

Amata key points

This section provides a summary of some key issues identified in this report. It incorporates some of Amata's strengths as well as some of the major challenges the evidence suggests confront the community. It concludes with a consideration of government and non-government service provision including a summary of major projects underway.

Background community information

Population

- In 2006, the population of Amata was estimated to be 373 people, of whom 341 (92%) were Indigenous.
- Amata has a relatively young population. In 2006, 43 per cent of Amata's Indigenous population were under 20 years of age compared to 27 per cent of all Australians.

Population projections

- From 2006, the Amata Indigenous population is projected to increase by around 35 per cent, giving a projected population of 439 in 2026.
- The working-age (15 to 64) Indigenous population is projected to grow by 83 people (39%), while the Indigenous population older than 50 is projected to grow by 45 people (105%) over this period.
- The increasing size, and ageing, of Amata's population will increase the need for housing, employment opportunities and, particularly, aged care and health services.

Geography and land tenure

- Amata is a relatively isolated community located approximately 20 km (50 km by road) from the Northern Territory border in the north-west of South Australia. It is one of the larger Aboriginal communities that lie within the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. Amata is approximately 400 km (455 km by road) from Alice Springs and 1,200 km (1,400 km by road) north of Adelaide.
- The APY Lands are held by the Aboriginal Lands Trust under inalienable freehold title resulting from the *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act 1981*.

Community strengths

Culture

- Aboriginal residents of Amata, and of the whole APY Lands, are known as Anangu (meaning 'people'). The main language in Amata is Pitjantjatjara.
- Traditional ties are strong in Amata with a focus on maintaining cultural identity through ceremony, language, art and education.

- Literacy in Pitjantjatjara is taught at the Amata Anangu School by an Anangu teacher. Maintaining language is regarded as a key community strength that is much assisted and promoted by the local Amata Anangu School.
- The Anangu-owned and -managed Tjala Arts Centre at Amata has experienced rapid business growth since 2002 and a new complex was opened in 2009. The arts centre is a source of considerable community pride.

Improved community safety

- Recorded offences in Amata decreased each year from 2004 to 2008, from 896 in 2004 to 154 in 2008. The most significant drop in recorded offences occurred in 2005, when 460 offences were recorded—almost half the number recorded in 2004.
- The decrease in offending is most notable for offences against public order, which decreased from 429 offences in 2004 to 35 in 2008.
- Between 2004 and 2008 there were 66 recorded breaches of domestic violence restraining orders. Twenty-three of these were in 2004. By 2007 this number reduced to less than five, before rising again in 2008 to nine.
- Recorded offences against the person decreased by nearly 50 per cent between 2004 and 2008.
- Also of note is the decline in the number of substance abuse-related offences between 2004 and 2006. There were 260 substance abuse-related offences recorded in 2004 and 56 in 2005, after which no such cases were recorded.
- While the reduction in the level of offending in Amata is a positive development, it should be noted that offence rates still remain high compared to South Australia as a whole. For example, there were 40 offences against the person recorded in Amata in 2008. Per head of population this is around five times the rate for South Australia as a whole. The rate of property offences in Amata was much higher than the state average in 2008.

Education initiatives

- A swimming pool was built at the Amata Anangu School, with a 'no school, no pool' policy enforced. The careful monitoring of this policy has increased school attendance when the pool is operational.
- The school runs numerous programs to encourage and enable staff development.
- TAFE has a community-based lecturer in Amata responsible for delivering accredited units from a range of courses.
- The school participates in a pilot Tri-border Attendance Strategy project which seeks to lessen the disruption to schooling experienced by students with high levels of mobility through improving the sharing of student information across borders and sectors.

Early childhood health

- According to the Nganampa Health Council, the establishment of the health service in 1983 has resulted in a substantial improvement in perinatal health. There have been substantial increases in antenatal care attendance in the first trimester.
- Since the establishment of the health service, there have also been fewer low-birthweight babies, a reduction in perinatal mortality, and reductions in the proportion of children with moderate or severe growth failure, acute respiratory illness and diarrhoeal disease.¹

Community store

- The Mai Wiru community store in Amata no longer stocks high sugar content cool drinks to help promote healthy living.
- Mai Wiru also provides in-store cooking demonstrations to teach people about healthy food on a budget.

Substance misuse centre

- Amata is the site of the only substance misuse centre on the APY Lands, which was opened in 2008. Its inpatient service remains underutilised and Anangu using the centre still travel to Alice Springs for some detoxification services.
- However, the mobile outreach program of the centre is regarded as valuable with widespread coverage across the Lands, and is well-utilised. The centre has assisted with urgent, temporary accommodation shortages for a variety of programs.

Challenges facing the community

Education

- In 2009, the average school attendance rates in Amata were only 67 per cent for primary school students and 52 per cent for secondary school students.
- In 2006, 73 per cent of Indigenous 20- to 64-year-olds in Amata had a Year 9 or below education. This is higher than the rates for the region, state and nation. Forty-seven per cent of this age group in Amata had a Year 8 or below education and 10 per cent had not been to school.

NAPLAN results

- In the 2009 National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests, more than three-quarters of students in Amata Anangu School at each year level were below national minimum standards in every subject.

Employment

- In 2006, 49 per cent of Amata's Indigenous working-age population (15 to 64) were employed.

¹ www.nganampahealth.com.au.

- The overwhelming majority of those who were employed were in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) positions.
- If the figure is adjusted so that CDEP positions are not considered as employment, Amata's Indigenous employment rate is 12 per cent, approximately one-third of the national Indigenous rate.

Maternal health and young mothers

- In remote and very remote South Australia, the fertility rate for Indigenous women aged 15 to 19 years (79 per 1,000) was nearly five times the national rate for all Australian teenage women (16 per 1,000).
- According to data for the APY Lands from 2004 to 2008, 23 per cent of births were to teenage mothers. This was five times the equivalent proportion for the Australian population as a whole in 2008 (4%).
- From 2003 to 2007, Indigenous rates for low-birthweight babies in remote and very remote areas in South Australia (172 per 1,000 live births) were 1.25 times the South Australian Indigenous rate and nearly 1.5 times the national Indigenous rate. Further, they were 3.5 times the total South Australian population rates. This is confirmed by data pertaining to the APY Lands. Over the period 2005 to 2008, 12 per cent of all births in the APY Lands were low-birthweight babies.

Health

- High rates of tobacco use, lack of refrigerators and unhealthy eating habits are continuing community health challenges.
- A reported shift from petrol and alcohol to marijuana by some has led to a reported increase in mental health issues across the APY Lands.
- There is evidence that some children remain undernourished, setting them up for long-term health and educational challenges. Through its child nutrition program the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council case-manages children who are registered on the community's 'failure to thrive' program.
- Over the five-year period 2003–04 to 2007–08, after adjusting for age differences, Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote South Australia are hospitalised for assault at 36 times, and dialysis at 20 times, the national average rate.
- Data specific to the APY Lands (for the four-year period 2004–05 to 2007–08) suggest the two most common principal diagnoses for hospitalisations are diseases and disorders of the respiratory system (44.6 per 1,000 people) and of the digestive system (32.8 per 1,000 people). The APY Lands data also seems to confirm the high rate of assault, with a high rate of injuries, poisonings and toxic effects of drugs (26.5 per 1,000 people).
- Over the five-year period 2003–04 to 2007–08, after adjusting for age differences, Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote South Australia

are hospitalised for diseases associated with poor environmental health at six times the national average rate.

- Hospital separations data for Amata confirms the high rate of diseases associated with poor environmental health. Over the period 2004–05 to 2007–08, there was an average of 33 hospital separations for intestinal infectious diseases in Amata.

Potential issues with service delivery

Municipal and essential services

- The Municipal and Essential Services Audit found that Amata has levels of infrastructure and municipal services which fail to meet most base level standards.
- The audit found:
 - inadequate quantity and quality of water supply
 - landfill facility requires a major upgrade
 - inadequate control and collection of litter
 - internet is not available in homes
 - lack of public telephones (due to vandalism)
 - no mobile phone services available
 - inadequate maintenance of external roads
 - inadequate maintenance of community housing
 - inadequate staffing for the management of municipal services
 - insufficient maintenance of external lighting
 - inadequate landscaping management and dust control
 - inadequate environmental health services and management
 - inadequate animal management
 - lack of all-weather access to the aerodrome
 - inadequate quantity of staff accommodation to enable recruitment of required additional staff
 - lack of community facilities including insufficient visitor accommodation, public toilets and childcare facilities.

Accessibility

- While Amata's internal roads are good, the roads into and out of the community are in poor condition. This makes accessibility and road safety key issues.

- The access roads to the community are unsealed. Flash-flooding in the APY Lands results in roads that are sometimes washed out and impassable.
- Amata has one of two sealed (all-weather) airstrips on the APY Lands. However, this may become inaccessible in flood conditions necessitating reliance on helicopters.

Language and English as a second language (ESL) teaching

- One of the 22 teachers at Amata is trained in ESL. The school adopts ESL methodologies but there is 'no external ESL support provided'.
- In addition, many students have hearing impairments which are catered for with the aid of special equipment in all classrooms but which still present significant challenges for teachers.

Significant new investments

Policing

- A new Amata police station opened in 2010. There is now a 24-hour-a-day permanent police presence in the community.

Housing

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, 19 new dwellings have been approved and are being constructed and 15 were refurbished this financial year.
- Over the coming years, the National Partnership Agreement will provide funding for further housing in remote Indigenous communities through a process of competitive bidding. From 1 July 2010, state governments will submit proposals for new dwellings, refurbishment activity and employment-related accommodation for communities.

Education

- The Amata Anangu School is expected to benefit from the Low Socio-economic Schools National Partnership.
- The National School Pride Program has provided funding for refurbishments in the Amata Anangu School.
- Primary Schools for the 21st Century has provided funding for the construction of a library at Amata Anangu School.

Water infrastructure

- SA Water is project-managing bore drilling at Amata at an approximate cost of \$118,000 (calculated as a proportion of total project cost funded by FaHCSIA covering four APY communities). This work is expected to be completed by June 2010, and will be the basis for a more sustainable water supply once the bores are equipped.
- Since the audit of these services was undertaken it is worth noting that, as part of a \$51.7 million funding program (by the Commonwealth Department of the

Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts announced on 23 April 2010), Amata has been allocated \$3,445,000 to replace existing water infrastructure and install metering at existing houses and to fit out a new bore. There is also \$150,000 allocated between Amata and Mimili to fund a water conservation program.

Roads to Recovery

- Over the period 2009–10 to 2013–14, APY is to receive \$534,000 in Roads to Recovery grants from the Australian Government. APY received \$107,000, or \$136 per km, of this amount in 2009–10, and will receive another \$106,000 in 2010–11.

Community infrastructure

- As part of the Australian Government's Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, the APY Lands have been allocated \$130,000 for community infrastructure projects, under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

Mimili key points

This section provides a summary of some key issues identified in this report. It incorporates some of Mimili's strengths plus some of the major challenges the evidence suggests are confronting the community. It concludes with a consideration of government and non-government service provision including a summary of major projects underway.

Background community information

Population

- In 2006, the population of Mimili was estimated to be 317 people, of whom 289 (91%) were Indigenous.
- Mimili has a relatively young population. In 2006, 43 per cent of Mimili's Indigenous population were under 20 years of age compared to 27 per cent of all Australians.
- Mimili had lower proportions of children aged 5 to 9 years and significantly higher proportions of teens aged 15 to 19 years than the national Indigenous population.

Population projections

- From its 2006 level, the Mimili Indigenous population is projected to increase to 393 (36%) by 2026.
- The working-age Indigenous population is projected to grow by 71 people (39%), while the Indigenous population older than 50 is projected to grow by 38 people (105%) over this period.
- The growing size and ageing of Mimili's Indigenous population will increase the need for housing, employment opportunities, and particularly aged care and health services.

Geography and land tenure

- Mimili is a relatively isolated community situated within the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in the north-west of South Australia approximately 400 km (455 km by road) from Alice Springs and 1,040 km (1,140 km by road) north-west of Adelaide.
- The APY Lands are held by the Aboriginal Lands Trust under inalienable freehold title resulting from the *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act 1981*.

Community strengths

Language and culture

- Mimili has a strong Anangu culture, and the Anangu-owned and managed Mimili Maku arts centre brings in income and is a source of pride for the community.

- In the 2006 Census, in Mimili about 60 per cent of people said they spoke Pitjantjatjara at home, 35 per cent said Ngaanyatjarra and the rest Luritja, Yankunytjatjara or English.
- Maintaining language is regarded as a key community strength that is much assisted and promoted by the local Mimili Anangu School.

Improved community safety

- Recorded offences in Mimili decreased each year from 2004 to 2008, from 112 in 2004 to 63 in 2008.
- The decrease in offending is most notable for offences against public order. There were 36 such recorded offences in 2004 and only 11 such recorded offences in 2008.
- Property offences decreased incrementally each year, from 30 in 2004 to 18 in 2008.
- However, offences against the person rose from 25 offences in 2004 to 32 in 2008.
- The rate of reoffending within 12 months of the first offence rate fell 77 per cent between 2004 and 2008.
- While the reduction in the level of offending in Mimili is a positive development, it should be noted that offence rates still remain high compared to South Australia as a whole. For example, there were 32 offences against the person recorded in Mimili in 2008. Per head of population this is around five times the rate for South Australia as a whole.

School attendance

- In 2009, the average Mimili Anangu School attendance rates were 80 per cent for primary school students and 71 per cent for secondary school children.
- These rates are substantially better than in many remote Indigenous communities, but are below the state and national averages.

Education initiatives

- A swimming pool was recently built at the Mimili Anangu School, with a 'no school, no pool' policy enforced. The careful monitoring of this policy has increased school attendance when the pool is operational.
- Since the majority of students are English as second language (ESL) learners, ESL methodologies underpin all curriculum areas of Mimili Anangu School.
- The school participates in a pilot Tri-border Attendance Strategy project which seeks to lessen the disruption to schooling experienced by students with high levels of mobility through improving the sharing of student information across borders and sectors.

Early childhood health

- According to the Nganampa Health Council, the establishment of the health service in 1983 has resulted in a substantial improvement in perinatal health. There have been substantial increases in antenatal care attendance in the first trimester.
- Since the establishment of the health service, there have also been fewer low-birthweight babies, a reduction in perinatal mortality, and reductions in the proportion of children with moderate or severe growth failure, acute respiratory illness and diarrheal disease.²

Community store

- The Mai Wiru community store in Mimili no longer stocks high sugar content/high energy cool drinks to help promote healthy living.
- Mai Wiru also provides in-store cooking demonstrations to teach people about healthy food on a budget.

Challenges facing the community

Education

- In 2006, 71 per cent of Indigenous 20- to 64-year-olds in Mimili had a Year 9 or below level of education.
- This is more than twice the percentage of Indigenous 20- to 64-year-olds for South Australia and for Australia as a whole.

NAPLAN results

- For nearly all subjects, the majority of students in Years 7 and 9 at Mimili Anangu School were below national minimum standards in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests. The sole exception was Year 7 numeracy.

Employment

- In 2006, 33 per cent of Mimili's Indigenous working-age population (15 to 64) were employed.
- The overwhelming majority of those who were employed were in Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) positions.
- If the figure is adjusted so that CDEP positions are not considered as employment, Mimili's Indigenous employment rate is 8 per cent, approximately one-quarter of the national Indigenous rate.

Maternal health and young mothers

- In remote and very remote South Australia, the fertility rate for Indigenous women aged 15 to 19 years (79.1 per 1,000) was nearly five times the national rate for all Australian teenage women (16.4 per 1,000).

² www.nganampahealth.com.au

- According to data for the APY Lands from 2004 to 2008, 23 per cent of births were to teenage mothers. This was five times the equivalent proportion for the Australian population as a whole in 2008 (4%).
- From 2003 to 2007, Indigenous rates for low-birthweight babies in remote and very remote areas in South Australia (172.3 per 1,000 live births) were 1.25 times the South Australian Indigenous rate and nearly 1.5 times the national Indigenous rate. Further, they were 3.5 times the total South Australian population rates. This is confirmed by data pertaining to the APY Lands. Over the period 2005 to 2008, 12 per cent of all births in the APY Lands were low-birthweight babies.

Health

- High rates of tobacco use, lack of refrigerators and unhealthy eating habits are continuing community health challenges.
- A reported shift from petrol and alcohol to marijuana by some has led to a reported increase in mental health issues across the APY Lands.
- There is evidence that some children remain undernourished, setting them up for long-term health and educational challenges. Through its child nutrition program the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council case-manages children who are registered on the community's 'failure to thrive' program.
- Over the five-year period 2003–04 to 2007–08, after adjusting for age differences, Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote South Australia are hospitalised for assault at 36 times, and dialysis at 20 times, the national average rate.
- Data specific to the APY Lands (for the four-year period 2004–05 to 2007–08) suggest the two most common principal diagnoses for hospitalisations are diseases and disorders of the respiratory system (44.6 per 1,000 people) and of the digestive system (32.8 per 1,000 people). The APY Lands data also seems to confirm the high rate of assault, with a high rate of injuries, poisonings and toxic effects of drugs (26.5 per 1,000 people).
- Over the five-year period 2003–04 to 2007–08, after adjusting for age differences, Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote South Australia are hospitalised for diseases associated with poor environmental health at six times the national average rate.
- Hospital separations data for Mimili confirms the high rate of diseases associated with poor environmental health. In 2008–09, 41 children (aged 0 to 5) in Mimili were hospitalised with diseases associated with poor environmental health.

Potential issues with service delivery

Municipal and essential services

- The Municipal and Essential Services Audit found that Mimili has levels of infrastructure and municipal services that fail to meet most base level standards.
- The audit found:
 - inadequate quantity of staff accommodation to enable recruitment of required additional staff
 - inadequate animal management
 - no mobile phone coverage
 - lack of visitor accommodation
 - inadequate environmental health services and management
 - unreliability of sewerage system
 - landfill facility requires a major upgrade
 - unreliability and poor quality of the water supply.
- Since the audit of these services was undertaken, it is worth noting that, as part of a \$51.7 million funding program by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts announced on 23 April 2010, Mimili has been allocated \$1,955,000 for the construction of a reverse osmosis plant, and to introduce metering to existing houses. Funding of \$150,000 has been shared between Amata and Mimili to fund a water conservation program.

Accessibility

- Mimili's access road is a 70 km unsealed road to the Stuart Highway.
- The Mimili aerodrome is located 4 km from the community and is accessible via an unsealed road. The runway is unsealed.
- As the APY Lands are subject to flash flooding, the dirt roads are sometimes washed out and can be left impassable until significant road maintenance is carried out after the waters have subsided.

Mimili Anangu School

- In the Mimili Anangu School, the library, computer lab, administration area and staff room all have limited physical space.
- None of the nine teachers had training in teaching English as second language. The school adopts ESL methodologies, but there is no external ESL support provided.
- In addition, many students have hearing impairments which are catered for with the aid of special equipment in all classrooms, but effectively supporting the education of hearing-impaired children continues to present significant challenges for teachers.

Significant new investments

Policing

- A new Mimili police station opened in 2010. There is now a 24-hour-a-day permanent police presence in the community.

Housing

- Under the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing, 18 new dwellings have been approved and 15 were refurbished during the 2009–10 financial year.

Education

- Mimili Anangu School is expected to receive funding under the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership.
- The National School Pride Program has provided funding for refurbishments in Mimili Anangu School.
- Primary Schools for the 21st Century has provided funding for the construction of new classrooms at Mimili Anangu School.

HomeMaker Centre

- To accommodate a future HomeMaker Centre, the community hall is to be refurbished. The hall will also continue to house indoor church services. In addition, a rural transaction centre has been developed north of the Mimili store.

Roads to Recovery

- Over the period 2009–10 to 2013–14, APY is to receive \$534,000 in Roads to Recovery grants from the Australian Government. APY received \$107,000, or \$136 per km, of this amount in 2009–10, and will receive another \$106,000 in 2010–11.

Community infrastructure

- As part of the Australian Government's Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, the APY Lands have been allocated \$130,000 for community infrastructure projects, under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.