



Northern  
Territory  
Government



# *Closing the Gap*

of Indigenous Disadvantage

Progress Report – 2007-08



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Readers should be aware that this report may contain images  
of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A young Indigenous child with dark, curly hair is smiling warmly at the camera. They are holding a blue stethoscope to their chest. The child is wearing a white shirt with a red collar. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown color. The overall mood is positive and hopeful.

# Vision

By 2030, Indigenous children born in the Territory will be as healthy and live as long as other Territorians. They will have the opportunity to participate fully in the social and economic life of the Territory, while having a strong cultural identity.



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During 2007-08 there has been substantial change in the landscape of Indigenous Affairs in the Northern Territory, building on the *Little Children Are Sacred* report handed down by the Northern Territory Government's Board of *Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse*.

*Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage – A Generational Plan of Action* was launched on 20 August 2007 in response to the 97 recommendations outlined in the inquiry, but goes further than just responding to those recommendations. The plan has a clear vision and objectives and sets ambitious but achievable targets at five, 10 and 20 years to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. It also identifies priority actions for the first five years.

Leadership by government is needed now more than ever because *Closing the Gap* is about new arrangements in which services are delivered to Aboriginal people in remote communities. These communities are widely dispersed across some of the most isolated parts of the Northern Territory. For many service providers it requires new levels of innovation, commitment, dedication, support and strength of conviction to address the underlying causes of Indigenous disadvantage.

I am pleased to say we are making progress towards our ambitious targets through the dedicated work of our frontline personnel delivering government programs and activities. One such example is the establishment of remote public housing management systems – a significant new approach to delivering public housing in the bush, which presents both opportunities and challenges.

Over the past year, change in Indigenous Affairs has occurred rapidly, both locally and nationally, and I recognise the pressing need for community engagement with the people affected most by the changes. For many Aboriginal people such wide-scale changes are often confusing when it comes to understanding government's areas of responsibility.

My government has worked in partnership with the Australian Government over the changes they have introduced through the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). We have aligned the Northern Territory Government's platform for Indigenous intergenerational change, through *Closing the Gap*, to complement many initiatives introduced by the Australian Government's NTER. Without the contribution of the Australian Government we would not have been able to achieve what we have to date.

We are committed to a new governance framework to be coordinated and managed by the Northern Territory Government. A new partnership arrangement is required that establishes better coordination and working arrangements across the three tiers of government and the non-government and community sectors. This new partnership should be designed as a key governance mechanism to manage and align the range of initiatives, strategies and evidence-based reporting requirements to be applied to the *Closing the Gap* programs of both governments.

While positive outcomes have been achieved, our enthusiasm needs to be tempered with reality. It is evident that people living in the bush need to be engaged through culturally appropriate consultative ways.

We must work together and engage effectively in partnership with Aboriginal people in remote communities. Our future will depend on learning and growing together to bring about the enormous social, economic and cultural changes required to achieve the *Closing the Gap* vision by 2030.



**Paul Henderson**



## Introduction

This report details actions taken under the Northern Territory Government's *Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage – A Generational Plan of Action* (CTG). CTG is aimed at closing the gap in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Territorians through initiatives to address the underlying social and environmental factors contributing to child sexual abuse. The Northern Territory Government has committed more than \$286 million to the implementation of CTG in the first five years.

This report on the implementation of *Closing the Gap* in the past 12 months lists tangible results achieved through Northern Territory Government programs that impact on the seven areas of action: safety, health, housing, education, jobs, culture and a better way of doing business.

## Implementation

An operational group of senior public servants at the deputy chief executive and deputy secretary level are managing the implementation and monitoring of CTG initiatives and activities as well as the development of a range of indicators to meet the five year targets. The group reports progress of these activities to the Chief Executives' Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs. Agencies have commenced implementing the various initiatives in *Closing the Gap* and are making good progress.

CTG committed to establishing an Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council (IAAC) as well as Local Community Boards to provide the consultation mechanisms that ensure plans are appropriate for local conditions and that Indigenous people are partners in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage. The purpose of the IAAC is to ensure that the Minister for Indigenous Policy and the Department

of the Chief Minister (DCM) receive sound advice from Indigenous people on the implementation of CTG. Nominations for appointment to the IAAC were called (or sought) in May 2008, with the first meeting of the IAAC scheduled for early 2009. Additionally, a number of government advisory groups already exist in specific areas of relevance to CTG including:

- Safety – Family and Community Services Advisory Council and the Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Advisory Council
- Health – NT Aboriginal Health Forum
- Education – NT Indigenous Education Council
- Housing – Territory Housing Board
- Jobs – Regional Economic Development Committees and the NT Indigenous Economic Development Taskforce
- Business – Local Government Advisory Board.

A dedicated CTG website contains information on the initiatives and provides regular updates on the progress of their implementation.

## Australian Government Partnership

CTG identifies related areas and initiatives for further negotiation with the Australian Government. The Northern Territory and Australian governments are working in partnership to develop a long term approach to addressing Indigenous disadvantage that goes beyond the Australian Government's current Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER).

On 18 September 2007, the Northern Territory and Australian governments signed four Memoranda of Understanding which provide substantial commitments for Indigenous Territorians. These Memoranda of Understanding are in housing, education, jobs and health and underpin a total of over \$900 million in resources from the



Australian Government for addressing Indigenous disadvantage in the Northern Territory over the next four years. This includes:

- \$793 million for Indigenous housing, of which \$414 million is for new initiatives
- \$135 million for primary health care over three years
- \$10 million per year for three years from the Australian Government, which the Northern Territory Government will match dollar for dollar, to transition people from the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) to real jobs delivering local government and Northern Territory Government services
- \$48.74 million over two years for government and non-government education to accelerate literacy learning, improve teaching quality and provide additional classrooms and a breakfast and lunch program in prescribed communities. In addition the Australian Government has provided \$98.8 million over five years for 200 additional teachers.

Northern Territory Government officers are also working with the Australian Government on initiatives such as child health checks and additional policing.

### **One-off Investment Packages**

The Australian Government has provided family support package funding for safe houses, remote family and community workers and a mobile protection team – a total of \$12 million by the end of 2008-09.

Expansion of sexual assault services as part of the child special services measure for 2008-09 has also been provided through one-off investment packages from the Australian Government. A partnership approach to alcohol strategies, including supply, harm and demand reduction is also being developed.

### **Legislative Reform**

Underpinning CTG initiatives is a range of new and amended legislation introduced under the seven areas for action including:

#### **Safety – Child Protection**

- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* – the Act aims to protect children from harm and exploitation.

#### **Safety, Policing, Justice and Family Violence**

- *Bail Amendment Act 2007* – amendment to reverse the current presumption in favour of bail in relation to an accused person charged with a serious sexual offence.
- *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007* – the Act aims to ensure the safety and protection of all persons, including children, who experience or are exposed to domestic violence.
- *The Youth Justice Amendment (Family Responsibility) Act 2008* – introduces family responsibility agreements and orders.

#### **Safety – Alcohol and Drugs**

- *Liquor Legislation Amendment Act 2007* – amendments introducing dry areas and increasing police powers to search and seize alcohol, as well as supporting the introduction of an identification system for the purchase of alcohol.

#### **A Better Way of Doing Business**

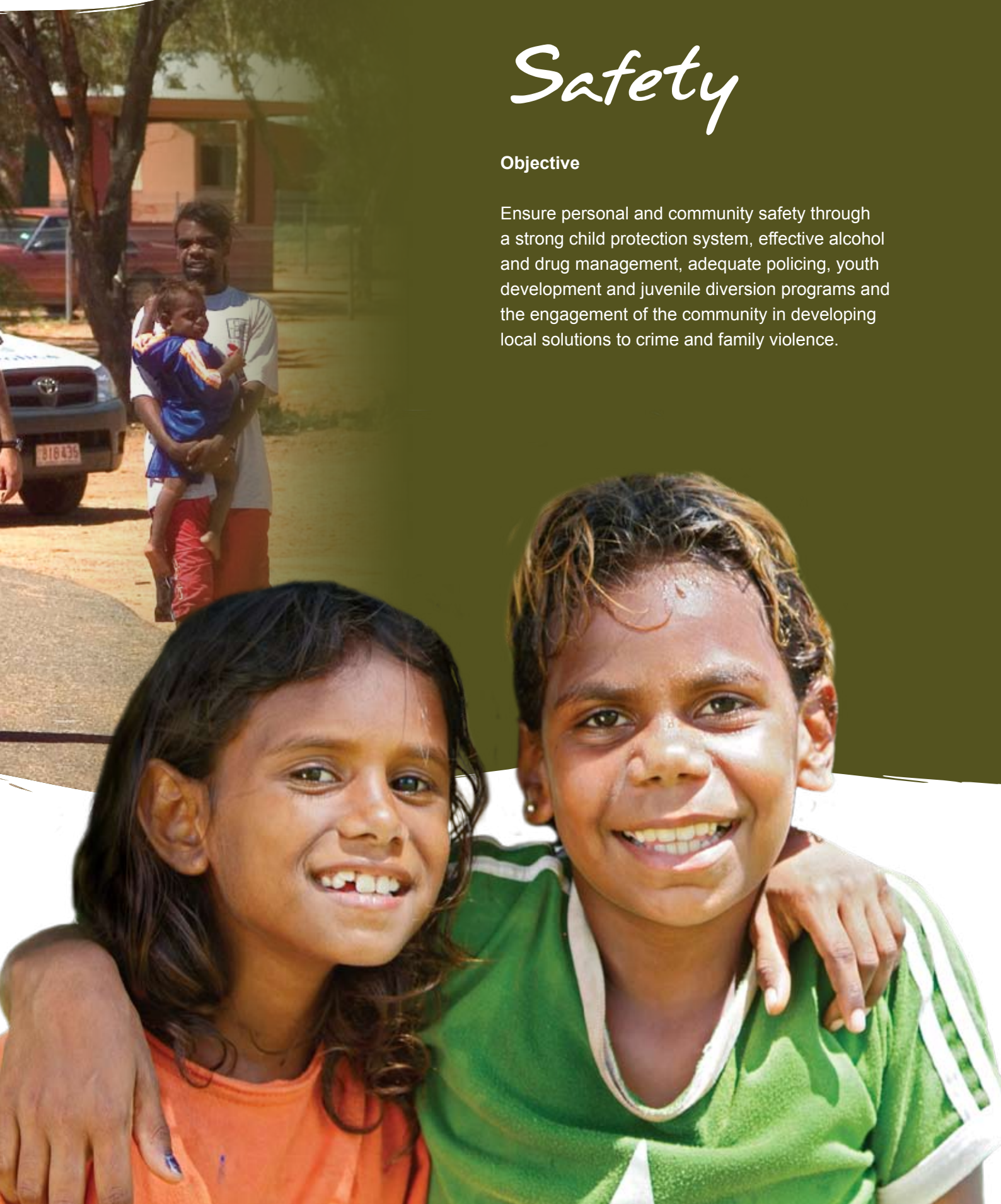
- *Local Government Act 2008* – a new Act to provide the legislative framework for local government in the Territory.



# Safety

## Objective

Ensure personal and community safety through a strong child protection system, effective alcohol and drug management, adequate policing, youth development and juvenile diversion programs and the engagement of the community in developing local solutions to crime and family violence.



# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

Child protection	
Children's Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Commissioner Dr Howard Bath commenced on 23 June 2008.</li> </ul>
Care and Protection of Children Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act assented to by His Honour the Administrator in December 2007, with staged introduction commencing May 2008.</li> </ul>
Child abuse community education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Community Services (FACS) staff providing mandatory reporting training as part of orientation programs for health, police, and education.</li> </ul>
Ten additional child protection workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eleven new positions have been created across FACS' regional offices working on child abuse and neglect cases across the NT.</li> </ul>
Residential care unit and therapy for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary appointment of therapists/clinicians to address current services gaps while a new model is being fully implemented.</li> </ul>
Additional care and case management for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional funding commencing in 2009–10.</li> </ul>
Network of Aboriginal child protection and care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote Aboriginal community workers will be employed in 13 communities. Recruitment has commenced. New remote staff are undergoing training and will receive professional support and supervision from two Aboriginal team leaders, one based in Darwin and one in Alice Springs.</li> </ul>
Sexual Assault Referral Centre expansion (SARC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New premises are being fitted out for Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin SARCs.</li> <li>Additional Commonwealth funding will fund further service expansion as part of an integrated model, enabling the SARCs to have mobile workers provide community education, counselling and support to remote communities.</li> </ul>
Child Abuse Task Force expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Child Abuse Task Force (Northern) was established prior to Closing the Gap. The Task Force has 17 NT Police established positions and eight seconded Australian Federal Police. Five administrative positions have also been established.</li> <li>FACS positions in the Task Force have been made permanent.</li> <li>The Child Abuse Team (Southern) has five new Northern Territory police officers and three FACS officers.</li> </ul>

10 additional student counsellors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four additional student counsellor positions were created and three filled.</li> <li>• Delivery of mandatory reporting training to 380 school staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Police</b>	
Remote Area Policing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Northern Territory Police has established 18 positions for the officer in charge of each of the THEMIS stations. Commencing 1 July 2008, 66 Australian Federal Police positions have been funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to provide staff for the 18 THEMIS stations and add staff to seven existing police stations.</li> </ul>
<b>Community justice</b>	
Ten community courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community courts are now operational in Darwin, Nguiu, Milikapiti, Pularumpi and Nhulunbuy. Community Courts have recently been held in Galiwin'ku and Yuendumu.</li> </ul>
Ten additional corrections officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four community probation and parole officers have been recruited and are operating at Timber Creek, Barunga, Lajamanu and Wadeye.</li> </ul>
Indigenous family violence offender program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based Indigenous family violence offender programs have been completed and will continue in Nguiu, Yuendumu and Tennant Creek.</li> </ul>
Katherine Witness Assistance Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The office is established and operational.</li> </ul>
<b>Family violence</b>	
Integrated community based family violence programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Territory Government (NTG) funding supports programs to operate in an integrated way with the Australian Government funded safe houses program in remote communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Offender rehabilitation</b>	
Rehabilitation programs for sexual offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs are now operating in Darwin and Alice Springs correctional centres. Central Australian Aboriginal Congress has been selected to deliver programs to offenders on community-based orders.</li> </ul>
Elders Visiting Program expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded to Lajamanu, Kalkaringi, Yuendumu and Tennant Creek and discussions are being held with elders in other parts of the Territory with a view to further expansion of the program.</li> </ul>

Alcohol and drugs	
Eight additional alcohol compliance inspectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four inspectors have been employed with Northern Territory Government funding. An additional eight inspectors have been employed with funding from the Australian Government.</li> </ul>
Two court clinicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part-time clinicians are operational in Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Katherine. Referrals have been made at each centre.</li> </ul>
Licensing identification system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electronic system for the scanning of photo identification required for the purchase of takeaway alcohol in Alice Springs and Katherine regions implemented.</li> </ul>
Return to Home program expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation engaged for Return to Home programs in Darwin and Palmerston.</li> </ul>
Regional alcohol management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol Management Plans in place in Alice Springs, Katherine, East Arnhem, Palmerston and Tennant Creek.</li> </ul>
Alcohol education and awareness program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community attitudes survey and young people and drinking survey underway.</li> </ul>
Pornography education and awareness program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pornography community education program is rolling out over 17 remote communities.</li> </ul>
Gambling education and awareness program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gambling awareness radio advertisements in language in East Arnhem as well as funding for a film involving the Tiwi Bombers football team promoting responsible gambling.</li> </ul>
Juvenile diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Youth Development Units (CYDUs) operate with a prevention and early intervention focus and conduct a wide range of risk abatement programs for young people. Recent Youth Diversion Scheme (YDS) policy initiatives include expanding the background screening for child-related employment to include all volunteers and community service providers associated with the program. YDS training delivered for grants program providers by other specialised agencies include the prevention of child sexual abuse, mandatory reporting, suicide and drug and alcohol awareness.</li> </ul>



## Related Initiatives

### Alcohol and drugs

The Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk (SAID), a combined initiative of the governments of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and Australia, was established to pursue the objective of coordinating law enforcement efforts in the southern Northern Territory and adjacent areas of South Australia and Western Australia. Funding was provided by the Australian Government to establish the SAID and a Dog Operations Unit in Alice Springs staffed by Northern Territory Police. Recent discussions may extend the concept to the Katherine/East Arnhem region.

### Northern Territory Emergency Response alcohol restrictions

The Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) introduced further alcohol restricted areas including all Aboriginal land and town camps. Responsibility for signage for these restricted areas has now been transferred to the Northern Territory. The NTER requirement for all purchases of alcohol over \$100 to be recorded has been incorporated into the electronic identification systems where they are in operation. Registers are maintained by licensees and checked during inspections by licensing inspectors.

## Outlook

- Continue to expand Community Courts to include Wadeye, Maningrida and Alyangula communities.
- Expand the Elders Visitors Program to include the communities of Yirrkala, Maningrida and one or more communities in Central Australia.
- Deliver sex offender treatment programs in both prisons and the community.
- Expand the community-based Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program to a further six communities in the first quarter of 2008-09 and consideration is being given to delivering the program in other places such as Alice Springs, Katherine and the communities of Galiwin'ku, Ti Tree and Alyangula by the end of the year.
- Employ four more community probation and parole officers in remote communities across the Territory, taking the total number of additional officers to eight.
- Complete and release the gambling awareness film featuring the Tiwi Bombers and Amity Community Services will be funded to run a gambling awareness project in Indigenous communities.
- Develop and implement Alcohol Management Plans in Timber Creek, Borroloola and Jabiru.
- Deliver the pornography awareness campaign in 17 communities across the Territory.









# Health

## Objective

Provide the opportunity for a healthy lifestyle through a focus on early childhood health and development, preventative health, sporting and recreational activities and primary health care programs.

# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

Integrated early childhood services	
Expanded antenatal and maternal care and early childhood development and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing Aboriginal childbirth education programs and planning improvement of hospital/remote community maternity care coordination. Expansion of remote area outreach midwifery service is underway; with two additional midwives recruited (East Arnhem) and a new third position in Central Australia.</li> <li>• Developing a new midwifery service that will provide remote area birthing support.</li> <li>• Develop childcare hubs in Yuendumu, Maningrida and Wadeye with support from the Australian Government.</li> </ul>
Preventative health	
Shire sport and recreation programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased funding of shire sport and recreation programs of \$4.5m to 2011-12.</li> <li>• In 2007-08:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$300 000 – for 12 additional Community Sport Recreational Officers at \$25 000 each</li> <li>- \$50 000 – for a Ngiuu football oval infrastructure grant</li> <li>- \$50 000 – for a Wadeye football oval upgrade infrastructure grant</li> <li>- \$100 000 – for grassroots projects.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Primary health care	
Chronic disease programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding commences 2009-10.</li> </ul>
Alcohol and drug rehabilitation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion has been occurring about the most appropriate way to expand services with this Northern Territory Government funding in light of the previously committed Council of Australian Government (COAG) funding, the Northern Territory Emergency Response one-off service expansion and further funding committed by the Australian Government.</li> </ul>



## Outlook

- Expand antenatal and maternal care and early childhood development and education.
- Continue development of child care hubs in Yuendumu, Maningrida and Wadeye in consultation with the Australian Government and the communities.
- Indigenous Early Childhood Development proposal with the hubs to be known as Children and Family Centres. This initiative will now form part of the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform (WGIR).
- Implement new midwifery service for remote area antenatal care.
- Implement antenatal education for Indigenous Territorians.
- \$1 million available in 2008-09 for remote community sport and recreation programs.







# Housing

## Objective

Provide families with safe, affordable and appropriate housing and access to essential services including power, water and sewerage.

# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

Government employee housing	
Housing for government employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment of \$42.32 million for 84 new houses.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 19 houses completed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Remote housing	
Remote housing and infrastructure Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$647 million will be delivered to 73 communities over the next five years under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement of specialist consultants for project management, cost management and design services.</li> <li>- \$30 million for Tennant Creek urban living areas.</li> <li>- Tenders have been called to create 62 allotments as part of a new subdivision at Nguiu.</li> <li>- 150 industry representatives attended SIHIP contract briefings in April 2008.</li> <li>- A series of regional information sessions were held across the Territory providing information on employment, training and development opportunities.</li> <li>- Tenders called for SIHIP alliance partners to deliver SIHIP housing program.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Implementation of Territory Housing framework in remote NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote Public Housing Management Framework (RPHMF)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shires contracted to provide housing repairs and maintenance and housing management services.</li> <li>- Information visits communicating housing reforms took place in 73 remote communities.</li> <li>- In-principle agreement for a 40-year lease over Tennant Creek town camps in exchange for \$30 million in infrastructure and housing refurbishments.</li> <li>- Signed agreement to allow investment of \$50 million for infrastructure and housing in Alice Springs town camps, upon commencement of a 40-year lease.</li> <li>- \$5.3 million allocated for urgent housing upgrades in Alice Springs town camps.</li> <li>- Territory Housing has opened an office in Nguiu, staffed by local residents. Five newly constructed dwellings have been allocated to tenants under the RPHMF tenancy model, including the provision of life skills training.</li> <li>- In-principle agreement with the Australian Government for Territory Housing to provide housing management services in Nguiu under the current 99-year lease.</li> <li>- A successful training program has been completed by housing officers in Wadeye to improve housing management practices in the community.</li> <li>- Increased Territory Housing capacity to deliver an expanded public housing system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Northern Territory  
Emergency  
Response five year  
leases and land  
tenure framework

- Territory Housing and the Australian Government are negotiating management responsibility for housing where the Australian Government has established five year leases.

## Outlook

- Funding of \$48.3 million for Indigenous housing and infrastructure, including part of the Territory Government's five-year \$100 million commitment to improve remote Indigenous housing.
- Funding of \$25 million for the construction and replacement of remote government employee dwellings across the Territory, including \$10 million under *Closing the Gap*.
- \$30 million for Tennant Creek urban living design works which commenced in April 2008.
- Training program completed in Wadeye will be continued in other communities to support the establishment of local offices.







# Education

## Objective

Provide children with a good start to life through preschool and early education programs in preparation for school, and access to high quality primary, secondary and tertiary education.



# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

<b>Preschool and early education</b>	
Six additional mobile preschools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three new mobile preschools in Central Australia: Lasseter, Tanami and Barkly</li> </ul>
<b>Primary and secondary education</b>	
Twenty-six additional teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ten additional teachers in remote schools and Indigenous Education Units.</li> </ul>
Fifteen additional classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fifteen classrooms have been completed.</li> </ul>
School attendance team to track students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three additional staff in Attendance Team.</li> <li>• Implementation of the Six Point Plan of Attendance commenced.</li> <li>• School responses in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs to identify needs of those children living in town camps.</li> </ul>
A 'value of schooling' education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Value of Schooling' campaign launched on 2 June 08.</li> </ul>
Convert two homeland learning centres to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and community consultation has occurred in Yilpara and Arlparra (Utopia) communities for upgrading their homeland centres to school status in 2008-09.</li> </ul>
IT resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved bandwidth to remote schools.</li> <li>• All newly recruited teachers provided with laptops</li> <li>• Phase 1 of local area network upgrades in remote schools.</li> <li>• Funding to schools to support the implementation of the Australian Government's Computer Fund initiative.</li> </ul>
Upgrade 15 community education centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning process completed for the first priority communities of Ramingining, Ngukurr, Alekarenge, Yuendumu and Yirrkala.</li> </ul>
Support to regional hostels for senior studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Territory Government agrees to support operational costs for the three regional hostels under consideration by the Australian Government.</li> </ul>
<b>School and community partnership programs</b>	
School and community partnership programs	<p>Partnership agreements signed with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top End Clontarf programs at Palmerston High, Katherine High and Sanderson Middle schools.</li> <li>• Smith Family to provide administration support to the Indigenous Students Mentorship program.</li> <li>• Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) Youth Crime Prevention and Reduction program.</li> </ul>
Early childhood centre for excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations have commenced about the establishment of the Early Childhood Centre of Excellence and for a research program involving Charles Darwin University and the Menzies School of Health Research. A senior officer has been seconded to the Menzies School of Health Research.</li> </ul>

## Related Initiatives

Initiatives under the Northern Territory Emergency Response included:

### Quality teaching and enhanced literacy

- An employment-based training model which will deliver training to Indigenous staff in remote communities in new and effective ways. Specialist Enhanced Literacy teams formed in phase one to provide support to 27 schools to develop staff and implement transferable literacy programs.

### Additional classrooms

- Planning and construction commenced for 16 new classrooms in remote schools.

### CDEP positions transitioned

- 184 Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) positions transitioned to employment in remote schools.

### Additional teachers

- First intake of new teachers funded by the Australian Government (50 teachers each year for four years) recruited, trained and placed in remote schools – Semester 2, 2008.

## Outlook

*Closing the Gap* initiatives to be implemented in 2008-2009:

- Continue establishment of mobile preschool sites in Central Australia and commence two new mobile preschools to support Top End communities.
- Recruit additional teachers for remote schools.
- Commence case-management of children with poor attendance and expand the 'Value of Schooling' campaign to regional and remote communities.
- Expand agreement with Top End Clontarf to include Casuarina Senior College and commence Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation program on Groote Eylandt to assist senior students to achieve their Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE).
- Expand further the bandwidth and local area network upgrades in remote schools.
- Expand the scholarship program for Indigenous students to receive support in studying to be teachers.
- Provide operational support for increased placements at Australian Government regional hostels.
- Upgrade 15 Community Education Centres and convert two Homeland Learning Centres to schools.





# Jobs

## Objective

Provide adults with opportunities through supporting the provision of local jobs to local people, increasing Indigenous employment in the Northern Territory Public Sector, enhancing literacy, numeracy and vocational skills and supporting economic activity in the bush.



# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

Indigenous employment in the Northern Territory Public Sector	
Transition Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) jobs to mainstream Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Health and Families (DHF): 61 positions converted to full-time and part-time positions.</li> <li>• Department of Education and Training (DET): 26 full-time and part-time assistant teachers (equivalent to 16 full-time) appointed to additional permanent positions in remote schools.</li> </ul>
Increase Indigenous employment in the NTPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As at June 30 2008, the number of NTPS Indigenous employees increased to 7.7% (1,380 people) of the total NTPS workforce.</li> <li>• DET has committed 100 additional NTPS traineeships over two years targeting Indigenous people and people from other disadvantaged groups under its Jobs Plan 3: Jobs for the Future 2007-2008.</li> <li>• Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education / Northern Territory Government Partnership Agreement 2007 – 2010 formally commenced on 1 July 2007. Schedule 3 Public Sector Employment Opportunities aims to improve Indigenous participations rates in the NTPS.</li> </ul>
Economic development	
Support Indigenous economic development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding provided for the Department of Business and Employment's (DBE) Indigenous Business Development Program to increase the number of successful applications.</li> <li>• The <i>Closing the Gap</i> initiative has currently created approximately 25 jobs and 12 new businesses.</li> <li>• There has been engagement with more than 115 individuals with business interests so far in 2008-09.</li> </ul>
10 year plan to improve road access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolled into the Northern Territory 10 Year Infrastructure Plan. A tender has been issued to develop this plan which is underway.</li> </ul>
Taxation incentives to foster economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research is now complete.</li> <li>• Proposed tax credit mechanisms to encourage investment and business setup on Indigenous land being developed.</li> </ul>
Local jobs for local people	
Identify jobs suitable for local employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian and Northern Territory governments have committed funding to transition CDEP positions to paid jobs in local government. During 2007-08 150 positions were transferred with a further 200 positions identified to transfer in 2008-09.</li> </ul>

<p>Make Indigenous employment a focus of procurement policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DBE is investigating options for consideration by government.</li> <li>• Territory Housing has developed a model for Indigenous employment through the alliance contracting arrangements as part of the workforce development outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p>Indigenous employment in housing and construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance contracting model will include financial incentives for alliance partners and sub-contractors to achieve agreed employment and workforce development targets.</li> <li>• An Indigenous Employment and Workforce Development (EWD) Working Group, reporting to the Australian and Northern Territory Government Joint Steering Committee (JSC), has been established to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explore opportunities for achieving Indigenous employment and workforce development outcomes under the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP)</li> <li>- provide key strategic advice on programs and implementation, including the development of an EWD framework model and EWD guidelines</li> <li>- monitor outcomes and facilitate a coordinated whole-of-government approach.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Outlook

- DBE is developing a proposal for base-level Administration stream Indigenous recruitment and training. It is envisaged that the program will commence in early 2009.
- The Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment (OCPE) is revising the 2002 NTPS Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy with advice from current Indigenous NTPS employees.
- Review of 2005-2008 Indigenous Economic Development (IED) strategy complete. A draft new IED strategy is due for public consultation in early 2009.
- A joint government-industry strategy looks to establish regional music hubs, among other initiatives, with associated touring, performance, training, mentoring, career pathways and employment outcomes.
- Four economic development officers in Nhulunbuy, Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs assist individuals and businesses to start or further develop their enterprise.
- Development of baseline data to measure Indigenous economic development.

## Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program

Indigenous employment in housing and construction initiatives include:

- A detailed community survey will be undertaken to identify those people in each community who may have an interest or willingness to participate in the employment and workforce development programs, are 'work ready' and have the skills or training required to participate in the construction program.
  - A number of employment and training resources will be provided by the alliance to support the alliance partners in achieving Indigenous Employment and Workforce Development (EWD) key result areas, including a pool of training and employment specialists to be shared across the alliance teams.
- In addition to construction activities, other opportunities pursued to achieve Indigenous EWD outcomes may include:
    - transport of materials
    - services to support the construction camps such as laundry services, cleaning and catering
    - light industry support
    - plant maintenance and vehicle servicing.











# Culture

## Objective

Recognise the importance of cultural identity and develop an environment of mutual respect through cross-cultural awareness, communication and engagement.

# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

## Cross cultural understanding

Indigenous culture programs in schools

- In 2008-09, expand the Wesley Lanhupuy Remote Teacher Cadetship from 10 to 15 places.

Implement cross-cultural programs in Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS)

- The Department of Business and Employment (DBE) co-ordinating the provision of three cross cultural training programs: orientation-level training for all new NTPS recruits, cross cultural training for senior (AO8+) NTPS staff and reverse cross-cultural training for NTPS Indigenous staff.

## Communication and engagement

Implement a whole of government Indigenous communications strategy

- General public information via a media campaign was launched on 20 August 2007 which included the Closing the Gap (CTG) policy framework and initiatives, fact sheets, media and information kits, media monitoring, and translations into seven major Aboriginal languages.
- A dedicated CTG website has been established.

Increase the use of interpreters when engaging with Aboriginal people for whom English is not a first language

- In 2007-08, 3903 interpreting assignments were completed, compared to 3104 in 2006-07, an increase of 25%.
- Seventy eight new interpreters have been recruited and trained in the following communities:
  - Santa Teresa, Areyonga, Imanpa, Papunya, Titjikala, Haasts Bluff, Yuendumu, Ampilatwatja, Utopia, Nyirripi, Laramba, Ti Tree, Mutitjulu, Elliott, Tara, Willowra, Lajamanu, Pigeon Hole, Kalkarindji, Daguragu, Bulman, Numbulwar, Ngukurr, Barunga, Beswick, Binjari, Wadeye, Daly River, Tiwi Islands, Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Milingimbi, Ramingining, Umbakumba and Angurugu.
- In 2007-08 Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) staff provided 30 training workshops for interpreters, Aboriginal Legal Services, Centrelink, FaHCSIA, Police, Relationships Australia, Centrecare, new doctors, graduate and nurses. Interpreter training has focused on issues related to the Northern Territory Emergency Response, such as income management.

## Outlook

- Whole of government communication strategy to be developed for implementation in 2009.
- The Northern Territory Government (NTG) is providing:
  - ongoing funding for two new interpreter positions one each in Darwin and Alice Springs
  - ongoing funding of \$70 000 per annum to cover costs associated with training and accreditation of interpreters with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
  - ongoing funding of \$70 000 per annum to assist in providing non-government organisations (NGOs) with free access to (AIS) registered interpreters.
- The Australian Government has provided one-off funding of \$800 000 to improve engagement with Indigenous people in the NT. This funding will focus on recruiting, training and accreditation of interpreters in the Australian Government prescribed communities.
- NTG is committed to developing a framework for whole-of-government action on cross cultural competence and security.







# *A better way of doing business*

## **Objective**

Work towards the engagement of Indigenous Territorians in policy and service delivery in areas affecting them, helping them meet their obligations and responsibilities in building a better future for their children.

# Progress on Key Initiatives to Close the Gap

Indigenous engagement in service delivery	
Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applications called in April 2008 for the Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council (IAAC).</li></ul>
Local government reform	
Local government community boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultation with communities and former community councils has been undertaken to ensure that all areas of community, region or ward have the opportunity to be engaged in determining the make-up of the local board.</li><li>• During the interim period of 1 July to 31 October 2008 a Shire Council Committee was formed for each shire to provide advice to the shire manager.</li></ul>
Local community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposal currently being developed.</li></ul>

## Outlook

- Shire council elections held in October 2008.
- Members of local boards will be appointed by council from October 2008.









# Next steps

While there has been significant progress by government agencies implementing action against more than 60 priority activities, there remains considerable work to do.

The outcomes sought through generational change in the *Closing the Gap* plan will require the alignment of all Northern Territory and Australian government initiatives aimed at closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage.

The Northern Territory Government will now develop a three year Strategic Implementation Plan (2009-12) to:

- better align *Closing the Gap* with other Australian and Northern Territory government initiatives
- review targets and indicators to effectively report progress and ensure consistency with the intent of *Closing the Gap*
- identify additional initiatives and strategies required to meet the five year targets.

As implementation of *Closing the Gap* proceeds, other policies are being developed and implemented at all levels of government to close the gap of disadvantage between the Territory (and Australia's) Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The challenge is to remain focussed on headline and progress indicators that underpin our targets, to ensure traction in delivering improvements in people's day to day lives and, at the same time, not be subsumed with information and reporting.

Development of a data framework document for *Closing the Gap* is underway. This will align with other elements of policy development under the auspice of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Working Group on Indigenous Reform, the Northern Territory Emergency Response as well as the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework. The purpose of this document is to support the information about the *Closing the Gap* targets and their indicators, to facilitate Northern Territory Government agency reporting and understanding of their progress, to inform key stakeholders and to assist monitoring by government.

We will report annually against the five year targets, explaining the extent to which we are achieving the objectives from the seven priority action areas in the *Closing the Gap* plan.

