

# What Works in Indigenous Affairs

Any policies for Indigenous communities should be based on evidence of what works, supported by strong research into how it works and why. The numerous reports, studies and research papers published over the years outline clear and repeated principles that can guide successful Indigenous programs and policies.

As Reconciliation Australia Director Fred Chaney says, *'...the answers, while complex, are now known. And that means... governments, and all of us involved, have no excuses left for failure.'*

Here are 10 ingredients for successful Indigenous policies and programs:

- Genuine engagement with communities in talking about, developing and implementing policies.
- Active and well-supported Indigenous led decision-making in program-design.
- Grass-roots, bottom-up approaches that knit together local knowledge within a national framework.
- Local and region specific programs that are tailored to the needs of particular communities rather than one size fits all approaches.
- Investment in and support for local Indigenous leadership.
- Long-term investment in strengthening communities at a local level to decide and manage their own lives.
- Programs and policy approaches that are geared towards long-term achievements.
- Real investment of dollars and people based on need and ongoing support for programs that work.
- Regular and independent public evaluation of government programs and policies to make sure we learn from mistakes and successes.
- Co-operative approaches by State, Federal and Local Governments and their agencies which reduce the burden of duplication and red-tape on community organizations.

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These points are a summary of recommendations and findings from the following sources:

The Productivity Commission Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Social Justice Report 2006, 2005 & 2004

The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey 2006

Anderson, P. & Wild, R. Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle "Little Children are Sacred" Report, 2007

Reconciliation Australia & CAEPR, Hunt, J. & Smith, D. Indigenous Community Governance Project: Year Two Research Findings 2006 and Building Indigenous Community Governance in Australia; Preliminary Research Findings 2005

Dr Ken Henry, Treasury Secretary "Creating the right incentives for Indigenous Development" Address to the Cape York Institute Conference, 2007



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