

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide

16 February 2009



Introduction

UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide (UCW-Adelaide), an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, is a South Australian community service organisation with over 100 years experience in providing services to low income and disadvantaged people.

In 2007, UCW-Adelaide established the Anangu Lands Paper Tracker project (www.papertracker.com.au). The project tracks government commitments to South Australia's remote Anangu communities. An overview on the work and scope of this project accompanies our submission (*see Attachment A*).

Given our deepening commitment to remote Aboriginal communities, UCW-Adelaide welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Australian Senate's Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities (Select Committee).

Focus of Submission

UCW-Adelaide understands that the Select Committee is planning to visit the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in early March 2009. Accordingly, this submission mainly focuses on the situation in that part of the State. In particular, it focuses on four key issues:

- long-standing commitments to provide training and employment in housing construction on the APY Lands,
- government responses to the Mullighan Inquiry into child sexual abuse,
- the impact of funding cuts to family centres and homemaker programs, and
- access to government services via the PY Ku network.

Notwithstanding this focus on the APY Lands, UCW-Adelaide believes that other South Australian remote Aboriginal communities also face significant challenges. For this reason, this submission also highlights a number of emerging issues and ongoing concerns.

1 Training and employment in housing construction

For a number of years both State and Federal Governments have repeatedly made broad commitments to train and employ Anangu in the construction and maintenance of houses and other buildings on the APY Lands. In 2007 and 2008, such commitments were frequently made during negotiations over a \$25 million community housing program. To date, no detailed information has been released on the estimated number of jobs that will be created as part of this program or how either level of government plans to sustain Anangu employment beyond the main construction phase.

The following sections provide an overview on past and present government commitments to provide Anangu with housing construction job opportunities.

1.1 APY Lands: \$25 million housing construction package

In late October 2006, the State and Federal Governments announced joint plans for a major new housing initiative on the APY Lands. Six months later, the terms and conditions of a \$25 million funding offer were presented to the APY Executive Board. As part of that presentation, the Executive Board was told that “local people” would be involved in the construction of new houses and the upgrade of existing homes.¹

Subsequently, throughout protracted negotiations, both the State and Federal Governments continued to stress that job creation for Anangu would be a central component of the housing program. Examples include:

- on 15 August 2007, the Federal Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs informed Anangu, in writing, that as part of the \$25 million package, there would “be more jobs” for them and that they would receive training so that they could “help to build and upgrade the houses”²
- on 24 July 2008, the State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon Jay Weatherill MP) reported that “a comprehensive program of construction and associated training and employment will be progressed”³
- on 8 September 2008, the State Department for Families and Communities stated that it would “make sure” jobs went to “local Anangu people” and, to that end, had established a subcommittee to examine options for both training and ongoing employment in housing maintenance and management⁴
- in October 2008, the State Government’s Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division (AARD) reported that a government agency had developed “three new housing designs” to enable “efficient construction of housing to remote locations.” The report continued, “construction techniques have been designed to create opportunities to employ Anangu

in the manufacture, transportation, and onsite construction of houses.” AARD also stated that the \$25 million housing package would “provide opportunities for Anangu to gain employment in the construction and maintenance processes”⁵

- on 14 November 2008, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs (Hon Jenny Macklin MP) confirmed that the “construction and maintenance of new and upgraded houses” would “provide work and training opportunities for Anangu people.”⁶

1.2 Previous schemes and projects

UCW-Adelaide notes that plans to create sustainable employment for Anangu in housing construction and maintenance pre-date the announcement of the \$25 million proposal, in some cases by many years.⁷

For example, in 2004, the State Department of Administrative and Information Services (DAIS), the State Department of Further Education Employment Science and Technology (DFEEST) and the Aboriginal Housing Authority (AHA) developed a joint proposal to increase the capacity of local Aboriginal organisations to undertake construction and maintenance work on, and around, the APY Lands. ⁸

The proposal also envisaged significant employment and training opportunities for Anangu in the construction of government facilities (e.g. schools, police stations, child parent centres) and government-employee housing.

In November 2004, the Department of Premier and Cabinet’s APY Lands Task Force endorsed the proposal. This endorsement charged all of the agencies involved (DAIS, DFEEST and AHA) with the task of developing an “operational framework” that included:

- service delivery models,
- a risk management strategy,
- governance arrangements, and
- timeframes for implementation.⁹

More formally, the endorsement linked the proposal to specific actions and timeframes under the Task Force’s strategic plan. For example, by December 2005, the agencies were expected to have developed “a comprehensive training and employment pathway for Anangu in the construction and training industry.”¹⁰

In April 2005, DAIS reported that discussions between the three agencies had “identified the need” for each of them “to clarify current policies and practices.” At that time, “no specific targets for employment” had been set, though DAIS “envisaged that this [would] occur in discussions with Anangu organisations.”¹¹

In September 2006, DAIS reported, somewhat vaguely, that the tri-agency project had resulted in “employment for Aboriginal young people” and that “further opportunities [were] being explored.”¹² To date, UCW-Adelaide has not located any evidence to suggest this project and its “comprehensive training and employment pathway” was ever formally evaluated.

1.3 Key questions and clear targets: 2009 and beyond

The State Department for Families and Communities and, in particular its Office for Aboriginal Housing, is responsible for the delivery of the \$25 million APY Lands housing construction program.

On 8 December 2008, UCW-Adelaide asked the Department for information on what training and employment opportunities would be provided to Anangu as part of the program. In a reply dated 21 January 2009, the Department stated, among other things, that it was difficult to estimate the likely numbers of full-time and part-time jobs that would be generated through the program as a number of employment strategies were still being investigated.¹³

UCW-Adelaide also asked the State Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) for information on its efforts to deliver training in housing construction and maintenance through APY TAFE. In a reply dated 22 January 2009, the Department noted that in 2008, no APY TAFE students had obtained a housing construction and maintenance-related qualification. However, seven APY TAFE students had completed an accredited unit related to housing construction and maintenance.¹⁴

DFEEST also indicated that APY TAFE was “involved in discussions” with State and Commonwealth agencies aimed at “developing an employment model for Anangu to obtain employment in housing construction and/or maintenance on the APY Lands.” UCW-Adelaide notes – as detailed above – that DFEEST was involved in a similar venture in 2004 but that it failed to produce any sustainable results.

UCW-Adelaide believes that the governments’ overarching goals for training and employing Anangu in housing construction need to be broken down into real and measurable targets and timelines and that transparent reporting and evaluation processes should be established. We would welcome a recommendation from the Select Committee to that effect.

2 Government responses to the Mulligan Inquiry into child sexual abuse

UCW-Adelaide notes and welcomes the Select Committee's commitment to examine the implementation of the recommendations of the Mulligan Inquiry into child sexual abuse on the APY Lands "as part of its inquiry up until 2010."¹⁵

Through its Anangu Lands Paper Tracker project, UCW-Adelaide is endeavouring to monitor the State and Federal Governments' response to the key recommendations of the Mulligan Inquiry and to provide Anangu with detailed information on those responses. As of February 2009, our website was tracking government responses to [11 of the 46 recommendations](#).

2.1 The Mulligan Inquiry's reporting requirements

In mid 2007, as part of the process of establishing the Mulligan Inquiry, the Parliament of South Australia instituted a clear, statutory process for monitoring the State Government's ongoing response to the Inquiry's final report and recommendations.¹⁶

In short, Parliament determined that after receiving the Inquiry's final report, the Government must provide:

- a Preliminary Response to its recommendations within three months,
- a Full Response within six months, and
- five Annual Reports outlining the progress that has been made in implementing the recommendations.

The Inquiry's report was completed on 30 April 2008 and tabled in Parliament the following week.

The Government's Preliminary Response to the report was tabled in State Parliament on 24 July 2008. Its Full Response was tabled on 30 October 2008.

The first of the five Annual Reports is due to be provided to the State Minister for Families and Communities by 30 January 2010 and then tabled in Parliament within three sitting days. As things currently stand, the 2010 State election is likely to delay the release of the report until late April 2010 at the earliest.¹⁷

UCW-Adelaide believes that the State's electoral cycles should not unreasonably delay Anangu and the broader public from being informed on what progress the State Government has made in responding to the Mulligan Inquiry's recommendations.

UCW-Adelaide understands that the State Minister for Families and Communities can arrange for the out-of-session publication of this report and would welcome a recommendation from the Select Committee to that effect.

2.2 Projected timeframes and targets

When the State Government released its Preliminary Response to the Mullighan Inquiry in July 2008, UCW-Adelaide concluded that the inclusion of projected timeframes for specific actions would have strengthened the report. To that end, on 7 August 2008, we advised the responsible Minister (Hon Jennifer Rankine MP) of our hope that the Full Response would be far more comprehensive and include the necessary detail to appropriately address the report's recommendations.

UCW-Adelaide is pleased to report that the Full Response did include projected timeframes for certain actions, including some anticipated completion dates. For example, the report indicates that three additional social workers and two child protection officers should start work "in December 2008" and that a safe house at Umuwa is expected to "be operational by the end of 2010."¹⁸

2.3 Lack of consistency in Government's response

UCW-Adelaide is disappointed, however, that this level of information was not provided consistently across all 46 recommendations. For example, as part of its response to Recommendation 3 – regarding the funding and expansion of child sexual abuse prevention programs – the Government reports:

The Department for Families and Communities is working with the Bungala Aboriginal Corporation to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the establishment of 20 traineeships for Anangu on the APY lands.¹⁹

UCW-Adelaide believes that some indication of *when* the government expects the Memorandum of Understanding to be completed and *when* the traineeships might commence would have enabled Anangu, Parliament and the broader community to better assess the timeliness of this response.

At other points within the Full Response, some indication of an anticipated timeframe or funding allocation would have strengthened the Government's commitment to address an area of identified need. For example, the Mullighan Inquiry highlighted substantial, systemic shortcomings in the provision of treatment, and support services to children who had been removed from the APY Lands and brought to Adelaide.²⁰ In response to a recommendation aimed at addressing this problem (Recommendation 11), the Full Response states that the State Government is "exploring opportunities to streamline processes to support the adequate treatment and services, accommodation, supervision, and support for children" who have been removed from the Lands due to child abuse.²¹

The UCW-Adelaide is concerned that this statement fails to address the Mullighan Inquiry's finding that existing treatment and services are inadequate. Moreover, while "exploring opportunities to streamline processes" may be a useful first step, the UCW-Adelaide does not consider this to be an adequate long-term response. It is disappointed that the government's response makes no mention of the possibility of the allocation of any additional resources.

2.3 Insufficient State Funding

UCW-Adelaide has concluded on the basis of its close examination of the Preliminary and Full Responses to the Mullighan Inquiry that while the State Government had reorganised funding to focus more attention on the APY Lands, it does not appear to have allocated any substantial new funding in response to the report and its recommendations. In contrast, the Federal Government has committed an additional \$23.5 million.

UCW-Adelaide notes that this lack of new funding at a State level is at odds with the Inquiry's finding that addressing "fundamental problems" on the APY Lands will "require significant resources." It also sits uneasily with those recommendations that call for the provision of "sufficient funds," "adequate resources" and "the necessary long-term funding."²²

Neither the Preliminary Response, nor the Full Response contains a clear statement on the total amount of new funding that the State Government has allocated in response to the Inquiry's recommendations. While the Responses do highlight five State funding allocations, most of these are long-standing and/or pre-existing commitments. For example, while both of the Responses highlight \$1.49 million in recurrent funding for the operation of the Amata Drug Rehabilitation Centre, this commitment dates back to at least October 2004. Similarly, statements about a commitment of \$36,000 to APY schools to support primary school students "in the lower [literacy and numeracy] skills bands" refers to monies allocated in January 2008; that is, four months prior to the conclusion of the Mullighan Inquiry.

UCW-Adelaide would encourage the Select Committee to try to obtain a clear statement on the amount of new funding that has been allocated by the State and Federal Governments in direct response to the recommendations of the Mullighan Inquiry into child sexual abuse on the APY Lands.

2.4 Informing and engaging Anangu

The report of the Mullighan Inquiry emphasised the importance of empowering Anangu to "participate in the solutions" and stated:

It is fundamental to the success of any measures to prevent sexual abuse of children on the Lands that Anangu, particularly the women, be consulted and assisted so that they are empowered to make decisions about their children and keep them safe. No strategy or program can achieve the ultimate goal of eliminating or even reducing child sexual abuse without Anangu having a real sense of hope and relevance.²³

UCW-Adelaide believes such statements underscore the importance of providing Anangu with easy access to clear and accurate information about the findings of the Mullighan Inquiry and the Government's response to its recommendations.

On 22 September 2008, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon Jay Weatherill MP) advised UCW-Adelaide that a “short explanation” on the Inquiry’s report and findings had been provided to PY Media and that this explanation had been broadcast “in language approximately twenty times” on the local radio station.²⁴ The Minister also advised UCW-Adelaide that a broad-based strategy, engaging all the relevant groups, was being developed to communicate the findings of the report to Anangu and further, that this strategy would “be used as the foundation for an education strategy about sexual abuse” as recommended by the Mullighan Inquiry. Although the Government’s Full Response refers to this “communication education strategy” six times, it does not provide any detailed information on the timeframe for this work.²⁵

On 14 October 2008, a fortnight prior to the release of the Full Response, UCW-Adelaide asked the State Government when it expected the communication strategy to begin.²⁶ As of 16 February 2009, a response to this and subsequent follow-ups requests had not been provided.

UCW-Adelaide understands that the State Government is planning to hold a series of community meetings across the APY Lands in late April 2009 to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Mullighan Inquiry.²⁷ UCW-Adelaide welcomes this development but believes such meetings should have been held much sooner.

UCW-Adelaide concurs with the Mullighan Inquiry that problems on the APY Lands “cannot be solved overnight” and that “it will take time to find and implement solutions.” At the same time, we endorse its advice to Government that “unnecessary delay must be avoided” and that “Anangu must be empowered and resourced so that they provide the solutions.”²⁸ UCW-Adelaide believes that, as of 16 February 2009, the Government has not done this as well as it should have.

UCW-Adelaide has strong concerns that Anangu have not been properly informed about either the Preliminary Response or the Full Response and that this lack of information is making it difficult for them to engage with the Government from a position of knowledge and strength.

UCW-Adelaide encourages the Select Committee to ask the South Australian Government for:

- **regular updates about its broad-based communication strategy to inform Anangu about the findings of the Mullighan Inquiry into child sexual abuse on the APY Lands, and**
- **six-monthly progress reports on its development and implementation of an education strategy about sexual abuse as recommended by the Mullighan Inquiry.**

3 Impact of funding cuts to family centres and homemaker program

In 2004, the South Australian Government provided funding for family-focused programs to be established in four APY communities. Over time, this commitment evolved into the establishment of a number of family centres. Homemaker programs delivered from the centres support Anangu parents in their efforts to create safe and healthy home environments for their children. In 2006, Federal funding was supposed to enable the number of family centres on the APY Lands to expand from four to seven.²⁹ To date, this expansion has not been achieved.

The Mullighan Inquiry into child sexual abuse on the APY Lands examined the operation of the centres and their programs. It concluded:

The homemaker programs and the Family Centres appear to the Inquiry to be doing very good and important work. Many witnesses and, indeed, Families SA, also praised their effectiveness. The ultimate goal should be for individual communities and families to be sufficiently empowered to take control of the issue of child sexual abuse.³⁰

In its May 2008 submission to the Select Committee, the South Australian Government stated that funding from the Australian Government had enabled “an extension of the Family Homemaker programs to an additional 4 communities on the APY Lands.”³¹ However, on 30 June 2008, federal funding for the program ended.³² This has led to a shortfall in funding of approximately \$300,000 per annum.

UCW-Adelaide understands that no Federal funding and no additional State funding has been allocated to the Homemaker Program for 2008/2009 and, consequently, the program is experiencing a budget shortfall of more than \$300,000 per annum. Unless that funding is secured, the scope of the existing program will need to be reduced. Any such reduction would undermine the State Government’s public commitment to maintain the Families Centres and Homemaker programs as part of its response to the Mullighan Inquiry.³³

UCW-Adelaide notes the irony in the Federal Government agreeing to provide \$25 million for community housing on the APY Lands while simultaneously ending a small but significant contribution towards the cost of a program designed to ensure Anangu are better equipped to live in those homes.

On 8 December 2008, UCW-Adelaide wrote to the State Minister for Families and Communities (Hon Jennifer Rankine MP) expressing its concern about the cessation of federal funding for the family centres. We also asked the Minister for some detailed information on the existing centres and their operating budgets.

UCW-Adelaide notes that the Acting-Minister’s response of 22 January 2009:

- makes no mention of the Amata Family Centre,

- reiterates earlier assurances – made since at least November 2007 – that a centre in Mimili is “currently being established,”³⁴ and
- does not respond to our request for information on the 2007/08 and 2008/09 combined operating budgets and, in this way, avoids the difficult issue of the more than \$300,000 p.a. funding shortfall.³⁵

The Acting-Minister’s letter also refers to the “absence” of a centre in Kalka community. This statement is at odds with reports issued by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in 2007 and 2008 indicating that a centre had been established in that community.³⁶

UCW-Adelaide would encourage the Select Committee to clarify the status of the APY Family Centres and Homemaker Programs, including determining:

- **the specific communities in which centres have already been established, the dates on which they commenced operations and the number of FTE staff that they currently employ,**
- **those communities in which the State Government is planning to establish additional centres and the timeframe for that work,**
- **the combined operating budget for the centres and their programs in (a) 2007/2008 and (b) 2008/2009, and**
- **the impact, to date, of the 2008/2009 funding shortfall.**

4 Access to government services via the PY Ku network

UCW-Adelaide recognises that it can be very difficult and costly for Anangu to access many of the services that other Australians take for granted. Simple tasks such as renewing a driver’s licence, registering a motor vehicle or requesting a copy of your birth certificate become major challenges when the nearest government office is hundreds of kilometres away.

4.1 The aims and establishment of the PY Ku Network

In 2003, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), as part of its APY Lands Trial, announced that it would address this problem by establishing a network of rural transaction centres across the APY Lands. At each centre, Anangu would have improved access to banking, internet and government services (including Centrelink). Known on the APY Lands as the “PY Ku Network,” this initiative was one of two flagship projects for the APY Lands COAG trial.³⁷

In the second half of 2004, the South Australian Government stressed that the PY Ku Network would improve access to key State government services, including motor vehicle registration and licensing, fine payments, and accessing birth,

marriage and death certificates. It also indicated that “additional customer services and income generating opportunities” would be incorporated into the network “over time.”³⁸

In October 2004, the State Government allocated \$1.28 million towards the establishment of the network and reiterated that each of its centres would deliver “electronic and face-to-face government services to APY communities”.³⁹ Around this time, the State Government told the State Coroner that the PY Ku Network project would be micro-managed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and include training and employment opportunities for Anangu.⁴⁰

The PY Ku Network was originally scheduled to be up and running by June 2006. After many delays and setbacks the first PY Ku centre opened at Amata in late 2007. The sixth and final centre opened at Watarru in September 2008.

On 4 June 2008, representatives of UCW-Adelaide visited the PY Ku centre at Amata. At that time, six months after it had opened, only Centrelink services could be accessed from the centre. Three weeks later, the then State Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon Michael Wright MP) informed the South Australian Parliament that a whole range of services including driver's licence renewal, vehicle registration renewal and applications for births, deaths and marriages certificates were already being provided through the PY Ku centres.⁴¹

As the Minister's response seemed inconsistent with what UCW-Adelaide representatives had observed during its visit to the APY Lands, we contacted PY Media, the organisation responsible for managing all of the PY Ku centres. On 21 July 2008, PY Media confirmed that no State government services had been transferred to any of the PY Ku centres and that Centrelink services remained the only Federal government services accessible from the centres.⁴²

On 21 October 2008, the current State Minister for Government Enterprises (Hon Gail Gago MLC) advised UCW-Adelaide that:

negotiations between Service SA, the PY Media Management and their Executive Group are currently underway, with a view to recommencing a service delivery program as soon as possible.⁴³

UCW-Adelaide notes that, as of 13 February 2009, it was still not possible for Anangu to access any State Government services from any of the PY Ku Centres.

UCW-Adelaide has strong concerns that delays in transferring services to the PY Ku centres are undermining the long-term viability of a flagship project that was originally supposed to provide ongoing employment for up to 30 Anangu.⁴⁴

4.2 Evaluation of COAG APY Lands Trial

In February 2007, the previous Federal Government released the results of a first-stage evaluation of the APY Lands COAG Trial. Although the report contained substantial information on the PY Ku Network project, by the time of its release, its research data was more than a year out of date.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding that drawback, the evaluation report warned that as of December 2005 “significant aspects of the funding requirements for implementation of PY Ku remained to be resolved”⁴⁶. The report also documented concerns as to how the project would be managed and funded in the longer term:

Several of the parties consulted during the study raised concerns about the long-term management of the PY Ku, noting that this would be a challenging task and was well outside PY Media’s core areas of activity. There was also concern that the project could not be self-sustaining and would require long-term commitment of public funds.⁴⁷

It is important to note that some of those concerns had earlier been raised by PY Media.⁴⁸

The report notes that a second stage evaluation was scheduled to be undertaken in 2007/08 and indicated that the following issues were likely to be examined:

- the progress that has been made in implementing the PY Ku Network;
- the extent to which its objectives been achieved; and
- the benefits (or disadvantages) that have flowed to the communities as a result.⁴⁹

UCW-Adelaide understands that the second stage evaluation has not been conducted and is concerned that COAG’s announcement in November 2008 of a new national partnership “on Indigenous Remote Service Delivery” will divert attention and energy away from efforts to ensure that the original goals and commitments of the PY Ku project are fulfilled.

UCW-Adelaide would encourage the Select Committee to try to confirm:

- **whether the second-stage evaluation of the APY Lands COAG trial – or any other government-funded evaluation – was undertaken and, if so, what were the findings of that evaluation,**
- **the nature and extent of State Government services available through each of the centres, and**
- **the amount of funding that the State and Federal Governments have (a) provided PY Media for this venture in 2008/09 and (b) intend to provide PY Media for this venture in 2009/2010.**

5 Emerging issues and ongoing matters

5.1 Driver's Licensing and Anangu

UCW-Adelaide acknowledges the South Australian Government's sustained efforts to reduce the State's road toll, in part by increasing the skills and experience of new drivers. Since 2005, anyone wanting to obtain a South Australian motor vehicle licence has been required to complete 50 hours of supervised driving. UCW-Adelaide notes that this requirement has made it much more difficult for Anangu to obtain a licence, may have unintentionally increased the rate of Aboriginal incarceration, and may make it more difficult for Aboriginal people to take up job opportunities in remote areas. In January 2009, the State Government announced plans to increase the supervised driving requirement to 75 hours.

In 2007, Professor Ilona Kickbusch, an expert on public and global health, completed a ten-week residency in Adelaide as part of the State Government's Thinkers in Residence program.⁵⁰ Professor Kickbusch's final report on her residency was provided to the South Australian Government in May 2008 and released online in January 2009.⁵¹

Professor Kickbusch has recommended that the South Australian Government "develop alternative pathways for Aboriginal people to obtain a driver's licence," and track progress on this issue by adding a relevant target into South Australia's Strategic Plan.⁵²

UCW-Adelaide welcomes Professor Kickbusch's recommendation and trusts that the State Government will act on it as quickly as possible.

UCW-Adelaide would encourage the Select Committee to investigate the issue of driver's licensing in remote Indigenous communities including whether the lack of a licence is preventing Aboriginal people from obtaining employment in mining and other industries.

5.2 Public Transport options

UCW-Adelaide welcomed the Select Committee's observations in its first report concerning the "general lack of public transport in regional and remote areas" and the impact this has for the wellbeing of Indigenous communities.⁵³ The report drew attention to the demise of a bus service between Yalata and Ceduna.

UCW-Adelaide notes that in December 2007 the State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon Jay Weatherill MP) reported that a West Coast Senior Officers Group was to be established "in early to mid 2008" and that this would lead to the development of "longer term coordinated solutions ... for a range of challenging areas in the Eyre Peninsula, including the Yalata Bus Service."

UCW-Adelaide understands that while a Senior Officers Group has been established, as of 13 February 2009, the Yalata Bus service has not been re-established.

UCW-Adelaide also draws the Select Committee's attention to a long-standing State Government commitment to establish a public bus service on the APY Lands.⁵⁴ Funding for this service was allocated in October 2004. UCW-Adelaide notes that more than four years later, this service has not yet been established.

5.3 Aged-Care facility at Kalka (APY Lands)

In April 2003, South Australia's Aboriginal Housing Authority (AHA) allocated funding for the construction of aged care accommodation at Kalka, a remote Anangu community on the western-edge of the APY Lands.⁵⁵

In its official business plan for 2004/05, AHA indicated that "Stage 1" of the Kalka "aged accommodation" project would be implemented in 2004/05 and include the construction of "up to six units and a communal kitchen."⁵⁶

Construction of Stage 1 was eventually completed in the second half of 2007 at a cost of more than \$840,000.⁵⁷ As of early February 2009, all but one of the units had never been used. UCW-Adelaide understands that the State Government is continuing to negotiate with the community on the facility's purpose and has not yet provided any funding for its ongoing maintenance and operation.

UCW-Adelaide finds it unconscionable, given the high levels of overcrowding that exist in a number of APY communities, that this facility has remained unoccupied for more than a year.

UCW-Adelaide would encourage the Select Committee to inquire into the status of this project and what funding, if any, has been provided to Kalka to enable it to operate and maintain this facility.

5.4 The construction of the police station at Yalata

In October 2006, the Federal Government commissioned an independent review of policing in remote Aboriginal communities.⁵⁸ As part of its mandate, the review was asked to identify priority locations for the allocation of \$40 million of funding that the Federal Government intended to spend on policing infrastructure within remote Aboriginal communities.⁵⁹

Both South Australia Police (SAPOL) and the Police Association of South Australia made written submissions to the review pointing out the Yalata police station was not fit for purpose.⁶⁰

SAPOL's submission also noted that the police cells at Yalata – constructed in the 1980s – had been decommissioned in 2005.⁶¹

In its submission to the review, the Police Association also stressed the inadequacy of the existing police facilities in Yalata and also on the APY Lands:

these stations – in service for around 30 years – exist in a deplorable state of repair. ... The need for new police stations to be built in these communities is patently urgent.⁶²

In March 2007, the findings of the review were provided to the Federal Government. In relation to police stations in SA communities, the review report stated:

there is a need for police to demonstrate its presence and commitment with appropriately configured police stations located in the larger communities of Amata, Pukatja and Yalata.⁶³

The replacement of the police stations and cell facilities at Amata, Pukatja and Yalata was top of the report's list of "priorities for policing in remote indigenous communities within South Australia".⁶⁴

In August 2007, the State Government announced that the Federal Government had agreed to provide "\$7.5 million for police stations, police housing and associated infrastructure at Amata and Pukatja" and that this would include "court facilities and cells."⁶⁵ No mention was made of funding for new facilities at Yalata.

On 21 August 2007, fire completely destroyed the police station at Yalata.⁶⁶ Local police quickly established a temporary base in the community's administration centre.⁶⁷ SAPOL subsequently secured the ongoing use of another building "during the transition to a new station."⁶⁸

On 21 December 2007, the South Australian Commissioner of Police (Mr Mal Hyde) advised UCW-Adelaide:

Planning for a new purpose-built facility is progressing. The Yalata Community Council has endorsed a preferred site ... Funding and budgets for a new facility at Yalata have not as yet been approved.⁶⁹

A year later, on 18 December 2008, the State Coroner recommended that the South Australian Government consider building "a police station with safe cells at Yalata."⁷⁰

On 23 January 2009, SAPOL advised UCW-Adelaide that the situation regarding the "delivery of policing services to the Yalata Community via temporary office accommodation ... remained unchanged" and that funding for a permanent facility "had not been provided."⁷¹

UCW-Adelaide would encourage the Select Committee to continue to monitor progress on the funding and construction of a new police station at Yalata.

5.5 Core funding for Umoona Community Council

In September 2006, the previous Federal Government announced plans to abruptly end its long-standing funding arrangements with Umoona Community Council.⁷² These arrangements included funding for Umoona's governance, overheads, administration and management ('core funding'). After the announcement was widely condemned,⁷³ the Government reinstated about 80% of Umoona's funding through to 30 June 2007.⁷⁴

In May 2008, after Umoona waged a prolonged lobbying campaign, the current Federal Government agreed to reinstate most of the funding for that financial year, albeit as "one-off funding."⁷⁵

At the time that this funding was announced, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs (Hon Jenny Macklin MP) informed UCW-Adelaide that this funding would pay for activities intended to help Umoona "prepare for new arrangements to be put in place in the future."⁷⁶

The Federal Government acknowledged that these new arrangements would be "a significant change from the funding practices of the past" and were based on a 'normalisation' approach that supports Indigenous Australians to have access to the same type of services as other Australians wherever this is possible.⁷⁷

In May 2008, the State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon Jay Weatherill MP) noted in his Government's submission to the Select Committee that changes in Federal Government policy in relation to the funding of communities like Umoona had "impacted negatively" on the governance of those communities, and that:

without functioning community councils, the ability of communities to generate employment or establish business ventures is significantly reduced.

While the Australian Government's policy is for these services to be delivered by Local Government, there has been insufficient transition planning and Indigenous communities are suffering as a result.⁷⁸

UCW-Adelaide wholeheartedly endorses Minister Weatherill's statements and observations on this matter. Indeed, over the last two and a half years, Umoona Community Council has for long periods of time found itself in the unenviable position of needing to continue to deliver key services without having received the funding to do so.⁷⁹

In a letter confirming the one-off funding, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs (Hon Jenny Macklin MP) acknowledged "that the delay in providing clarity around funding ... had created difficulties for" Umoona. The Minister's letter continued:

Accordingly, we are keen to work closely with the Umoona Community Council and other key agencies on the implementation of new

arrangements under the Rudd Government on the delivery of municipal services funding and support for community organisations.⁸⁰

As of 4 December 2008, more than six months after the Federal Minister advised both Umoona Community Council and UCW-Adelaide that the one-off funding would help Umoona “prepare for new arrangements to be put in place in the future,” no such arrangements had been put in place. Instead, once again, Umoona was having to draw heavily on its own limited financial resources.⁸¹

UCW-Adelaide would urge the Select Committee to ask the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs for:

- **a clear and detailed statement on the level of funding that the Federal Government has provided Umoona Community Council in 2008/2009,**
- **the status of the Federal Government’s plans to establish new funding arrangements, and**
- **an outline of what the new funding arrangements might be.**

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- ³ Government of South Australia, July 2008, "Response by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to the 'Children on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands Commission of Inquiry: A report into sexual abuse'," p[13].
- ⁴ This information was provided by Mr P Fagan-Schmidt, General Manager, Affordable Housing and Sector Development, Housing SA, and Ms L Forrest, Director, Strategic Interventions (DFC) during their appearance before the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee, Parliament of South Australia on 8 September 2008.
- ⁵ Government of South Australia, October 2008, "Progress on the Lands: Update on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands," p3.
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- ¹² Department for Administrative and Information Services, 2006, *Annual Report 2005-06*, p52.
- ¹³ Fagan-Schmidt, P. (DFC) 21 January 2009. Letter to Rev P. McDonald.
- ¹⁴ Garrand, R. (DFEEST) 22 January 2009. Letter to Rev. P. McDonald.
- ¹⁵ Australian Senate, 2008, *Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities: First report 2008*, p41.
- ¹⁶ See Section 11A, *Commission of Inquiry (Children in State Care and Children on APY Lands) Act 2004*. The ongoing monitoring requirements were established through amendments moved by the Hon Sandra Kanck MLC (Democrats).
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- ²¹ Government of South Australia, 30 October 2008, *op. cit.*, p20.
- ²² See, for example, Recommendations 8, 14, 26 and 35 of the Mullighan Inquiry.
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- ²⁶ Nicholls, J. 14 October 2008. Email to J. Cranney (DFC).
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- ³¹ Weatherill, J. May 2008, "South Australian Government Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities," p3.
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⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ This information was provided as part of an Amended Answer to a question on notice asked by Senator Rachel Siewert in February 2008 as part of the Australian Senate's 2007-08 Additional Estimates session (see Output Group 1.2, Question 80, Amended Answer).

⁷⁸ Weatherill, J. May 2008, *op. cit.*, p 5 & p13.

⁷⁹ When the Federal Government agreed to release one-off funding in late May 2008 for the 2007/2008 financial year, the real effect of this decision was to provide Umoona with back-pay to partially cover the governance, administration and management costs it had incurred over the previous 11 months, along with one month of funding for its ongoing work (i.e. funding until 30 June 2008).

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