

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Finance and Administration

Supplementary Estimates Hearings - 1 November 2005

Question: F56

Outcome: 1 Sustainable government finances, Output: 1.2.4 Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Topic: Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) Work Program

Written Question on Notice:

Senator Evans asked:

(1) In the May 2005 estimates, OEA said it was committed to a "three-year rolling evaluation plan" from 30 Jun 05 - 30 Jun 07. OEA also committed to having a program for this evaluation plan finalised towards the end of June or early July.

Is this program now available? Can you please attach if so:

(2) What will this evaluation encompass?

(3) OEA conducted an interim six-month program between Jan and Jun this year:

(a) What happened during this interim program?

(b) What were the conclusions of the interim program?

(c) Were any reports produced? Will these be publicly available?

(4) At the May estimates, OEA had not given any thought as to whether it will be able to assess the effectiveness of TSI programs. Has this changed? If so, please give details of any planned evaluations.

Answer:

1) *The Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) Work Program July 2005 – June 2007* (Work Program) has been finalised. A copy is attached.

2) The Work Program comprises 9 evaluations or audits commenced in the period January 2005 to June 2005 and in progress after 1 July 2005; 11 evaluations or audits to commence in 2005-06; and, 13 evaluations or audits to commence in 2006-07. In addition the Work Program provides for a number of reserve topics.

3) *The Evaluation and Audit Work (Indigenous Programs) Program January 2005 – June 2005* (Interim Work Program):

a) Work commenced on the evaluations and audits in the Interim Work Program. These evaluations and audits were incorporated into the Work Program as evaluations and audits in progress.

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- b) No reports were issued during the Interim Work Program, and, as such, no conclusions have been reached.
- c) No reports were issued during the period January to June 2005. Two audit reports were provided to departments after July 2005. As audit reports are internal working documents they are not made available publicly.
- 4) The Office is required by the legislation to evaluate and audit relevant programmes administered by Australian Government bodies and particular aspects of their operations. There are no specific programmes aimed at Torres Strait Islander people living on the mainland. However, Torres Strait Islander people living on the mainland are able to access Indigenous programmes administered by Government bodies. No variation to the Work Program has been made. Evaluation and audit topics are selected on the basis of the risks involved with the development and delivery of a relevant programme and the likely benefits that an evaluation or audit might bring. Australian Government Indigenous programmes and expenditure are directed through various portfolios for the benefit of both Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders. Programmes in the Torres Strait Islands (TSI) region are delivered by the Torres Strait Regional Authority, which is scheduled in the Work Program for 2005/06 and 2006/07.



**Department of Finance and
Administration**

**Office of Evaluation and Audit
(Indigenous Programs)**

EVALUATION AND AUDIT WORK PROGRAM

July 2005 – June 2007

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FOREWORD

The Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) [OEA (IP)] was established by Section 193W of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (the Act). It is an administrative unit within the Department of Finance and Administration.

Section 193Y(1) of the Act requires the Director of Evaluation and Audit to develop a program for the evaluation or audit of relevant programs administered by Australian Government bodies or particular aspects of the operations of Australian Government bodies relating to such programs.

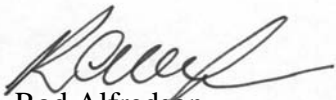
This is the first work program developed by OEA (IP) since the passage of the enabling legislation and, in accordance with the Act, covers the period ending on 30 June 2007. It covers evaluations and audits that are in progress at 1 July 2005 together with those that are expected to commence during the period covered by the program.

In future years OEA (IP) will develop a three-year evaluation and audit work program, which will be reviewed before 1 July each year.

Because risks and priorities can change, the Act provides for the Director to vary the program from time to time as the need arises. This work program, therefore, also includes a number of reserve topics as part of the program. However, variations to the program are not limited to these reserve topics only.

In developing this program OEA (IP) has consulted widely with interested parties and I am grateful for their co-operation and assistance.

This program is available on OEA (IP)'s website on www.finance.gov.au.



Rod Alfredson
Director of Evaluation and Audit

30 June 2005

Part 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Role and functions of OEA (IP)

The role of OEA (IP) is to assist in improving the performance and public accountability of Indigenous-specific programs.

This is achieved by conducting a regular program of *independent, objective and systematic* evaluations and audits of:

- relevant programs¹ administered by an Australian Government body;
- related aspects of the operations of Australian Government bodies delivering those programs;
- particular activities of organisations or individuals funded under those programs when requested by the Minister²; and
- organisations or individuals where a funding or loan agreement provides for evaluation or audit by OEA (IP) and where the Minister consents to the evaluation or audit.

Focus of evaluations and audits

Evaluations and audits provide an independent and objective assurance for government on the delivery of Indigenous programs by Australian Government bodies. They also provide recommendations to improve administration and program delivery.

Evaluations will focus on the administration of a program as well as the outcomes achieved by the program and the effectiveness of the policy in achieving the government's objectives.

Audits undertaken by OEA (IP) include performance audits and assurance audits and focus on the administration of a program or organisation. They can cover issues such as:

- compliance with policies and procedures including public sector financial reporting, control and accountability; and
- the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the program including its administration, the relationship between inputs and outputs, and the quality of services delivered.

¹ A relevant program means a program, or a program component, under which money is provided, including on loan, or a guarantee is given, or an interest in land or other property is transferred, for the purpose of furthering the social, economic, or cultural development of Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islanders.

² The Minister for Finance and Administration has delegated responsibility for OEA (IP) to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration.

Topic selection criteria

OEA (IP) selects evaluation and audit topics on the basis of the risks involved with the development and delivery of a relevant program and the likely benefits that an evaluation or audit might bring. OEA (IP) adopts a systematic approach to the selection of evaluation and audit topics and takes into account the following factors:

- likely impact from an evaluation or audit;
- risk of the program not performing efficiently and effectively;
- government policy priorities;
- priorities of the Minister for Finance and Administration and the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs;
- consistency with OEA (IP)'s broad strategic approach;
- previous evaluation or audit coverage by OEA (IP) or other reviewers; and
- financial materiality.

In order to avoid duplication and maximise the value of evaluations and audits, topics are selected in consultation with other Australian Government agencies and other key stakeholders. However, the final decision rests with the Director of Evaluation and Audit.

Proposed evaluations and audits are detailed in Part 2 and a summary listing provided in the Appendix.

The detailed scope or terms of reference for each evaluation or audit will be determined as part of the individual evaluation or audit planning process.

Risk environment

The administration of some \$3.1 billion per annum in programs to improve the social, economic and cultural development of Indigenous people is undergoing substantial change.

Changed administrative arrangements

The Government has recently abolished the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) agency, which were previously responsible for the delivery of many Indigenous-specific programs. These responsibilities have been transferred to mainstream Australian Government departments with the bulk of the funding spread across eight departments.

The transfer of programs to new departments can result in a loss of corporate knowledge as staff change and a disruption of existing services as the new arrangements are bedded down. The integration of inherited programs into the new department's financial and other management systems can also present risks including data migration and system compatibility.

The acquisition of new responsibilities creates challenges for departments as they come to grips with the added tasks and are required to rearrange their focus and priorities. Such challenges present new opportunities and risks for the delivery of programs in an efficient, effective and accountable manner.

Whole of government approach

The Government now expects Indigenous programs to be delivered by a ‘whole-of-government’ approach with Australian Government agencies collaborating together, as well as co-operating with other levels of government to deliver the right services, to the right people, at the right time. Multi-agency Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) have been established by the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) throughout Australia to coordinate services at the regional and local level. A number of multilateral cooperative arrangements have also been established between the Australian Government and the States and Territories through the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). A series of bilateral arrangements with specific States and Territories are also underway.

These approaches have the potential to deliver significant benefits in program delivery. However, working in a whole of government environment is relatively new for most departments and organisations. To be successful staff will need the appropriate skills and a whole of government ethos. Reporting arrangements will also need to be appropriate and effective.

Program delivery organisations

It is estimated that some 1500 organisations throughout Australia are involved in delivering programs and services to Indigenous people. These include community housing organisations, Indigenous health centres, native title representative bodies etc. The large number, variety and geographical spread of organisations together with changes as new or existing organisations take on new responsibilities, means that there is a considerable variation in the level of management expertise available to, and within, such organisations. This, coupled with differing understandings of public sector accountability requirements, increases the risk programs will not be delivered efficiently and effectively in accordance with public accountability norms.

Performance information frameworks

Major new performance information frameworks have recently been introduced in Indigenous health and education. Appropriate performance information to measure progress in improving the wellbeing of Indigenous people is an essential part of delivering effective programs. However, designing performance frameworks that capture key indicators cost-effectively is always a challenge for agencies. The challenge is made even more difficult when programs are delivered through a complex arrangement of Australian, State, Territory and local governments and local organisations. However, if performance frameworks are not designed or implemented effectively early on in a program’s life cycle, key data is often not available to monitor progress with the program or evaluate the program at any mid point review or at the end of the program’s life.

Government priorities

The Government has indicated that its major priorities in Indigenous affairs are:

- early childhood intervention, a key focus of which will be improved mental and physical health, and in particular primary health, and early educational outcomes;
- safer communities which include issues of authority and law and order but also include issues of governance to ensure that communities are functional and effective; and
- building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture, as these are integral to boosting economic development and reducing poverty and dependence on passive welfare.

The work program has been developed to take account of these priorities.

OEA (IP) strategic approach

In determining the importance allocated to evaluations and audits and the timing of evaluations and audits, OEA (IP) has given a high priority to topics that:

- examine the management of program and service delivery organisations and the quality of services provided by them;
- provide an early review of the quality of program performance information to ensure it is appropriate, accurate and consistent;
- adopt a staged approach to program coverage in order to build up expertise over time and transfer lessons learnt from one evaluation or audit to another; and
- cover a mix of both major programs that are designed to have a significant impact over a longer period of time and smaller programs that have a more immediate impact on the quality of life of Indigenous Australians.

In particular evaluations and audits have been programmed to address:

- Indigenous family violence;
- programs to prevent contact with the criminal justice system;
- the supply of rental housing;
- early interventions in education;
- implementation of social and emotional wellbeing strategies
- performance information frameworks in education, employment and health
- initiatives to promote economic independence.

Relationship with other agencies

The OEA (IP) recognises that Secretaries and heads of agencies have a range of responsibilities under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, including an obligation to ensure the proper use of Commonwealth resources in the administration of Indigenous-specific programs. Internal audit assists Secretaries and heads of agencies in discharging this responsibility.

OIPC is also a key component of the Government's co-ordination and accountability arrangements for Indigenous programs. It provides policy advice to the Government on Indigenous issues and co-ordinates whole-of-government policy development and service delivery. OIPC also has an evaluation role that focuses on supporting the whole-of-government approach in Indigenous affairs. This responsibility includes independently monitoring the *overall* performance of Indigenous-specific programs and services and preparing annual public reports on the performance of Australian Government programs. The work of OEA (IP) assists OIPC in this regard.

The Auditor-General also has a statutory responsibility to provide assurance on the financial reporting, control and accountability of Australian Government agencies and the performance of programs, including Indigenous programs.

Therefore the functions of OEA (IP) complement, but do not substitute for, the review activities of other agencies. A range of measures have been put in place to avoid any duplication of effort with the evaluation and audit activities of other agencies.

Reporting

The Office reports on evaluations or audits conducted by it in a manner required by the Minister. Given the generally broader scope and wider public interest in evaluations the Minister has determined evaluations will be tabled in Parliament.

OEA (IP)'s objective is to produce reports that are readable and fair, which present a balanced, consistent perspective and which place primary emphasis on matters requiring attention.

In particular, OEA (IP) reports will aim to:

- explain the scope and objectives of the evaluation/audit;
- present only findings and conclusions adequately supported by evidence;
- include recommendations for improvement;
- identify issues needing further study or consideration;
- recognise management-initiated improvements; and
- reflect the views of the evaluated/audited body and, where appropriate, state reasons for any disagreement by OEA (IP).

Operational protocol and standards

OEA (IP)'s process in conducting evaluations and audits is governed by an Operational Protocol that provides guidance in respect of liaison and coordination arrangements between OEA (IP) and Australian Government bodies to promote a professional working relationship .

OEA (IP) will adopt standards and guidelines issued by the professional accounting and auditing bodies, the Australasian Evaluation Society and the Australian Public Service.

Preliminary study

At the commencement of an evaluation or audit, a preliminary study is usually carried out to gain greater familiarity with the subject matter and to establish whether or not to proceed with the evaluation/audit. A preliminary study also assists in refining the objectives and scope of the evaluation/audit to ensure the evaluation/audit adds maximum value.

Follow-up evaluations or audits

Some evaluations or audits may be designated as Follow-up evaluations or audits to determine if suitable action has been taken in response to the recommendations of a previous evaluation/audit. It is possible that an evaluation/audit that is begun as a follow-up of specific recommendations may be expanded to a wider review. Departments and agencies will be advised of any change in scope.

Part 2

EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS BY PORTFOLIO

July 2005 – June 2007

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

Audit of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program

The Attorney-General's Department provides funding for a number of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) units to assist Indigenous adults and children who are victims of family violence, including sexual abuse, or who are at immediate risk of such violence. Overcoming family violence is one of the Government's priority areas in Indigenous Affairs and the number of FVPLS has recently been doubled.

The objective of the audit is to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the FVPLS program and the FVPLS units in delivering services including:

- assessing the actual extent of the implementation of the recommendations contained in an OEA Report issued in April 2004; and
- reviewing the process for determining the location of the additional 13 FVPLS units.

The audit is expected to be completed in September 2005.

To commence in 2005-06

Prevention, Diversion & Rehabilitation Program

The Government has allocated some \$6.4 million in 2005-06 for projects that support diversion, prevention, education and rehabilitation to help Indigenous people avoid contact with the criminal justice system. The program consists of four components:

- Night patrols
- Youth initiatives
- Prisoner support and rehabilitation services
- Restorative justice initiatives

The program is consistent with the government's priorities of providing safer communities and early intervention. The Youth initiative, for example, aims to disrupt cycles of offending by young people at risk. This is especially important given the rapid growth of the young Indigenous population.

An audit will examine the administration and achievements of the program and any areas where performance can be improved. The precise objectives and scope will be determined as part of a preliminary study.

To commence in 2006-07

No evaluations or audits are planned to commence.

Reserve topic

Evaluation of Indigenous Legal Aid Services

The largest component of Indigenous expenditure in the Attorney-General's Department in 2005-06 is \$47.8 million on legal aid. The objective of this program is to provide high quality, culturally appropriate, equitable and accessible legal aid and legal aid related services to assist Indigenous Australians.

In 2004-2005, the Department commenced an open tendering process for the provision of Legal Aid services to Indigenous Australians with the aim of delivering better outcomes for Indigenous Australians while ensuring value for money. The open tender process will commence in Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland for funding available in 2005-06.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Legal Services (ATSILS) have previously provided legal aid services to Indigenous Australians. In 2003-04, 25 ATSILS were in operation throughout 96 locations in Australia. They provided legal representation to 72 500 clients on 137 000 case and duty matters.

OEA evaluated ATSILS in 2002-03 and found, inter alia:

- ATSILS were providing legal services at a cost markedly lower than that of services provided by private lawyers who are paid by the Legal Aid Commission (LAC);
- this is achieved at a level of client satisfaction no different from that reported by LAC clients;
- there is a high level of client dissatisfaction among ATSILS clients;
- despite the low level of client satisfaction with the ATSILS, this body is still the legal aid body of choice for most Indigenous clients; and
- there were important areas for improvement in policy and direction in the delivery of legal services to Indigenous communities including the ATSILS performance data management system.

An evaluation will follow up the findings of the earlier OEA review and examine if the new arrangements are delivering better outcomes and better value for money.

COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

No evaluations or audits are in progress.

To commence in 2005-06

TAPRIC – Community Phones Program

Basic telecommunications services are important for the economic and social development of remote Indigenous communities. There is a need to continue to meet the ongoing and unique challenge of providing adequate telephone services for remote Indigenous communities across Australia.

The Telecommunications Action Plan for Remote Indigenous Communities (TAPRIC), released in May 2002, is a program designed to improve telecommunications services in remote Indigenous communities.

It consisted of five program areas:

- Online Access Centre Business Study;
- Internet Access Program;
- Content Development Program;
- Information and Awareness Raising Program; and
- Community Phone Program.

The Government originally allocated \$8.3 million over three years. The program was due to end on 30 June 2005, however, following a lapsing program evaluation, the Government agreed to extend the program for a further 12 months to complete the Community Phones Program element at a cost of \$3 million.

An audit will examine the management and achievements of the Community Phones Program in the context of the overall TAPRIC program. The precise objectives and scope will be determined by a preliminary study.

To commence in 2006-07

Evaluation of Support for Indigenous Visual Arts

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art retains deep spiritual significance for communities. By maintaining and preserving Indigenous arts and culture important social and economic benefits can be delivered.

In 2005-06 some \$19.6 million will be spent on maintaining and promoting Indigenous Arts, culture and language. The major visual arts program funded under this broad heading is the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS) Program.

The NACIS program supports a network of Indigenous Art and Craft Centres, art support and advocacy organisations. It fosters the development of community-based visual arts and crafts activities in order to develop and maintain a successful Indigenous visual arts and crafts industry that is economically viable and culturally sustainable.

The administration of NACIS is guided by the Indigenous Arts Centres Strategy and Action Plan that was released in October 2003. The objective of the Strategy and Action Plan was to build a strong and sustainable Indigenous visual arts sector, characterised by a stable and profitable base of Indigenous art centres producing and distributing works of artistic excellence. The Strategy and Action Plan is a coordinated government approach consisting of targeted interventions delivered through a range of Government agencies, including the Departments of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS), and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Australia Council.

An evaluation will examine progress in achieving the objectives of the NACIS program, especially its economic benefits, and the contribution made by the implementation of the Indigenous Arts Centres Strategy and Action Plan to Indigenous visual arts. The precise objectives and scope will be determined following a preliminary study.

Reserve Topics

Sporting Opportunities for Indigenous People Program

Sport and physical recreation activities have a positive impact in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. They increase social cohesion, providing a sense of purpose and achievement and encourage healthy lifestyles and fitness.

The Sporting Opportunities for Indigenous People program supports activities that increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in sport and physical recreation, with a special focus on children and youth. Program expenditure in 2005-06 is estimated to be \$11.7 million.

The program funds peak sporting bodies and community organisations to develop and deliver sport and recreation programs. Support is also provided to individuals through grants and subsidy programs.

The program has three main elements:

- regional and local sport and recreation programs that support individuals, teams, carnivals and other events;
- multi-regional sport and recreation projects like national carnivals and events; and

- a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Sports Commission supporting a network of Indigenous sport development officers and providing financial support to elite Indigenous athletes.

In 2004, OEA conducted an internal audit of aspects of the program managed by the then ATSIC. The audit found that the performance measures provided only limited information as to whether outcomes were being achieved. Consequently, it was not possible at the time to establish if the program was being delivered effectively and achieving its desired outcomes.

An audit will examine a selection of the organisations, including the Australian Sports Commission, who receive funding under the program to ensure funds are being managed efficiently and effectively to achieve the program objectives. Where possible, the performance of organisations will be benchmarked and examples of better practice identified for wider dissemination.

Indigenous Broadcasting Program

The Indigenous Broadcasting Program aims to contribute to reviving, rebuilding and maintaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity through the provision of culturally appropriate and regionally relevant community broadcasting. Program expenditure in 2005-06 is expected to be \$13.3 million.

The key goals of the program are to:

- enable access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas to broadcasting services similar to those available to Australian citizens generally;
- enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting services through supporting a national body that serves and develops the sector it represents;
- support the operation of Indigenous owned and controlled community radio broadcasting services, including Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS), that meet DCITA Indigenous Broadcasting Program Funding Guidelines;
- develop and broadcast programming that focuses on the promotion of local Indigenous language(s);
- inform and educate Indigenous Australians on accessing the range of health, legal, education and housing services available to them; and
- develop an Indigenous broadcasting sector that meets all governance requirements.

The Indigenous Broadcasting program currently supports some 115 remote area broadcasters and media associations and 22 licensed Indigenous Broadcasters. In addition, a number of regional broadcasting coordination centres and a national remote broadcasting coordination body and a national Indigenous media body are provided with funding.

In 2002, OEA conducted an internal audit of the then Broadcasting Services output managed by ATSIC and identified a number of opportunities for improvement in the planning and management of the program.

An audit will examine the management of the program by DCITA and a selection of the organisations receiving funding under the program to ensure funds are being managed efficiently and effectively to achieve the program objectives. Where possible, the performance of organisations will be benchmarked and examples of better practice identified for wider dissemination.

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

Evaluation of Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative: Away-from-Base

One of the key initiatives funded under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) is the Away-from-Base (IESIP-AFB) component. This component provides funding to educational institutions to pay for the travel, accommodation and meal costs incurred by students participating in 'mixed-mode' courses. This is a term used to describe courses delivered through a combination of distance education and face-to-face teaching for students who are based in their home communities and need regular on-campus tuition to complement the distance education element of the course.

The draft terms of reference are to:

- review the appropriateness of the 2001-2004 funding with reference to the effectiveness of the IESIP-AFB mixed-mode delivery program on improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students; and
- assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Program Administrative Guidelines and the Indigenous Education Agreement administered by education providers.

The evaluation is expected to be completed in the December 2005 quarter.

To commence in 2005-06

Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP)

The Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) will fund a number of significant national initiatives and special projects over a four year period, commencing in 2005, with an emphasis on Indigenous students in remote areas. \$128.1 million will be provided for this purpose over the four years. Initiatives will be directed towards promoting systemic change and developing flexible, whole-of-government approaches to education delivery - for example through the Council of Australian Government trials.

Other initiatives include:

- the Scaffolding approach to teaching literacy. This is a structured approach to teaching literacy that has been shown to be especially effective with Indigenous students in remote areas. The Government will provide \$14 million over 2005-2008, and partner with education providers to embed the Scaffolding literacy approach;
- partnerships with school principals to champion Indigenous education in their schools and communities by setting measurable goals for improvements in the literacy levels and retention rates of Indigenous students;
- projects to increase the effectiveness of teachers and support staff;

- English as a Second Language for Indigenous Language Speaking Students; and
- National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Ambassadors.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of one or more of the initiatives including the operations of organisations funded under the various initiatives. The initiatives to be audited and the scope of the audit will be determined by a preliminary study.

National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training

In November 2003 the Department's National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training 2002 was tabled in Parliament. This was the second such report. The report found that on many measures, the results and the specific outcomes for Indigenous students are the best to date. For example, the latest Year 3 numeracy and writing, and Year 5 reading, numeracy and writing results for Indigenous students were the best ever in five out of six national benchmark areas. There was a 12.3 per cent increase in Year 12 enrolments to a record 2 941 students. This contributed to a record Year 12 retention rate of 38 per cent, up from 29 per cent in 1996. However, this is still only half that of non-Indigenous Australians.

During 2004-05 the Department was due to provide the third annual National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training.

An audit will examine the accuracy and quality of the reports provided to Parliament.

To commence in 2006-07

Tuition Assistance

As part of the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Program (IEDA) the Government will provide \$179 million over four years to ensure that Indigenous students can access high quality tutorial assistance at key stages of their education. This includes:

- \$105.5 million for in-class tutorial assistance targeted to those students not meeting the Year 3, 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy national benchmarks. It is estimated that more than 45,000 students will benefit from the additional assistance over 2005-2008;
- \$41.9 million to provide tutorial assistance targeted at Year 10, 11 and 12 students in order to increase retention and completion rates of Indigenous students in the latter years of schooling. Approximately 11,600 students will receive individual or group assistance over 2005-2008; and
- tutorial assistance for tertiary students through bulk-funding arrangements with institutions, with flexibility for the delivery of tutorial assistance to students from remote locations (\$31.5 million targeting more than 4,000 students over 2005-2008).

In some States tutors are required to pass a Working with Children Check (WWCC) to ensure their suitability to work with young people.

It was announced in the 2005 Budget that \$8.7 million would be provided over four years to provide tutorial support for students who move from their remote communities to undertake their schooling.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of Tuition Assistance including the operation of organisations funded under the scheme and the implementation of the results of the Review of the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme Bulk Funding Arrangements to Higher Education and Boarding Schools. Compliance with any required WWCC will also be examined.

Evaluation of Supplementary Recurrent Assistance

As part of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) the Government will provide \$513.5 million for the period 2005-2008 for the continuation of per-capita supplementary recurrent assistance paid to education and training providers for Indigenous students.

This supplementary funding for Indigenous education is provided to government and non-government education providers across the preschool, school and vocational education and training sectors.

Funding is provided on a per-capita basis. Students classified as being in remote regions attract funding at twice the rate of students classified as being in non-remote locations.

The Government is committed to improving mainstream service provision for Indigenous Australians in metropolitan areas, thus enabling Indigenous-specific funding to be better targeted to those at greatest disadvantage.

An evaluation will examine the management of the program including the initiatives introduced to improve mainstream education for Indigenous Australians in metropolitan areas and the outcomes achieved by the assistance provided. The precise terms of reference will be determined following a preliminary study.

Reserve topics

Homework Centres

As part of the Government's Whole of School Intervention Strategy the Government will provide \$37.8 million from 2005 to 2008 to fund homework centres in communities that face a very difficult learning environment. In some communities, Indigenous students do not have an appropriate place to study effectively after class. Homework centres seek to address this.

An audit will examine the administration of the homework centre selection process and the on-going management of the initiative including reporting and acquittal requirements by funded organisations.

Parent-School Partnerships Initiative

As part of the Government's Whole of School Intervention Strategy the Government will provide \$62.5 million from 2005 to 2008 for submission-based projects to promote parent and school partnerships to improve the learning outcomes of Indigenous students.

Initiatives which can demonstrate strong partnerships with schools and Indigenous communities, provide innovative approaches to engaging students, and improve student learning outcomes will be encouraged. To ensure a focus on the students facing greatest need, at least 50% of this funding will be targeted to remote schools.

An audit will examine the administration of the selection process and the on-going management of the initiative including reporting and acquittal requirements by funded organisations.

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Reserve topic

AIATSIS – Collection Development and Management

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is a statutory authority established by the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989*. One of its functions is to establish and maintain a cultural resource collection consisting of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. To this end AIATSIS maintains an extensive collection of library and audio-visual materials. An evaluation of the audio-visual archives and the library were conducted during 2004-05.

In the 2005-06 Budget, the Government announced an additional \$6.0 million in 2005-06 and \$13.0 over four years to preserve the Institute's collection of film, video, sound and pictorial materials in a digital format. The total price of developing and managing the collection is estimated to be \$7.5 million in 2005-06

The AIATSIS collection is an important research resource and historical record. If not adequately maintained or if policies and procedures not properly implemented, there is a risk of, at best, a waste of scarce funds or, at worst, irreparable damage.

An audit will examine the management of the various AIATSIS collections to provide assurance that the collections are being well maintained and that collection policies and procedures are being complied with.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audit in progress at 1 July 2005

Audit of CDEP organisations

There are approximately 230 organisations that provide Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program services to over 35 000 participants. These organisations undertake a range of activities to provide employment, business development and community outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities. The Budget estimate for departmental and administered funding for CDEP is \$587.9 million in 2005-06.

The program provides funding to support the delivery of CDEP activities in the form of management fees to provide funds to operate and manage the CDEP organisation and activity fees to cover items necessary to run activities such as capital items, insurance, training equipment and materials for community activities.

CDEP organisations operate in urban, rural and remote locations. In urban areas CDEPs are a major provider of training and employment services. In rural and remote areas, CDEPs undertake important community development work, including the provision of essential services. In some communities, the CDEP is the only source of employment and the only provider of services.

The objective of the audit is to:

- examine the operations of a sample of CDEP organisations in urban, rural and remote Australia to determine whether they deliver their services in an efficient, effective and appropriate manner;
- identify ways in which the interaction between CDEP organisations and Government bodies might be improved; and
- identify better practices.

The audit is expected to be completed in the March 2006 quarter.

To commence in 2005-06

CDEP Performance Information

The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program employs over 35 000 Indigenous Australians and accounts for one in four jobs held by Indigenous Australians. The Government recently announced reforms to the CDEP Program designed to increase the employment rates for working age Indigenous Australians and increase economic independence. Through a contract management approach DEWR will work closely with the approximately 230 CDEP organisations to help them improve performance and achieve better results. Accurate, relevant, timely and consistent

performance information is essential to measure the success of the reforms and to inform management decision-making.

A major upgrade has been made to the CDEPManager records system to strengthen CDEP management. The CDEPManager system records CDEP participants and participation periods and activity information. Data from CDEPManager is used in determining funds releases to CDEP organisations. This upgrade has the potential to provide accurate and timely performance information to assist in the management of the Program.

DEWR performance indicators are also being revised and new systems reporting requirements considered for 2005-06.

An audit will examine the quality of the performance information collected under the CDEP program and the extent to which it informs management decision-making and assists in measuring progress in achieving the program's aims. The audit objectives and scope will be determined by a preliminary study.

To commence in 2006-07

Indigenous Economic Development Strategy

In the 2005-06 Budget the Government announced the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy (IEDS) to provide ways of gaining better synergies across the range of Indigenous-specific business support and mainstream programs in the Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio. These programs include the Business Development Program, Indigenous Small Business Fund, Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme and the Indigenous Self Employment Program.

The IEDS is a direct response to the Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Economic Report, the Productivity Commission evaluation and the Indigenous Review Business Review all of which identified that there are a number of indigenous business and economic development programs which need to be rationalised and delivered in a coherent approach.

The IEDS is a key plank in the Government's Indigenous Economic Independence and will start in early 2006.

An audit will examine the progress in developing and implementing the strategy, the views of Indigenous entrepreneurs and assess its effectiveness in achieving the program's objectives.

Reserve topics

Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants Program

School completion is of primary importance to lifelong employment outcomes. Currently the unemployment rate for Indigenous young people aged 15 – 19 years is almost double that for non-Indigenous young people in the same age group. It is critical to support the growing population of young Indigenous people who are in the ‘transition from school to work’ stage by implementing measures to improve school to work outcomes.

The Government will provide funding of \$13.1 million over four years from 2004-05 to fund up to 30 Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants. In the first year up to 15 Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants will be engaged in working with Indigenous young people, with up to a total of 30 by the following year.

Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants will work with Indigenous youth to encourage better transitions from school to work by providing linkages with both work opportunities and further education and training.

Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants will be linked with Job Network members in areas with active labour markets. They will target three groups of young Indigenous people, those:

- disengaged from school;
- entering the workforce after leaving school; and
- continuing with education and training before entering the workforce.

The consultants will work with these people as well as families, communities, local schools, vocational education and training providers and local business to provide these young people with better linkages with work opportunities and further education and training.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the program including the number of sustainable jobs created and the views of participants and other stakeholders involved with the program.

Indigenous Community Volunteers

In Australia over four million people are involved in volunteering activities in the general community. However, volunteering in Indigenous communities is a relatively new concept and there is considerable scope to realise significant economic and social outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) links skilled volunteers with Indigenous communities and organisations that have asked for expert assistance in areas such as financial management and corporate governance, IT, horticulture, art, tourism, business

planning and marketing. In addition to meeting the needs of Indigenous Australian communities and organisations, ICV encourages skills transfer and the development of longer term strategic relationships between the community and the private sector.

ICV operates as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee under contract to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

An additional \$20 million was provided in the 2004-05 Budget to expand the activities of Indigenous Community Volunteers. The funding of \$20 million will provide ICV with a substantial resource base to strengthen the engagement of the corporate and philanthropic sector to help build the capacity of Indigenous communities and organisations. The funds will also enable longer term placements (up to two years) which will help consolidate skill and knowledge transfer.

Since August 2001 when it commenced operations, ICV has placed almost 200 volunteers in the field to work within Indigenous communities. An evaluation was conducted in 2004 and the contract with ICV requires a further independent evaluation before the end of 2007.

An audit will examine the achievements of the program and the views of participants and organisations involved with the program.

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS AUSTRALIA

Evaluations/audit in progress at 1 July 2005

Third Party Funding Arrangements - Follow up audit

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is included in the follow up audit of Third Party Funding Arrangements detailed under the Family and Community Services portfolio (p.26) in respect of those elements where responsibility was transferred to IBA.

To commence in 2005-06

Evaluation of Indigenous Business Australia

IBA was originally established by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Act 2001* which was superseded by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*.

Indigenous Business Australia was established:

- to assist and enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-management and economic self-sufficiency; and
- to advance the commercial and economic interests of Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders by accumulating and using a substantial capital asset for the benefit of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For the year ending June 2004 IBA had an operating revenue of \$46 million and total equity of \$99 million. It invests in commercial business ventures including property, insurance and financial services, construction, mining, transport and tourism.

The last OEA (IP) evaluation of IBA was conducted in 1994 when it was then known as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commercial Development Corporation. An evaluation of IBA is now timely given the last evaluation was ten years ago.

The evaluation aims to determine how successful IBA has been in generating income and in transferring business skills to the Indigenous community. Within this over-arching objective, the evaluation could examine issues surrounding:

- the economic benefits to Indigenous communities from IBA's activities;
- IBA's performance against appropriate financial benchmarks;
- the identification of any impediments to IBA achieving its stated goals;
- the adequacy of IBA's capital base;
- the effectiveness of IBA's investment portfolio risk management strategy;
- an examination of alternative business models;
- the effectiveness and costs of IBA creating employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people;
- the views of key stakeholders on aspects of the program; and
- the implementation of recommendations from the earlier OEA (IP) evaluation.

The precise objectives and scope will be determined following a preliminary study.

To commence in 2006-07

Business Development Program

The Business Development Program (BDP) facilitates the acquisition, establishment, and development of commercially viable enterprises by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities. Research shows that, in most States, Indigenous people are 2 – 5 times less likely to be self employed than non-Indigenous people. The budget estimate for the program is \$20.8 million in 2005-06.

Two types of services are provided

- **Business support:** access to professional business and marketing advice, training, mentoring and facilitation of access to other public and private-sector services; and
- **Business Finance:** loans, a loan/grant mix and or guarantees to Indigenous clients assessed as eligible. The BDP offers an alternative to business finance provided by mainstream financial institutions. Normal equity and security criteria exist for applications for finance.

The BDP is fundamentally a commercial program. The funding criteria are founded on the importance of commercial viability for businesses receiving finance.

At 30 June 2004 there were 593 loans made by ATSIC still outstanding with a balance of \$62.3 million of which some 44 per cent were in arrears. At the same date there were 22 loans made by ATSIIS still outstanding worth \$1.6 million.

Following losses in a number of projects, the findings of audits into these businesses and consequent changes to the program guidelines, the then ATSIIS commissioned a review of the program. The BDP Effectiveness Review was completed in December 2003.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the program including the implementation of the recommendations flowing from the BDP Effectiveness Review and the management of program risks, including arrears and governance arrangements.

ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

No evaluations or audits are in progress.

To commence in 2005-06

No evaluations or audits are planned.

To commence in 2006-07

No evaluations or audits are planned.

Reserve topics

Maintenance and Protection of Indigenous Heritage

The Department has had a long association with the protection of Indigenous heritage. It is responsible for the administration of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (the Heritage Protection Act). The purposes of the Heritage Protection Act are the preservation and protection from injury or desecration of areas and objects in Australia and in Australian waters that are of particular significance to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. The Heritage Protection Act provides the opportunity for Aboriginal people to seek protection for areas and objects that are of particular significance in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, where these are under threat of injury or desecration.

The Department also administers a wide range of programs relevant to the protection of Indigenous heritage and culture including the Cultural Heritage Program, the Marine Protected Areas Program and the Indigenous Protected Areas Program.

The Director of National Parks also has responsibility for the protection of Indigenous heritage.

The Department acquired additional Indigenous heritage responsibilities when most elements of the former ATSI-ATSIS Heritage and Environment Program were transferred to the Department of Environment and Heritage. Total expenditure on the various Indigenous heritage programs is estimated to be in the order of \$10 million in 2005-06. OEA conducted an audit of the ATSI-ATSIS Heritage and Environment Program in 2003.

Each State and Territory also administers Indigenous heritage protection legislation and operates programs tailored to that legislation.

Grants have been provided to Indigenous community organisations to support local heritage preservation and management projects. Projects such as library and information

services and support and outreach programs for Aboriginal cultural centres have also been funded at the State/Territory level or national level.

The objective of the audit would be to assess the effectiveness of the Department, including the Director of National Parks, in protecting Indigenous heritage under its various programs. The audit scope would include the administration of the Heritage Protection Act, cooperation and coordination within the Department and between the various Australian and State and Territory government agencies and the administration of grants to Indigenous community and national and state organisations.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

Audit of Indigenous Housing Organisations

Community housing services are provided through some 600 Indigenous Housing Organisations (IHOs) that are primarily funded through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). The Budget appropriation for CHIP is \$249 million in 2004-05.

IHO's may have several roles including asset and tenancy management, community management, community welfare and municipal services.

The objective of the audit is to assess the community housing activities undertaken by IHOs funded through the Community Housing and Infrastructure output of CHIP. This will involve an examination of how efficiently and effectively a sample of IHOs are managed and have used funding for:

- capital construction, purchase and upgrade of community owned or managed rental housing;
- general administration costs; and
- repairs and maintenance of existing housing stock where rental income and service charges are not sufficient to meet the costs involved.

Aspects of the reporting arrangements for program outputs and outcomes will also be examined.

The audit is expected to be completed in the December 2005 quarter.

Third Party Funding Arrangements - Follow-up audit

Third Party Funding Arrangements (TPFAs) are those arrangements in which a trusted third party holds moneys in escrow pending instructions from Australian Government agencies regarding their disbursement. These arrangements include trust accounts operated by solicitors (including the Australian Government Solicitor) and project managers overseeing major works as well as 'cash at agent' arrangements.

The objective of the audit is to assess the extent to which the recommendations of the April 2004 audit report have been implemented and the extent of the enhancement to the internal controls in managing TPFAs. As noted earlier, IBA is also included in the audit.

The audit is expected to be completed in July 2005.

To commence in 2005-06

Aboriginal Rental Housing Program

As part of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), some \$93 million will be allocated in 2005-06 to State and Territory governments to supply Indigenous people with safe, healthy and sustainable housing under the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program (ARHP). Most program funds are directed to remote and isolated communities where housing need is highest, there are no alternative sources of housing supply, and benefits in terms of improved health of Indigenous people are greatest. The program incorporates provision of new housing stock, and maintenance and upgrading of existing stock, as well as training and skill development in the Indigenous housing sector.

The Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP) is a complementary program that provides funding for housing activities and related infrastructure projects, such as water supply and waste disposal. An OEA (IP) audit of Indigenous Housing Organisations responsible for delivering CHIP is expected to be completed in 2005.

The Department of Family and Community Services is responsible for managing the program on behalf of the Australian Government and its functions include the examination and approval of plans submitted by the States and Territories and the review of performance information.

An audit will examine the management of the ARHP. The precise objectives and scope will be determined after a preliminary study is completed.

Evaluation of Family Violence Prevention Programs

FaCS is responsible for administering two programs designed to reduce and prevent family violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities.

Family Violence Partnership Program

The Government will provide \$37.3 million (\$14.7 million in 2005-06) over four years to pursue bilateral partnerships with State governments to enhance or establish new initiatives in Indigenous communities that aim to develop a sustainable reduction in, and prevention of, Indigenous family violence and child abuse. The Family Violence Partnership Program will complement the delivery of existing government programs and services and fund new initiatives and infrastructure to meet gaps in service delivery particularly, but not exclusively, in remote areas.

Family Violence Regional Activities Program

The Program aims to:

- prevent family violence, sexual assault and child abuse and strengthen child protection initiatives by undertaking relevant activities and initiatives; and

- support local communities to develop sustainable solutions which address the needs and issues as they relate to individuals, families and communities.

Examples of projects supported include night patrols, coordinators for safe houses, and the development of support initiatives to assist perpetrators to break the cycle of family violence. The Government has allocated \$4.2 million to the program in 2005-06.

An evaluation will examine the success of the programs in reducing and preventing family violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities as well as the selection and monitoring of initiatives to prevent Indigenous family violence and the operations of organisations responsible for their delivery.

This evaluation will follow on from, and complement, an audit of Family Violence Legal Services in the Attorney-General's Department that is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2005-06.

To commence in 2006-07

Healthy Indigenous Housing

In the 2005-06 Budget the Government allocated an additional \$24.9 million in 2005-06 and a total of \$102.8 million over four years to the continuation of the Healthy Indigenous Housing initiative. Healthy Indigenous Housing aims to improve the viability and sustainability of Indigenous community housing organisations and the quality of Indigenous housing in rural and remote communities.

The initiative will reform governance, asset and tenancy management practices and continue a program of assessing and repairing up to 500 houses in around 15 communities.

The Australian Government will work with State and Territory Governments who will be responsible for planning and implementing governance reforms and improving asset and tenancy management practices of Indigenous community housing organisations. The initiative will form part of Indigenous Housing Agreement negotiations and will be progressively implemented and should commence in 2006.

A review of the Healthy Indigenous Housing initiative identified the need to focus on improving the quality and management of existing housing stock to increase sustainability of Indigenous housing. The focus of the initiative provides an ideal opportunity to develop shared responsibility between communities and government for the management and delivery of housing and related infrastructure.

Functional housing and related infrastructure is a platform for improving social and economic outcomes. Healthy Indigenous Housing is intended to improve functional housing and reduce homelessness and overcrowding in rural and remote Indigenous communities.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the of the management of the initiative and the progress to date in achieving the initiatives objectives.

Reserve topics

Indigenous Community Stores Project

The Government has approved \$1.5 million in funding to the Fred Hollows Foundation (FHF) to support the expansion of their existing Remote Community Stores Program in the Northern Territory.

The Program's priorities are to strengthen the ability of Indigenous communities to:

- manage their stores through effective governing committees;
- establish commercially viable stores;
- improve access to affordable and healthy foods; and
- develop retail management skills in the communities.

The project will be undertaken in staged phases. Phase One includes a number of elements built around the following five areas:

- scoping the dimension of need in relation to stores in the Northern Territory (and possibly, northern South Australia);
- examining the findings of the evaluation of the Nyirranggulung Nutrition Strategy;
- assessing communities in the Katherine region that have already approached FHF for assistance;
- investigating other issues that need to be addressed in order to refine and improve the model used to date; and
- exploring and firming up the levels of support that may be forthcoming from other partners.

The outcomes of Phase One, one of which will include a monitoring and evaluation strategy, is expected to contribute to the development and implementation of a broader national stores framework.

The project is consistent with the Government's priorities to boost economic development while at the same time offering the potential to improve nutrition in remote Indigenous communities.

An audit will examine the administration of the program and its achievements to date.

Indigenous Child-Care Services

Child-care support strengthens families by allowing parents to participate more fully, both economically and socially, in the community. Child-care also benefits children by

providing them with opportunities for learning in a social environment and providing quality educational experiences.

Children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families have been designated as having a high priority for funded child-care and the Government funds a number of Indigenous specific child-care services including:

- *Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service (MACS)*: MACS is a service designed to help Aboriginal communities with their child-care needs as well as with social and development needs. These services can include different types of child-care depending on the community needs (eg. playgroups, centre based long day care, occasional care, and outside school hours care).
- *Aboriginal Playgroups and Enrichment Programs*: Informal self-help gatherings set up by parents to provide their very young children with opportunities to take part in group socialisation and development activities. They are run on culturally appropriate lines, encouraging children to learn and appreciate their traditions.

Budget expenditure in 2005-06 is expected to be in the order of \$24.0m.

An audit will examine the cost and quality of the services provided by the various Indigenous child-care services including the views of clients and other key stakeholders.

Evaluation of Social Support Programs for Indigenous People

The major aim of the review is to analyse the longitudinal data maintained by the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), to identify Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients who are enrolled in government social welfare programs, their demographics and patterns of movement between different welfare programs.

It is recognised that national and state averages mask local variations. The FaCs database contains postcode details of welfare recipients and therefore it is possible to undertake an analysis of welfare recipients according to the type of social support program and location. The evaluation will also be able to assess the level of income received by Indigenous clients from all welfare programs administered by FaCS and Centrelink. This information could assist in the identification of clusters of people requiring assistance or demonstrate the level of potential economic activity in a particular location.

The evaluation is also expected to be able to demonstrate how Indigenous welfare recipients respond to any changes in government policy or programs or their individual or family circumstances.

This evaluation is the first of its kind focusing on all Indigenous clients of FaCS/Centrelink and would be expected to uncover some complex issues of relevance to Indigenous welfare recipients as opposed to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Such information would provide information that would be valuable in reviewing existing

welfare policies, programs and administrative procedures and in developing policies and programs tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of Indigenous people.

The precise terms of reference and scope for the evaluation will be determined by a preliminary study.

ABORIGINAL HOSTELS LTD

Evaluations/audit in progress at 1 July 2005

No evaluations or audits are in progress.

To commence in 2005-06

No evaluations or audits are planned.

To commence in 2006-07

AHL Community Operated Hostels

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) is a company that provides temporary accommodation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. AHL has established a network of hostels across Australia and currently owns and operates 48 of its own hostels while contributing to funding 83 hostels operated by local communities.

Each night over 3,000 beds are available for Indigenous people who require accommodation for medical, educational, rehabilitation, aged care or other reasons.

AHL operates from a central office in Canberra and eight regional offices around Australia. Regional offices are in Perth, Darwin, Cairns, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Alice Springs. Budget expenditure on company owned and operated hostels is expected to be \$34 million in 2005-06.

As noted above, AHL also contributes to approved community organisations to run hostels. If an organisation meets certain management criteria, and provided funds are available, they may be eligible for funding under the Community Hostels Grants Program to meet primarily the cost of operational deficits. Budget expenditure on community hostels is estimated to be \$8.4 million in 2005-06.

In 2004, OEA conducted an evaluation of the performance of company owned and operated hostels and the inferred impact of their accommodation services on the Indigenous population.

An audit will examine the management and quality of services provided by community operated hostels and benchmark services against company operated hostels.

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

Audit of Croc Festivals

Croc Festivals provide an opportunity for both primary and high school Indigenous students living in remote and rural Australia to demonstrate their creative talents by performing in front of a live audience. Performances are held in the evening and daytime activities include health and career expos, sports clinics and creative and performing art workshops. The Festivals encourage young Indigenous students to attend school more regularly and to lead healthy lifestyles and avoid substance abuse.

The Festivals rely on partnerships between the Australian Government and State/local governments, commercial sponsors and local communities. Local industries also provide strong support, either financially or 'in kind' for these Festivals. A number of Australian Government Departments, co-ordinated by the Department of Health and Aging, provide sponsorship for the Festival with some \$1.7 million being provided for the last Festival.

Given that the successful staging of the Festival relies on complex commercial and financial arrangements involving many stakeholders, concerns have been raised. An audit is examining the reporting arrangements and ensuring appropriate record keeping and accounting practices are maintained.

The audit is expected to be completed in July 2005.

Audit of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) within the Department of Health and Ageing (DHA) has responsibility for administering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services program.

The program aims to improve access for Indigenous people to culturally appropriate health care services. Funding is provided to a network of community organisations - mainly some 180 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) organisations, previously known as Aboriginal Medical Services.

OEA (IP) is conducting a preliminary study of ACCHS to identify the risk factors and to determine the detailed objectives and scope of an audit.

The audit is expected to be completed in January 2006.

To commence in 2005-06

Primary Health Care Access Program

The aim of the Primary Health Care Access Program (PHCAP) is to increase access to primary health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PHCAP funds have been used for a range of initiatives, including:

- the expansion of primary health care services, including funding services established as former Aboriginal Coordinated Care Trials;
- the upgrade and expansion of health clinics;
- capacity building activities such as training and support, information provision and the development of community representative steering committees; and
- the construction of health staff housing in remote areas to encourage health care staff recruitment in these regions.

Further expansion of services through PHCAP will continue to be a major focus with additional funding of \$40 million to be provided over the next four years including an additional \$7 million in 2005-06. This will build on the measures announced in earlier Budgets. Annual program expenditure is some \$45 million.

The additional resourcing is designed to allow further primary health care sites to be established and existing sites to be expanded. This will include:

- additional doctors, nurses and Aboriginal health workers;
- training of Indigenous Australians to work in health sciences; and
- improved Indigenous health data collection, and improved quality of service provision including medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to treat conditions particular to Indigenous health needs.

Longer term strategies to build the capacity of local health systems and support them to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will also continue. A more streamlined approach to services expansion was designed to ensure that additional health services were established as quickly as possible, having regard to the health care needs of local communities and the capacity of organisations to deliver services effectively.

In June 2004, a series of papers were released that provided information, analysis and advice to Government as a part of a Review of the Australian Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Program. The Review examined issues relating to funding for comprehensive primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the impact of activity in this area. The published material complemented information obtained from previous reviews and evaluations as well as that obtained from program data.

Improving Indigenous health and primary health in particular, is a key focus of the Government and of the National Indigenous Council.

An audit will build on the audit of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services organisations and examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the program by the Department of Health and Aging, including action to address relevant recommendations from the 2004 Review, and the achievements of the program in meeting its objectives. The details of the audit objectives and scope will be determined by a preliminary study.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework

In July 2003 the Australian, State and Territory Health Ministers signed the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*. The National Strategic Framework outlines nine key result areas requiring whole-of-government action that all governments are committed to achieving. By the end of 2004-05 each jurisdiction, including the Australian Government, will finalise detailed National Strategic Framework implementation plans that describe the accountabilities for progressing the action areas, timeframes and reporting mechanisms, and will commence implementation in accordance with these plans.

The Commonwealth and States and Territories are also scheduled to complete and implement a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework (Health Performance Framework) by the end of 2004-05 that will provide the mechanism for quantitative measurement of the impact of the National Strategic Framework. This will:

- enable ongoing assessment of the Australian health system in meeting the needs of Indigenous Australians; and
- address the need for a more consistent, simple and comprehensive strategy for data development, quality improvement and reporting based on policy priorities.

In addition the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council will finalise a plan for an independent mid-term and final evaluation of progress in meeting the aims and action areas contained in the National Strategic Framework.

The outcomes of the Health Performance Framework are crucial to the success of the planned evaluations and to the National Strategic Framework as a whole. An audit of the Health Performance Framework in achieving its objectives will provide assurance that performance measurement underpinning the National Strategic Framework is appropriate and achievable. An audit will examine the:

- appropriateness of the performance information;
- policies and strategies to enable consistency across jurisdictions; and
- mechanisms to collect and review data.

To commence in 2006-07

Implementation of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing

The *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing* was agreed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) in March 2004.

The Department has established implementation arrangements for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing, and is enhancing workforce support and training by continuing to support Emotional and Social Wellbeing Regional Centres.

In keeping with the Framework and the National Drug Strategy's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Complementary Action Plan, there is increasing emphasis on the development of Social Health Teams in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services. Social Health Teams will provide a range of specialist support services to meet the social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and alcohol and drug counselling and education needs of individuals, families and communities.

Improved mental health is another key priority of the Government and members of the National Indigenous Council.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Abuse Programs

The National Illicit Drug Strategy 'Tough on Drugs' (NIDS) was launched by the Prime Minister in November 1997. Since its launch the Australian Government has committed more than \$1 billion to the Strategy for a range of measures aimed at reducing the demand and supply of illicit drugs. A number of programs under the Strategy have components that specifically target Indigenous Australians under the umbrella of the National Drug Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Complementary Action Plan 2003-2006. Some \$11.3 million will be provided in 2005-06 for substance abuse programs in Indigenous communities including \$2.3 million to increase access to the Comgas Scheme.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Use Program involves working with strategic partners to implement the policy framework for the program, with a particular focus on alcohol, petrol sniffing and the impact of tobacco.

Another component of the Tough on Drugs Strategy is the Non Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program (NGOTGP), providing funding to establish and operate new

treatment services, and expand or enhance existing treatment services for users of illicit drugs. In August 2003 the Prime Minister announced \$6.1 million in grants for 15 services to help Indigenous communities to deal with problems of drug and substance abuse.

The Australian Drug Information Network (ADIN) is funded by the Australian Government as part of NIDS. It provides a central point of access to quality Internet-based alcohol and drug information provided by prominent organisations in Australia and Internationally. There is an Indigenous specific section on the website that provides information of particular relevance to Indigenous communities.

The Department intends to commission an evaluation of NGOTPGP and ADIN in 2006. These evaluations will be taken into account in planning the timing and scope of the audit.

An audit will examine the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the programs designed to reduce the harm caused by substance abuse by Indigenous people. The precise audit objectives and scope will be determined by a preliminary study.

Reserve topics

Aged Care Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – Residential Care

Disability and ageing affects Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people earlier than other Australians. Planning for aged care services is based on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 50 years and older compared to 70 years and older for other Australians.

Aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are currently provided under the *Aged Care Act, 1997* and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy, 1994*. In 2005-06, the Strategy has been allocated \$17.1 million.

Under the Strategy the Australian Government is funding some 28 Flexible aged care services providing approximately 599 aged care places specifically for older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The *Investing in Australia's Aged Care: More Places, Better Care* package is designed to ensure continued access by older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to culturally responsive aged care services, as close as possible to their own communities.

An audit will examine the implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Strategy including the quality of care offered to older Indigenous Australians.

Australian Hearing Special Program for Indigenous Australians

The extent of hearing loss amongst Indigenous Australians has been estimated to be as high as 40 per cent compared to 17 per cent amongst non-Indigenous Australians. The Australian Hearing Special Program for Indigenous Australians was established in 1996 and its objectives are to improve:

- access to primary, secondary and tertiary hearing health care programs and services including: increased hearing health promotion activities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; increased access to prevention, early detection, treatment and management services for ear disease and hearing loss; and
- standards of care in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing health for infants and children of 0-5 years.

It is delivered through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) and has four components:

- the establishment of Child Health Sites in selected ACCHSs where funding is provided for the employment of a health worker to assist in the integration of a primary hearing health program into an overall child health program;
- the provision of hearing health training for Aboriginal health workers by Australian Hearing, and the supply and maintenance of audiometric equipment;
- the provision of soundproof testing facilities in selected ACCHSs; and
- strategic research into otitis media.

In collaboration with the Office of Hearing Services, OATSIH is also implementing *A Workplan for Future Actions in Ear and Hearing Health*, which is based a *Report on Commonwealth Funded Ear and Hearing Services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Strategies for Future Action* which reviewed the program. The 2005-06 Budget expanded eligibility to Indigenous Australians aged 50 and over and to participants on the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program at a cost of \$10.1 million over four years.

The objectives of the audit will be to examine the management of the program, its achievements to date and the implementation of the *Workplan for Future Actions in Ear and Hearing Health*.

Eye Health Program

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Program began in 1998 and is a regional model of eye health service delivery involving Regional Eye Health Coordinators. The program facilitates specialist access to rural and remote areas and provides ophthalmic and optometric equipment in identified Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

In 2002-03 the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health commissioned the Centre for Remote Health in Alice Springs to undertake a Review of the Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Program.

The 24 Review recommendations span State, Territory and Australian Government responsibilities and areas of the health system including primary health care professionals, public health units, hospitals, specialists and other eye health providers and their professional organisations. The Australian Government Response addresses these recommendations and sets out future directions for the program, to strengthen its integration within primary health care and improve the mainstream health system response to the eye health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Implementation of program activities will occur in the context of the implementation of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

An audit will assess progress with the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Review of the Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Program and the relevant aspects of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and identify any systemic impediments to progress.

HUMAN SERVICES PORTFOLIO

CENTRELINK

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

There are no evaluations or audits in progress.

To commence in 2005-06

There are no evaluations or audits planned.

To commence in 2006-07

There are no evaluations or audits planned

Reserve topic

Centrelink Agents

Centrelink contracts organisations in Indigenous Communities who primarily employ local Indigenous Australians under the Centrelink Agent and Access Point Servicing model to improve the quality of, and access to, Government services and payments in remote Australia. Centrelink has over 180 Agents in Indigenous Communities across Australia. The cost of this service is estimated to be some \$2.7 million in 2005-06.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the model and the views of key stakeholders.

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

Audit of Native Title Representative Bodies

The Native Title program supports native title claimants through the establishment and operation of a network of professional service-delivery organisations known as Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs). Representative bodies derive their powers and functions in relation to native title activities from the *Native Title Act 1993* (the Native Title Act) and are eligible to apply for funding from OIPC to undertake those activities.

The Native Title Act sets out a range of functions for organisations, which are selected to operate as representative bodies. There are currently 15 organisations recognised as representative bodies for particular areas. Taken together, their areas cover the majority of the land mass of Australia.

The audit will examine the administration, corporate governance and performance of a sample of funded organisations to determine whether they perform their statutory functions under the Native Title Act in an efficient, effective and appropriate manner.

The audit is expected to be completed in the December 2005 quarter.

To commence in 2005-06

No evaluations or audits are planned

To commence in 2006-07

Audit of Indigenous Coordination Centres

The Government has placed a strong emphasis on a whole-of-government approach to policy development and service delivery across the Government with a network of 30 former ATSIC-ATSIS regional offices becoming Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) in 2004-05 to promote co-ordinated service delivery.

Initially ICCs will cover program areas such as CDEP, Community Housing and Infrastructure and Broadcasting and Culture. Over time the objective is to build a single office in which all the Indigenous services managed by key Departments – employment, education, community services, legal aid and health – will be represented. Individual ICCs are managed by an officer from DIMIA and staffed by officers from a number of government agencies. Administrative support staff is also provided by DIMIA.

Effective governance arrangements, relevant skills and a whole-of-government ethos will be critical to the success of the ICCs.

An audit could select a sample of ICCs and examine issues such as the:

- efficiency and effectiveness of the co-ordination arrangements for planning, budgeting, grant and program management, monitoring and reporting; and
- extent of program alignment and information sharing with State and local governments.

The scope and focus of the audit will be determined as a result of a preliminary study.

TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL AUTHORITY

Evaluations/audits in progress at 1 July 2005

Torres Strait Regional Authority Audit

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) was originally established as a Statutory Authority under Part 3A Division 1 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989*. It came into effect on 1 July 1994. TSRA comprises a Board of 20 elected Members supported by an administrative arm of about 26 staff. Funding of \$55.5 million was allocated to administer TSRA in 2005-06.

TSRA is responsible for many national and regional programs for people in the Torres Strait, which were previously administered by ATSIC. These include Economic Development, Native Title, Housing and Environment Health Infrastructure, and Social, Cultural and Development.

Section 76 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989* required the then Office of Evaluation and Audit to regularly evaluate and audit the operations of TSRA.

The aim of the audit is to identify the extent to which the TSRA is operating in accordance with its approved policies and procedures in meeting its accountability obligations.

The audit is expected to be completed in August 2005.

To commence in 2005-06

Torres Strait Regional Authority Audit

See above

To commence in 2006-07

Torres Strait Regional Authority Audit

See above

Torres Strait Regional Authority CDEP

The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program is a national program which is a regionally focused, targeted and tailored initiative aimed at improving and developing the economic, social and cultural status of Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority CDEP scheme provides work experience, training and community development activities to approximately 2,000 eligible Torres Strait Islanders at an estimated cost of \$31.9 million in 2005-06. The program is intended to improve the quality of life of people living in the Torres Strait communities by delivering community projects undertaken by the CDEP. The program also ensures the maintenance of a certain level of income for the participants to the program who voluntarily forgo their rights to income support entitlements and are instead paid wages for work carried out on community-managed activities.

The program was previously evaluated by the then Office of Evaluation and Audit in 2001.

Given the importance of the program to the social and economic wellbeing of Torres Strait Islanders, an audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the program by the Torres Strait Regional Authority and the operations of Torres Strait Regional Authority CDEP community organisations and the achievement of the program's objectives. The precise audit objectives and scope will be determined by a preliminary study.

Reserve Topic

Torres Strait Regional Authority - Housing and Environmental Health Infrastructure

The Housing and Environmental Health Infrastructure program aims to increase the number of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal persons in the Torres Strait area with access to adequate housing, infrastructure facilities and essential municipal services, consistent with, and appropriate to, their needs. The program also aims to improve the health standards of the Indigenous population of the Torres Strait region by providing appropriate and sustainable infrastructure, as well as ensuring that adequate environmental health programs are implemented. An estimated \$8.6 million will be spent on the program in 2005-06.

An audit will examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the program.

INDIGENOUS LAND CORPORATION

To commence in 2006-07

Assistance in the Acquisition and Management of Land

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) was originally established by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989* which was superseded by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*. Its purpose is to assist Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders to acquire and to manage Indigenous held land so as to provide economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits.

In December 2002 the ILC launched its new National Indigenous Land Strategy (NILS) that sets out how the ILC will assist Indigenous Australians to achieve outcomes under the four categories of benefit through its land management and land acquisition programs.

The land acquisition and management programs require applicants to define a specific purpose and set themselves achievable milestones and outcomes. The ILC is required to assess all applications thoroughly and not support those that are not sustainable and viable in the long term, or those that are inconsistent with the ILC's published program guidelines. The ILC is also required to monitor active projects to ensure they are sustainable and that real benefits are achieved.

The ILC is not directly funded via a Budget appropriation, but receives the realised real return from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Land Fund. Under its legislation the ILC has the flexibility to invest funds and to roll over funds not expended in previous years. It is estimated that some \$92.6 million will be available from revenue and assets for expenditure on land acquisitions and management in 2005-06.

An audit will examine the application and assessment process and monitoring of approved applications to ensure they are in line with program guidelines and contribute to the achievement of the program's goals.

Reserve topic

Aboriginal Benefits Account

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* established the Aboriginal Benefit Account (ABA). The major functions of the ABA are to:

- receive the equivalent of royalty monies derived from mining operations on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory;
- to make payments to Aboriginal land councils in the Northern Territory in proportions determined by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to meet their administrative expenditure; and

- to make payments to the above mentioned land councils for distribution to incorporated Aboriginal associations, communities or groups in order to benefit those Aboriginal people who are affected by mining operations.

Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the ABA is required to distribute statutory payments totalling 70 per cent of royalty equivalent income (i.e. special appropriation monies). The remaining 30 per cent of royalty equivalent income is available for discretionary payments. Monies surplus to immediate needs are invested. Payments from the ABA are expected to be \$64.5 million in 2005-06 and the closing balance at the end of 2005-06 is expected to be \$103.5 million

The audit will examine the administration of the fund with particular regard to the selection of discretionary payments and the investment of surplus funds.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS

Portfolio	In progress at 1 July 2005	To commence in 2005-06	To commence in 2006-07	Reserve topics
Attorney-General's				
	Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program	Prevention, Diversion & Rehabilitation Program		Evaluation of Indigenous Legal Aid Services
Communications, Information Technology and the Arts				
		TAPRIC – Community Phones Program	Evaluation of Support for Indigenous Visual Arts	Sporting Opportunities for Indigenous People Program
				Indigenous Broadcasting Program
Education Science and Training				
	Evaluation of Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative: Away-from-Base	Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program	Tuition Assistance	Homework Centres
		National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training	Evaluation of Supplementary Recurrent Assistance	Parent-School Partnerships Initiative

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS

Portfolio	In progress at 1 July 2005	To commence in 2005-06	To commence in 2006-07	Reserve topics
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies				Collection Development and Management
Employment and Workplace Relations				
	CDEP Organisations	CDEP Performance Information	Indigenous Economic Development Strategy	Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants Program
				Indigenous Community Volunteers
Indigenous Business Australia		Evaluation of IBA	Business Development Program	
Environment and Heritage				Maintenance and Protection of Indigenous Heritage
Family and Community Services	Indigenous Housing Organisations	Aboriginal Rental Housing Program	Healthy Indigenous Housing	Indigenous Community Stores Project
	Third Party Funding Arrangements - Follow-up audit	Evaluation of Family Violence Prevention Programs		Indigenous Child-Care Services
				Evaluation of Social Support Schemes for Indigenous People

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS

Portfolio	In progress at 1 July 2005	To commence in 2005-06	To commence in 2006-07	Reserve topics
Aboriginal Hostels Ltd			Community Operated Hostels	
Health and Ageing	Croc Festivals	Primary Health Care Access Program	Implementation of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy	Aged Care Strategy -Residential Care
	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services	Health Performance Framework	Substance Abuse Programs	Hearing Program
				Eye Health Program
Human Services				
Centrelink				Centrelink Agents
Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs	Native Title Representative Bodies		Indigenous Coordination Centres	
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Torres Strait Regional Authority	Torres Strait Regional Authority	Torres Strait Regional Authority	Torres Strait Regional Authority Housing and Environmental Health Infrastructure
			Torres Strait Regional Authority CDEP	
Indigenous Land Corporation			Assistance in the Acquisition and Management of Land	Aboriginal Benefits Account

