

Intervening in the Intervention

In summary, this document recommends the continuation of the NT Emergency Response (Intervention), with some modifications to its design and methodology. The NTER is really just the beginning of what needs to be a long-term and much more strategic approach to tackling huge lifestyle, behaviour, governance, housing, education and other issues in the NT. The NTER has provided an initial opportunity for progress and improvement in Aboriginal peoples' lives in the NT. A reversion to what has been the situation in many communities for decades is too depressing to contemplate.

These modifications include:

- clarification of objectives;
- a greater emphasis on Aboriginal agency and partnership;
- development of a more sophisticated set of aims;
- clarification of operational principles;
- establishment of a monitoring process, with an independent monitoring commission as its centerpiece;
- a much improved communications strategy.

In terms of content, we need added emphasis on:

- developing good quality interpreting and translating capacities;
- developing social and cultural adaptation capacities and initiatives;
- improved employment and training strategies;
- better policing and community safety;
- detailed work on improving child welfare;
- a major effort in education, particularly adult education, community literacy initiatives and Aboriginal workforce development;
- a major effort in development of youth programs;
- an improved process for supporting enterprises.

Also recommend the continuation of the existing Intervention programs, with adjustments as detailed in the Attachment.

Suggestion for Clarification of the Intervention's Strategic Aims:

As well as assessing the Intervention's design and progress to date, the Rudd Government should consider renaming the initiative: the "NT Special Measure" or the "NT Emergency Assistance Package".

The Government should also clarify to government and Aboriginal leaders and organisations that the Special Measure's overall objective should be to create a partnership between governments and Aboriginal people to help create safe, peaceful, healthy communities; strong, responsible families; and competent households in which to raise Aboriginal kids in the NT.

Further, that these aims will be achieved by securing constructive behavioural and social changes by individuals and families, improved government services, better communities and community-controlled organisations, and increased participation in the mainstream workforce and the private sector economy, and that initiatives such as increased policing, Welfare quarantining and income management, restrictions on alcohol and pornography, 'welfare to work' training and employment changes, streamlined development of

community infrastructure and private investment, less segregation, and normalisation of services and facilities, are judged to be of assistance in securing these changes.

The NT Special Measure's aim should be to decrease the following:

alcohol intoxication
oppression of women
mistreatment of children
welfare dependency
violence
sexual abuse
child neglect
crime
illegal drug use
self-destructive behaviour
truancy
illiteracy and innumeracy
corruption and nepotism in community and organisational governance
disease
depression
injury
property damage
joblessness
alienation (including alienation from the 'mainstream' society)
personal powerlessness
organisational dysfunction
environmental degradation
buck-passing by government departments
government neglect of its responsibilities
wastage of money and resources by all concerned

and to improve the levels of:

personal safety and security
responsible behaviour
responsible child care
competent child-rearing
education achievement
personal empowerment
engagement in and with mainstream society
competent tenancy management
responsive housing services
timely building maintenance
employment
effective training
sobriety
budget management
economic initiatives
successful enterprises
competent services
individual autonomy

secure and affordable food supply
effective government support
jobs in government programs in remote communities
adequate training to enable successful employment outcomes
saving money
wiser use of money and resources

Some important issues that need addressing in the Special Measure, but which appear to be missing from or to have received insufficient attention in the design of the original Intervention program:

Government and Aboriginal roles & responsibilities

- Monitoring and evaluation of the Intervention/Special Measure *processes*
- Understanding, affirming, valuing and encouraging the roles of responsible individual Aboriginal people, families, organisations & communities in constructively transforming their own situations and that of their society
- Reform of community organisations to ensure better accountability & outcomes
- Development and strengthening of responsible social institutions
- Fostering responsible voluntary social activities
- Community development & responsible empowerment projects
- Developing communities' conflict prevention and management skills
- Valuing and inclusion of responsible and capable Aboriginal leaders
- Development of responsible contemporary Aboriginal role models
- Positive engagement of responsible Aboriginal men
- Citizenship education
- Civic participation and voluntary activities

Child welfare (see 5 below)

- Reform of Child Protection systems (to ensure consistent, stable & predictable interventions for children at risk of actual or perceived harm)

Employment & training programs in remote communities (see 3 below)

- Effective training
- Better rates of retention in training programs, apprenticeships and jobs

Education programs in remote communities (see 6 below)

- Promotion of home and community literacy
- Adult literacy classes
- Pre-school education

Youth well-being & programs in remote communities (see 7 below)

- Young people's programs and related infrastructure
- Youth mentoring and leadership development programs

Health programs in remote communities (see 8 below)

- Mental health
- Drug and alcohol treatment and education
- Parenting skills
- Relationship counseling
- Sex education
- Nutrition education

Housing (see 12 below)

- Developing individual knowledge of maintenance requirements

Principles and Accountability

To ensure that the Special Measure is just and productive, the Australian Government should ensure that certain principles are observed.

The principles of mutual respect, fairness and non-discrimination should be practiced by all participants in the Special Measure process and applied in dealing with all issues.

The Australian Government and the NT Government (NTG) must work together in a non-partisan spirit of co-operation (“whole of both governments”) and make a fully integrated effort to enable problems to be solved and outcomes to be improved.

All NGOs and government departments delivering services to and working on behalf of Aboriginal people must be required to demonstrate good communications, effectiveness, transparency of processes and evidence of outcomes.

As well as observing the principles listed above, the Government should give serious consideration to taking the following actions to ensure accountability of all parties involved in the Special Measure.

An **independent commission** of qualified, respected and strictly non-partisan members should be established to ensure this happens. The commission should oversee relevant activities by both governments and NGOs, and report publicly against specific objectives.

Where analysis and evaluation reveals NGOs and government departments are failing to show good communication, effectiveness, transparency and desired outcomes, they should be reformed or replaced as a matter of urgency. The independent commission should be empowered to make recommendations to this effect.

Wherever possible, programs should be based on the strengthening of families, and, as far as possible, ensuring parents are competent and possess the necessary skills; and where possible, ensuring that parents accept and exercise their parental responsibilities.

Buck-passing between the Australian and Territory governments needs to be resolved for the long term. Full responsibility should rest with the Australian Government. If the NTG fails to deliver, it is a Commonwealth responsibility.

This responsibility must carry through to the local level, so that if local government does not perform, the Australian Government must ensure local public services are provided. Blaming local government, and local government models, is also a form of buck-passing.

It should also be acknowledged that Australian Government grants to the NTG are based primarily on population with loadings for remoteness and provision of services at national average levels to remote Aboriginal people, and do not give sufficient weight to the costs of developing the infrastructure and workforce for meeting the developmental needs of the population; and that the needs of much of the NT population are proportionally higher than in other States and Territories.

As Martin Mowbray has written, “Under the Commonwealth fiscal equalisation process, the NT receives much larger amounts of assistance than the states. This is to recognise the cost of providing average level public services to the Aboriginal population, dispersed as it is across vast regions. In 2004-05, eighty per cent of the NT government revenue came from Commonwealth government grants. Sixty-four per cent (\$1740 million) of the total revenue (\$2716 million) is derived from the GST. This (untied) amount is calculated (by the Commonwealth Grants Commission) to recognise the relative cost of delivering average (or ‘standard’) level public services. Called ‘horizontal fiscal equalisation’, the process recognises such factors as socio-demographic make-up, wage levels, the economic environment, geographic scale and dispersal or remoteness. Remoteness is said to be ‘a proxy to differentiate between the cost of providing services to ‘traditional’ lifestyle Indigenous people and ‘non-traditional’ Indigenous people, in recognition that indicators of relative need in relation to health, education and employment are more acute amongst Indigenous people in remote areas.’ (NT Treasury, 2006:21)

“Considering all factors that the Grants Commission takes into account, 65.5 per cent of Commonwealth grants to the Territory ‘can be attributed’ to the Aboriginal population (NT Treasury, 2006:22). Because of higher relative costs for delivering standard services, the NT receives more than four times the average allocation from the Commonwealth (NT Treasury, 2006:18). An essential problem is that the existing funding formula is only about current expenditures. It does not recognise the vast (needs and infrastructure) deficit that needs to be overcome.” (Mowbray, unpublished notes for Central Australian Aboriginal Congress briefing on Northern Territory Indigenous Expenditure Review, 2007). [see also Northern Territory, Treasury (2006) Indigenous Expenditure Review, Darwin, September. <http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/>]

Note in particular the reference to the ‘needs and infrastructure deficit’ whereby significant additional funding is needed to make up for past neglect.

Methodology and Communication

A revised **working group** of high-level Australian Government, NTG and responsible and supportive NGO officials should be established to replace the NTER Task Force. Its role should include ensuring development of appropriate processes and structures for working together; reforming the delivery of services; and ensuring adequate outcomes for Aboriginal people in the NT.

A primary task for the working group should be to revise the communication strategy for the Emergency Intervention. Absolutely central to this strategy should be an upgraded approach to the job of ensuring effective communication, principally by making better use of expert linguists, interpreters, translators, meeting facilitators and broadcasters.

Experienced long-term Central Australian linguist Gavan Breen:

“...People don’t realise that even simple little words may be known only to the highly literate; and many second-language speakers of English, even if they are reasonably well educated, won’t know a lot of words that you and I know simply because they live in a semi-literate society. They don’t read newspapers, let alone books. For example, I heard just the other day an experienced cross-cultural communicator say ‘What we are seeking to do is’, and I wondered if the person he was talking to had ever learnt the word ‘seek’. Aboriginal language speakers don’t learn idioms either, and we whitefellows grow up with them and use them without thinking — ‘it’s much of a muchness’ for example. Who ever learns that at school? I still make mistakes by misunderstanding the way people answer negative questions, although I’ve known about it for donkey’s years (another of those idioms) — you go to a house and look around for Bob, and don’t see him, so you say to someone, ‘Bob not here?’ and they answer ‘Yes’ meaning, ‘Yes, what you say is right, Bob’s not here’ and you misunderstand and think it’s ‘Yes, he is here’. People have to learn things like that if they want to be understood, and probably they’ll have to learn to get people to repeat to them the essence of what they’ve just been told. It’s the only way to be sure you’ve been understood.”

High quality **interpreting and translation** should be provided in all relevant aspects of the Special Measure. Time should be scheduled for ‘engineering’ of interpreting and translation projects: i.e. time spent considering (and discussing with native language speakers) the best ways to interpret the more complex and alien concepts and theoretical language (such as jargon, acronyms, theoretical terms) into the language in question, to enable the clearest possible understanding by listeners who may have very little formal education or oral English.

In particular, there must be meaningful **engagement and discussion with members of communities**, especially by the Government Business Managers (GBMs) and members of the Special Measure Task Force. The Special Measure needs to be fully explained to these people, the subjects of the Intervention, with regular updates about changes, and acknowledgement of and responses to all questions.

It also needs to be explained clearly to the wider public in the context of an overall **management plan**, with a clear rationale, specific targets and timelines, provision for evaluation of all programs, a long term staffing plan, and full public reporting. The plan should provide for a publicly accountable management structure. It should be subject to ongoing improvement.

Attachment:

Proposals for Improving the NTER and Making Detailed Program Adjustments

1. Interpreting and Translating
2. Social and Cultural Maintenance and Development
3. Employment
4. Policing and Safety
5. Child Welfare
6. Education
7. Youth Well-being
8. Health
9. Welfare & Income Management
10. Alcohol
11. Justice and Prisons
12. Housing and Accommodation
13. Community Stores Ownership and Management
14. Local Government
15. Sport & Recreation
16. Transport
17. Democratic Governance

In relation to all of the proposals below, the Australian Government ultimately to be responsible for *ensuring* that they are implemented. If the NTG cannot or will not, then the

1. Interpreting and Translating

1. Revision of the communication strategy for the NTER to ensure effective communication, principally by making better use of expert linguists, interpreters, translators, meeting facilitators and broadcasters, particularly in all meetings and discussions with individuals and groups who do not speak English as a first language.
2. Greatly increased programs for the training and employment of skilled Aboriginal interpreters.
3. Provision of suitably qualified Aboriginal interpreters in NT courts, schools, education and training institutions, hospitals, clinics, prisons, legal services, government departments, council offices and other workplaces.

2. Social and Cultural Maintenance and Development

1. Strong support for Aboriginal people who wish to undertake projects to enable the healthy adaptation and development of traditional social practices, customs and cultural activities in contemporary settings, especially where they recognise the need to respect fairness and the common good, and guarantee the contemporary individual rights of women, children and other vulnerable people.

3. Employment & Training Programs

1. An immediate review of the performance of the Job Network members and Registered Training Providers in NT Aboriginal communities, including expenditure on same under NTER;
2. regular monitoring and evaluation of the Job Network members and Registered Training Providers, with strict assessment of their competence, capacity and performance in NT Aboriginal communities;
3. better design and delivery of incentives, requirements and supports for Aboriginal men to engage successfully in training and employment projects, including projects or opportunities in mainstream communities, the private sector and/or distant from home communities;
4. greater funding for jobs in government programs in remote communities (i.e. JET crèche, youth, aged care, Night Patrol (where there is a sworn police presence) , Sport and Rec.), with preference to training and employing sufficiently skilled local Aboriginal people and with guaranteed provision of adequate management and supervision arrangements;
5. monitoring of the performance of the private sector, including government contractors, in relation to serious employment of local Aboriginal people;
6. commitment by governments to educate, train, employ and support local Aboriginal people into substantive and useful jobs;
7. adequate education and training to ensure successful employment;
8. development of employment strategies to enable the above to occur, with evaluation mechanisms built into methodology;
9. funding to enable better capacity for skilled management and supervision of CDEPs *and* other work projects;

10. rigorous monitoring and assessment of supervision practices and productivity levels in government subsidised programs and services;
11. the incorporation of on-the-job literacy support, and programs for provision of mentoring, living skills, work skills, technical skills, and oral English for CDEP participants;
12. provision of capital grants and budgets for all the equipment needed to operate efficient and effective CDEP programs;
13. provision of award conditions for CDEP workers (inclusive of accrued annual leave, sick leave and long service leave, superannuation, professional development and other award conditions);
14. availability of reasonable accommodation for people employed to manage, supervise, educate and train CDEP workers and related enterprises.

4. Policing and Safety

1. Increase of police staffing levels and infrastructure to enable provision of a permanent sworn police presence in all substantial communities (that is, all bar outstations/homelands) and in the meantime police posts for regular overnight visits to communities without a permanent police presence;
2. police resources commensurate with the levels needed to reduce the rates of sexual abuse, substance abuse, violence and self-destructive behaviour occurring particularly in the town camps and remote communities;
3. three-fold extension of the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk and the Police Sniffer Dog program and efforts to identify and convict dealers of illicit drugs and alcohol;
4. provision of safe houses for victims of violence, but *only* in communities where there is a police presence, with staff trained in dealing with domestic violence, including at least a part-time resident co-ordinator;
5. facilitation of a longer term process whereby communities establish a shared and reasonably united commitment to community well-being and which includes a commitment to a degree of self-regulation.

5. Child Welfare

1. Child protection in the NT to be improved, starting with an independent evaluation of the management and performance of NT DHCS and FACS in relation to child welfare issues;
2. the evaluation should examine current ratio of notifications received compared to those actually responded to; central intake system; staffing levels, skills and retention rates; recruitment, training and support for workers and carers; the efficacy of the existing leadership, management and bureaucratic arrangements; good practice quality service standards; the need for improved interagency protocols that are enforced and how FACS might achieve an understanding and acceptance of the need for collaboration between the government and community sector.;
3. the NT to provide good practice quality service standards in child protection that include support and intervention for families at risk, timely comprehensively documented case planning, collaborative joint case management and information sharing proper care and supervision of children and young people who are in the care of the Minister, development and provision of appropriate out of home care options for children and young people, support for adequate and predictable family access for children and young people living in foster care, support for

- schools to manage troubled young people and provide early intervention, careful permanency planning and exit planning preparation and putting in place a support structure for children and young people leaving care;
4. NT FACS to produce regular audits of every child in the care of the minister, including joint guardianship orders, with the audits to include the production of mandatory case plans for all children in care; the plans to outline the location of the child, school attendance arrangements, any special supports in place, outstanding needs of the child, and how they will (or won't) be met; with provision for comments by families and community workers;
 5. all enforced care for children and young people to be based on rehabilitation, education, cultural and familial maintenance and appropriate therapy, so that the children & young people emerge from care with less distress, more education, better health and a chance to work & live a meaningful life;
 6. better structured support & brokerage funding to assist for those senior Aboriginal women and men who take responsibility for kids, often growing up grandkids and other relatives' children in an informal alternative care arrangement;
 7. independent investigation of all deaths of children in the care of the FACS Minister, and these reports to be made public and tabled in parliament;
 8. an annual report on the state of child protection in the NT, listing the number of children in care, the number of reports/notifications, the number of staff, staff case loads, and highlighting major gaps and proposing solutions; with provision for comment by families and community workers;
 9. the trialling of new models of care for children and young people in order to address the growing need for such care and the difficulties in providing this care. Alternative care models should consider family strengths and support networks; and secure and appropriate out of home care that is responsive to the particular needs and circumstances of children and young people in the NT;
 10. the funding of remote residential youth projects (such as the Mt. Theo program) that get kids away from the locations and peer pressure groups which promote sniffing, cannabis, grog and other substance misuse, and which also provide pathways back into community, including access to education, training and employment. This should include programs specifically designed for girls and young women;
 11. higher ratios of FACS staff to children at risk or in care, particularly those living in remote communities;
 12. funding for child protection & family support workers in community organisations;
 13. the development of policies to better respond to children living with domestic violence and the associated risks to their health and well-being;
 14. the development and implementation of a framework for practice standards in child protection in Aboriginal communities that promotes a whole of community responsibility for the care and protection of children and young people; and
 15. the development of cross-border protocols between child protection agencies to ensure a collaborative response for children and young people at risk living in the cross border region of central Australia.

6. Education

General

1. Continued emphasis on the fundamental importance of ensuring that parents and carers send all school-age children to school regularly and ensure that they remain there for the full school day.
2. An independent, expert review of the NT system for educating Aboriginal people, including an examination of the efficacy of the existing management and bureaucratic arrangements.
3. Recognition that:
 - schooling for the vast majority of Aboriginal people in the remote areas of the NT is by definition bilingual; and
 - literacy learning and formal schooling in many remote communities often has a short history (this generation may only be the first, second or third to experience schooling.)

Seeking parity with mainstream English language national literacy and numeracy benchmarking may therefore be unrealistic in some cases.

4. Development of techniques for generating greater community participation and engagement in and affirmation and ownership of the value of education, including via local language and culture programs; and increased parental (or carers) involvement generally in the education of children, as parents' role is critical, and teachers & other professionals have less influence on education than parents do.
5. The provision of support for increased home and community literacy activities outside school, including:
 - increased availability of affordable literacy items (stationery, books for adults and children, educational toys, etc) in community stores
 - increased attention to community design supporting home literacy activities (high bookshelves, lockable cupboards, etc).
6. Strong involvement of older people in language, story-telling and culture programs in all spheres of Aboriginal education.
7. Establishment of community history archives and libraries, enabling the publication of community histories and the employment of local people to maintain archive databases and produce and input new media recordings; with these community libraries and archives able to be accessed by older and non-literate people.

Early Childhood

- 8.1 Recognition of early childhood education as part of a wider 'whole of community approach' to child well being and early child development outcomes;
- 8.2 A timeframe for provision of programs for all children in the 0 – 5 age group, including playgroups involving mothers, incentives to get more grandparents reading and telling stories to young children, and mobile libraries (for outstations and town camps) with properly organised and supervised activities at adequately established Family Centres, and pre-schools, in all NT Aboriginal communities.
- 8.3 Flexible operating models and regulatory frameworks to accommodate and facilitate wide community participation and engagement in, and affirmation and ownership of, the value of early childhood programs.

- 8.4 Recognition and affirmation of existing family and community practices that ensure child well being in early childhood programs.
- 8.5 The provision of parenting support and education to young mothers and fathers.
- 8.6 Special recognition of cultural learning and practices in early childhood programs.

Indigenous Workforce

9. Immediate provision of more local Aboriginal staff, including Aboriginal men, in schools, particularly as Assistant Teachers, Teachers and language workers; and a commitment to employing Indigenous school staff on Award conditions.
10. Provision of a program for training local Aboriginal adults to be school and adult education workers in remote community schools; with appropriate and flexible training models explored and established to ensure participation of Aboriginal women and men in work opportunities.
11. Development of better and sustained supports for local Indigenous education workers, to enable better training and retention rates, along the lines demonstrated by Robyn Freeman's successful program in the Utopia schools; including more professional development and accredited training for Aboriginal staff in schools.

Adult Education

12. Commitment to making both formal accredited and non-accredited non-formal education programs (a well structured, planned adult literacy campaign where the intention is to hit illiteracy Territory wide) available for Aboriginal people over the age of 15, including a timeframe for provision of suitably trained adult literacy educators accessible to all NT Aboriginal adults, with the tackling of illiteracy as the first priority.
13. Availability of community education programs (often referred to as post-literacy programs) which create the literate environments necessary to retain literacy and to assist people to acquire critical literacy skills (e.g. citizenship, livelihood, land care, women's programs, in which people's educational attainments and skills are built, as well as building a culture which values education through programs relevant to community issues and interests).

Schools

14. Development of a detailed core curriculum for NT schools, to help provide a stable and viable environment in which to teach those pupils who are unusually mobile; a fundamental reform of primary and post-primary curriculum; and an Aboriginal curriculum framework strategy. The changed curriculum framework should focus on getting students to be able to successfully complete tasks. The improved curriculum needs to have strategies and resources that increase the capacity of Aboriginal teachers and parents to assist in all aspects of the delivery. The way to do this is often to have aspects of the curriculum grounded within a local context. At a secondary and adult education level this might involve students in working along tradesmen to develop concrete skills in various construction and other trade areas.
15. Independent critical evaluation of *Accelerated Literacy, Making up Lost Time in Literacy* and *Yachad Accelerated Learning Project* prior to committing spending to the broader implementation of such literacy programs in Indigenous schools.

Schools Workforce

16. Immediate provision of more local Aboriginal staff, including Aboriginal men, in schools, particularly as Assistant Teachers, Teachers and language workers.
17. Re-training of many NT primary school teachers to equip them with the skills (e.g. trained to teach ESL) needed to teach oral English to the increased numbers of children with 'special needs' and LOTE attending schools, and to help teachers cope with the high proportion of students with special needs such as hearing problems and behavioural issues.
18. Targeted recruitment of mature teachers who could be expected to set strong classroom management rules and styles, mentor less experienced teachers, and stay in positions for at least two years.
19. Incentives for teachers who work in schools for longer than their minimum contract which should be at least two years.
20. Improved induction and training in cross-cultural issues, English as a Second Language and bush driving for newly recruited teachers; and improved orientation and support for all new teachers in remote schools.
21. Increased staffing of behaviour modification programs in Aboriginal schools, and improved access to special assessment teams, together with Aboriginal engagement at the thinking level with cognitive behavioural practitioners (CBPs).
22. Funding to NT schools to be based mainly on enrolment levels rather than attendance rates, with quarterly reviews of both, and subsequent adjustments where this is sensible.
23. Higher ratios of teachers to pupils in Aboriginal schools, to enable more intensive work and to allow different age groups to receive better attention.

Secondary schooling

24. An expansion of regional secondary education programs in bush communities, including multi-community secondary programs, with an emphasis on attainment of life skills and practical employment-related skills.
25. An expansion of programs to enable remote students to study in high quality mainstream schools, including boarding schools, wherever parents are supportive of this option.
26. Development of stronger links between remote and town-based secondary education programs, with residential campuses in the regional towns.
27. Provision of adjunct youth programs, employing trained and supervised youth workers, to engage children not attending school in activities that support the development of literacy and computer technology skills and move them into education programs.
28. Integrated work-experience programs that provide all children with work experience in both their home communities and other environments such as regional centres.
29. Availability of school based apprenticeships in some remote communities and vocational education (VET) in regional bush centres.
30. More emphasis on practical skills training - putting money into trades teachers and health & nutrition, and linking these with training in house and community maintenance.

Tertiary education

31. Establishment of a rural college in Central Australia
32. Support of non-formal arts, music and media-based activities that engage post-school age youth in ongoing literacy and learning activities.

Education infrastructure

33. Education reform should feature facilities (in at least the larger communities) for child protection and support. These would be equipped to provide for nutrition, hygiene, guidance and homework. In many instances residential provision needs to be available. These facilities could be integrated with the proposed safe houses. The facilities must be secure, but accessible to people who do not pose any threat. The role of these facilities should be central, not residual – integrating protection and development functions.
34. Improved pre-school facilities.
35. Regional secondary education facilities, including quarters for visiting students to live during courses.
39. Adult Education Centres, including some trades education facilities, particularly Mechanical Workshops and Building /Maintenance Skills Workshops.

7. Youth Well-being

1. The provision of properly staffed and supervised youth programs with adequate facilities and teams of professionally trained male & female youth workers in most communities;
2. That youth programs be broadened to also incorporate out-of-school support for literacy and ICT skills development for teenagers and post-school age young adults (for example the Mt. Theo ‘night school’ program);
3. Adequate accommodation and transport for all youth workers, sufficient funding for youth workers to have holiday and sick leave, and sufficient funding for youth programs to run over the summer months when lots of other programs close down.
4. The development of specialist youth mental health programs and interventions.

8. Health

1. More Primary Health Care funding, particularly for resident workers in remote communities (doctors, nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers (AHWs)), community-based Early Childhood (Home Visitation) programs and Social & Emotional Well-being units.
2. provision of accommodation, facilities and vehicles needed by PHC workers who are resident in communities;
3. more capacity for surgery: more specialist physicians, availability of theatre nurses, and theatre capacity;
4. greater provision of specialist outreach services in the NT, as well as additional surgical capacity, more ENT surgeons and additional audiology services out bush
5. better integration of substance abuse and mental health services, including adequate provision of halfway housing and aftercare;
6. provision of Male Health Programs in all communities which have clinics;
7. provision of Early Childhood Health Centres (including facilities for play groups & childcare) in remote communities;

8. provision of Emotional Health and Social Well-being Treatment Place/Cultural Adaptation Centres (programs would include substance abuse and gambling counseling; DV Intervention service; Social Work/Child Welfare Service; Mental Health Project; Nutrition Program; Physical Exercise Program; Civic Institutions and Voluntary Activities Program) in remote communities
9. provision of Youth Centres in remote communities
10. provision of Male Health and Wellbeing Places in remote communities
11. provision of Aged Care Housing – with both self-managing, supported and fully managed accommodation in remote communities
12. provision of air-conditioned indoor Sports and Exercise Centres in remote communities
13. provision of staff housing for any skilled non-local staff needing to be employed by all the services and programs listed above

9. Welfare & Income Management

1. Income Management (IM) continue to apply as is for another two years at least and then be rigorously evaluated to determine the effects on both individuals and communities generally. Impracticable to target ‘non-compliant’ individuals at this stage, just as people are becoming accustomed to having some funds set aside. This would create a new bureaucratic layer and in any event the current system needs to continue for longer in order to allow proper assessment of its success or otherwise, in conjunction with other measures such as policing. As we are dealing mainly with small, kin-based communities, not urban areas of Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide, those not on IM would undoubtedly be at risk of being harassed by others for cash as has frequently been the case in the past. This is one of the very valid reasons for the implementation of IM. CM Personal liberty needs to give way to the common good at this stage. Note that the 50% quarantining, apart from pilot in Katherine etc., is *not* currently tied to school attendance. Given the sorts and level of problems including harassment, substance abuse and related violence, that we are aware of in communities, it will take more than the six to twelve months in which the NTER has been in place for many communities’ and individuals’ existence to become more settled than they have previously been. Arguments about the impinging of peoples’ rights under IM are overshadowed by the abuse of rights that has gone largely unchecked for many years in Aboriginal communities, including town camps.
2. The IM process to be adequately monitored.
3. IM should incorporate adult education expertise, and is predicated upon the transfer of financial literacy, budgeting, nutrition, health, living skills and household management skills to welfare recipients within defined timeframes.
4. The implementation of a ‘smart card’ system that is tied to the individual through specific ID factors, whether photo or other, that can be used within and outside the NT (note there have been cross-border/mobility problems with the initial system).

10. Alcohol

1. Provision of at least one day (other than a weekend day) which has no sales of takeaway alcohol in each NT town;
2. establishment of a minimum price benchmark of 90c per standard drink, to ensure the cheapest, most damaging alcohol becomes less accessible throughout the NT;
3. abolition of licenses to sell alcohol at service stations and small food stores;
4. introduction of an ID card system for alcohol purchases throughout the NT.
5. greater surveillance of alcohol sales at roadhouse alcohol licences, and restrictions on amounts of takeaway alcohol sales from roadhouses;
6. adjustment of licences in Aboriginal communities to ensure that they feature responsible and health-related conditions, and do not contribute to excessive consumption of alcohol or the growth of alcohol addictions and alcohol-related harms;
7. monitoring of licensed premises in Aboriginal communities to ensure that they abide by their licence conditions ;
8. constant monitoring of the relationship between welfare quarantining, income management, increased policing and excessive consumption of alcohol to establish what changes are being produced;
9. Drug and Alcohol programs that support people to deal with additions in communities i.e. Case management, counseling, education, group therapy programs ie. AA, NA, ALON, rehabilitation, halfway housing, aftercare.

11. Justice and Prisons

1. Provision of a new low security NT prison farm for non-violent offenders;
2. a high component of life skills, education, vocational and life-skills training, therapeutic counseling and mentoring programs designed for all prisoners who don't speak English as a first language in NT prisons (including shorter term prisoners);
3. provision of an integrated rehabilitation strategy in the NT prison system;
4. more use of low risk prisoners on remote community projects;
5. improved post-release services and support, including half-way accommodation;
6. restoring of community service orders as an option for punishing non-payment of fines.

12. Housing and Accommodation

1. Provision of sufficient housing to meet the needs of all NT Aboriginal families, including housing that is appropriate for accommodating large extended families at certain times;
2. support for training programs to provide knowledge of the domestic, behavioural and life skills needed for living a healthy life in a house;
3. that houses be designed to support home literacy activities (lockable cupboard spaces, bookshelves, etc.);
4. provision of effective housing management and maintenance systems, especially re rent collection and housing administration;
5. strong management that is flexible and responsive to their needs of weaker community members;
6. greater amounts and varieties of short, medium and long term managed accommodation in regional towns;
7. Housing design that helps ensure safe food preparation, storage and waste disposal.

13. Community Stores - Ownership and Management

1. Stores that are not owned privately are owned and run on a regional basis to overcome the problems of corruption, and to enable economies of scale;
2. that management of stores attains set standards as defined by a stores operations policy, informed by an analysis of the many reviews, plans and consultants reports available on this subject;
3. that the food sold in stores meets, through regulation, certain basic requirements based on the health profiles and needs in the communities;
4. that stores provide healthy take away food served at lunch times, and to restrict, or not sell at all, sales of products which contribute significantly to development of diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and renal disease;
5. that stores provide affordable stationery (including paper, envelopes, scrapbooks, pencils, crayons, etc), reading materials (magazines, books and children's stories) and educational toys for children;
6. assessment of workable models for store management and ownership such as the Mai Wiru Stores Policy on the APY lands and the old AWS (Anangu Winkiku Stores) model adopted on the APY Lands SA; note the ALPA model used in some Top End communities [preference for a system wherein a single entity owns the stores, employs the staff (including store managers), acts as a centralised buying body, and sets (compulsory policies regarding what food should be sold (e.g. heavy subsidies of fresh fruit and vegetables at the expense of soft drinks and junk food). All NT stores adhere to a standard, mandatory Food and Nutrition Policy such as the Mai Wiru (good food) Stores Policy on the APY Lands;
7. Bi-annual analysis of store turnover to inform health promotion priorities;
8. Engagement of store managers to be on a contractual basis that adheres to the standard stores operation guidelines and food and nutrition policy;
9. Stores adopt a set price range for essential health items including food and health hardware;
10. Development of retail training and apprenticeships for remote Aboriginal people and clear career pathways in remote community stores.

14. Local Government

1. Encourage the NTG to re-examine the design and schedule for its Local Government reform, in the context of the NTER's aims and programs.
2. examine the possibility of reducing the size of some of the proposed shires, and other reforms aimed at strengthening families and empowering responsible individuals.
3. ensure that the Shires support the aims and objectives of the Intervention in terms of addressing disadvantage in the bush communities.
4. ensure the reforms are fully integrating and honouring the NTG's 'Closing the Gap' commitments
5. ensure that local council elections are based on democratic principles, and open to all residents without any impediments by people of power and influence.
6. ensure that community governance training and literacy mentoring be incorporated as core business for Shires
7. that Shires are adequately supported to employ Community Library Officers for the Library Knowledge Centres in remote communities

15. Sport & Recreation

1. Provision of swimming pools in major communities, with training & employment of locals as pool workers, and charges for admission to help off-set running costs
2. grassed ovals with night lights in major communities;
3. Trained professional sport & recreation co-ordinators with an adequate wage, accommodation, office and sport facilities and equipment in major communities;
4. resourced sport and recreation co-ordinators skilled to support young Aboriginal people to engage in local sporting activities including junior soccer, Aus kick, basketball, netball, swimming, little athletics

16. Transport

1. Appropriately subsidised regular air and bus services to and from remote communities, and between remote communities of significant size.

17. Democratic Governance

1. Provision of a systematic program of democratic governance training for community organisation boards and heads of agencies, developed and delivered by ORIC or other suitable agency. To be effective such a program requires on ground follow-up to help boards learn to apply governance training in context;
2. provision of a regionally-based board skills development officer to work with each board in each community for a specified time.

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24.8.08