects may need to be deemed in the national interest and be a practical step in the reconciliation process.

The tourism industry has not been the panacea for Indigenous economic development as originally thought. There may be a number of reasons for this including cultural and life style considerations. From a training perspective an examination of the Crocodile Hotel program at Jabiru may identify key success factors.

Similarly, the mining industry unless where specifically targeted has not created many direct outcomes. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commercial Development Corporation investments and the Central Land Council's ability to get concessions out of mining development in the Tanami are examples of this. Generally, casual indirect employment suits large scale Indigenous employment and the associated service industry has appeal to enterprise growth.

Regional Transaction Centres may also provide some limited opportunities for economic development and the provision of government services to remote parts of regional Australia.

The Northern Territory Area Consultative Committee (NTACC) is encouraging innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to both urban and non-urban Indigenous employment through the Regional Assistance Program. This includes an employment and enterprise scoping project on a number of Aboriginal communities.

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Economic Development Model has a strategic approach to project development integrating an advisory role to the Minister for Aboriginal Development supported at officer level (Commonwealth/NTG/Central & Northern Land Councils/NTACC) and facilitated by the Office of Aboriginal Development (OAD). Inputs come from research and industry groups and business proposals are progressed by a group of public sector funding agencies including ATSIC's Business Agent. The model is the basis of an MOU between OAD, Department of Industries and Development and a collaborative arrangement with ATSIC.

6. Urban housing needs and the particular problems and difficulties associated with urban areas.

The following data relates to Indigenous people of the Northern Territory.

There are 42% of families living in urban centres of 1000+ people. Group households show a strong bias towards urban centres with 78% of them in urban centres and 22% spread across rural and remote areas.

Of single people, 45% live in urban centres and 55% in other areas. These different proportions in some degree reflect the availability of dwellings for those living arrangements with greater choice in urban areas.

Of the 25% who are either buying or already own their own home and most of these are in urban centres. There is a 14% reliance on community rental properties in urban areas and 43% on public rental.

Homeless families have increased by 4.6% since 1991 to 2,958. Families living in impoverished dwellings raised by 432 and the number of second and third families in overcrowded dwellings increased by 476.

The proportion of householders in poverty increased by:

Darwin	3.5%
Katherine	2.7%
Nhulunbuy	10.9%

This compares with an overall increase of 2.2% for the Northern Territory.

The lower rates of home ownership is attributed to lower incomes resulting in more people using the housing of last resort options of public and community housing.

In urban centres families and individuals have share housing often due to economic factors leading to overcrowding which restricts housing options. Housing options are theoretically available but financial circumstances are a barrier.

Housing programs need to focus on making housing affordable. This may be able to be achieved by community housing becoming more affordable or through income support or other housing cost reduction programs.

While most people in disadvantaged areas in Australia live in major urban centres, they tend to be over-represented in smaller towns and in geographically isolated communities.

In Australia in 1999, 1 in 8 of all dwellings in remote Indigenous communities were temporary dwellings, such as caravans, tin sheds or humpies.
