



Department of Indigenous Affairs
Government of Western Australia



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OUR REF:

YOUR REF:

Ms Toni Matulick
Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous
Communities
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Matulick

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Please find enclosed a copy of the Department of Indigenous Affairs' submission to the Senate Select Committee's inquiry.


The submission does not cover all matters that are important to Indigenous people living in regional and remote communities in Western Australia, nor does it attempt to include details of all areas of government activity aimed at improving the living conditions and health and wellbeing of community residents.

In addressing the terms of reference, the submission draws on some of the themes and issues raised in the Committee's first report, as well as giving an overall sense of the strategies and initiatives the Western Australian Government is implementing to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage in regional and remote communities.

If you have any queries about the submission, or require further information, please contact Ms Jennette Ward, A/Assistant Director, Policy and Coordination, on (08) 9235 8054 or Mr Stephen Smythe, Principal Policy Officer, Policy and Coordination on (08) 9235 8120.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Walker
DIRECTOR GENERAL

 May 2009

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE'S
INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS
COMMUNITIES

PREPARED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

May 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Around 45,000 Indigenous people live in regional and remote areas of Western Australia (WA).

A large majority of the 286 discrete, Aboriginal communities are located in remote, or very remote, locations and represent a population of approximately 17,000 people.

Despite the best efforts of successive governments, many residents of regional and remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia continue to live in appalling conditions.

A difficult task for governments is to balance the aspirations, cultural and social needs of Aboriginal people living in their traditional lands with the financial and practical realities of providing a range of services required to help them lead healthy and productive lives.

Resolving Aboriginal disadvantage requires governments to work together and in partnership with Aboriginal people.

A key aspect of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is focused on closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage through the adoption of a wide range of reforms.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery for example establishes a future policy direction and provides a model for government services delivery to remote Aboriginal communities.

The West Australian Government is working hard to complement this work at a State level and has recently established the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee (AACC) and the Indigenous Implementation Board (IIB) to improve coordination of Indigenous policies and programs across government.

The State is also seeking to improve engagement with Aboriginal people through a new forum, the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council (WAAAC).

The Western Australian Government has a range of policies and programs in place targeting the needs of Aboriginal people in regional and remote Aboriginal communities. A number of these are cited in the submission. New initiatives such as the Royalties for Regions program through which the equivalent of 25 per cent of mining and petroleum royalty revenue is invested annually in regional Western Australia will have a positive impact on the lives of Aboriginal residents.

INTRODUCTION

This submission deals with the Senate Select Committee's (the Committee) terms of reference (b), (c) and (d) only.

It focuses primarily on the policy areas identified in the Committee's first report (housing, essential services, health and education) and picks up on other themes such as policies affecting small communities, and coordination within and between governments.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The population of WA is highly urbanised with 75 per cent of the State's population resident in the Perth metropolitan area¹. In contrast, 36 per cent of WA's Aboriginal population live in Perth, where they make up just 1.7 per cent of the total population of Perth.

Overall, Aboriginal people comprise 3.6 per cent of the population, with the largest concentrations of Aboriginal people living in the most remote parts of the State:

- 21 per cent of Aboriginal people live in the Kimberley region (compared with less than 1 per cent of non-Aboriginal people)
- 10 per cent of Aboriginal people live in the Pilbara (compared with less than 2 per cent of non-Aboriginal people);
- 10 per cent in the Central region² (compared with 3 per cent of non-Aboriginal people): and
- 8 per cent in the South-Eastern region³ (compared with 2.5 per cent of non-Aboriginal people).

The less remote rural areas of the State contain lower proportions of Aboriginal people, roughly commensurate with the distribution of the non-Aboriginal population.

Around 45,000 Indigenous people live in the regional and remote areas (see WA regional population data in Appendix I). Of the 286 discrete⁴, Aboriginal

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics - Experimental estimated resident Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous population, Statistical Local Areas-30 June 2006

² Includes Geraldton, Carnarvon, Meekatharra and Wiluna.

³ Includes Kalgoorlie, Esperance and Ngaanyatjarra lands.

⁴ The ABS defines a discrete Indigenous community as a geographic location, bounded by physical or cadastral (legal) boundaries, and inhabited or intended to be inhabited by predominantly Indigenous people, with housing or infrastructure that is either owned or managed on a community basis.

Discrete communities include:

- communities in urban areas where the title to a parcel of land has been transferred to an Indigenous organisation, for example, communities on former mission or reserve land in New South Wales and Queensland;
- well established communities and outstations in remote areas;
- Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) communities and their outstations in Queensland as well as the two shires of Aurukun and Mornington Island; and
- communities on Indigenous pastoral properties/leases.

communities in Western Australia, the large majority (281) are located in 'remote' or 'very remote' locations.

There is a high degree of mobility within the regional and remote Aboriginal population in WA which makes it difficult to calculate community population sizes.

Research⁵ highlights that kinship is the main reason for mobility:

Kinship is the driving force of Aboriginal mobility in many parts of Australia. Blood ties and marriage principally define Aboriginal kinship and a classificatory system of relationships extends the range of kin to many others in the wider society. Much mobility can be defined as a social process geared simultaneously towards the enjoyment of social interaction, the maintenance of social relationships and the maintenance of social identity.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of discrete WA communities by population size.

Community population size	Number of communities	Usual population
Over 200	18	6,922
100 – 200	25	3,492
50 – 100	59	3,790
Fewer than 50	179	3,054
Total	281	17,258

Around 40 per cent of the remote Aboriginal discrete community population resides in the 18 communities with populations over 200.

In contrast, around 18 per cent of the remote Aboriginal population lives in the 179 small communities (outstation or homeland communities) with fewer than 50 residents.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

There has been a debate running nationally about the sustainability of the remote Aboriginal communities. Questions remain whether they could ever be financially viable without government assistance, the extent to which governments should continue to financially support them, and whether they are desirable places to live, especially for children.

Governments have encouraged Aboriginal people over the past three or four decades to return to their homelands. However, critics have accused governments

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- Locations should not be included as communities if they currently have no usual population and are not expected to be reoccupied within the next 12 months.

⁵ Mobility of Aboriginal people in rural and remote Australia, Paul Memmot, Dr Stephen Long and Linda Thomson, AHURI Research & Policy Bulletin, ISSUE 69, May 2006.

of creating a 'failed state'⁶ in remote Australia characterised by poverty, a lack of security and only very limited access to key health and education services.

Opinion on homelands is often split on ideological grounds, and there are no simple solutions. The difficult challenge for governments is to balance the cultural and social needs of Aboriginal people for living in their traditional lands with the financial and practical realities of providing the level of services required to help them lead healthy and productive lives.

In WA, the Government has prioritised large, discrete, remote Aboriginal communities with regard to essential services and infrastructure delivery. The State targets housing resources to communities that are assessed as being sustainable using specific criteria such as the quantity and quality of water; risk of flooding; access to services; and access to employment and enterprise opportunities.

Although the State has legislative responsibility to provide services such as policing, child protection, health and education to its citizens irrespective of where they live, it is not feasible for all small communities to enjoy the same standards and range of services as the large settlements.

The State has developed a 'hub and spoke' model for service provision to remote communities. Essentially, services are provided to large settlements who in turn service the small, satellite communities on an outreach basis. This model was endorsed in the COAG Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement in Western Australia.

In addition, the WA Government is developing a policy for remote Aboriginal communities that will:

- establish a model of engagement for the development of community plans and delivery of services and infrastructure in partnership with Aboriginal people;
- provide a decision-making framework for the holistic assessment of the needs of remote Aboriginal communities; and
- assist in clarifying and coordinating the delivery of programs, services and infrastructure across State agencies for discrete communities.

⁶ Prospectus, remoteFOCUS, Revitalizing Remote Australia. This project was facilitated by Desert Knowledge Australia, September 2008.

TERM OF REFERENCE (b)—MEASURING THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WELLBEING OF REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

COORDINATION

The Senate Select Committee's first report referred to the complexity and interdependency of Commonwealth and State and Territory governments with respect to Indigenous affairs.

History has shown that without effective coordination, duplication, overlap and gaps in services ensue, resources are wasted, and outcomes are compromised. Overcoming the problem of 'silos' in relation to Indigenous policy and program development is one of the keys to improving outcomes of Indigenous people.

There is confusion about which level of government is responsible for delivering services to rural and remote Aboriginal communities. This has become more evident since the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2004 when its functions and programs were distributed across various Commonwealth departments.

Intergovernmental Agreements

To assist with coordination, the State has had a number of intergovernmental agreements with the Commonwealth regarding specific policy areas pertaining to Indigenous people.

The Western Australian Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs 2006-10 seeks to coordinate Commonwealth/State effort in a number of key outcome areas including essential and municipal service delivery to remote communities, early years programs for children, and developing Indigenous leadership and governance capacity. The Agreement serves to improve intergovernmental coordination of program planning in some outcome areas, and helps to forge a closer relationship with local government, particularly in the area of planning for municipal services delivery in communities in the future.

One of the initiatives to come out of the Bilateral Agreement was a Strategic Interventions Package of \$112 million, jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments for new housing, employment and training facilities for Indigenous people residing in select remote and town-based communities including Halls Creek, Kalumburu, Wiluna and Bidyadanga.

In Western Australia, there have been a number of regional agreements between governments and Aboriginal people such as the Ngaanyatjarra Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA), which led to improvements in schooling, community development, and has been successful in dealing with a number of social problems, such as petrol sniffing. One of the key issues for RPAs is sustaining long term, bi-partisan support for partnerships.

Regional agreements in which industry is also a partner have also proved to be effective. For example, the Port Hedland and the Ashburton Roebourne Regional Partnership Agreements, promoted through the Minerals Council of Australia, have

assisted many Aboriginal people into mining industry employment. The partners are also collaborating to find sustainable solutions to housing problems that arise when Aboriginal people are precluded from social housing due to higher incomes.

The Minerals Council of Australia also partnered with the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Shire of Wiluna to improve the governance capacity, social environment and economic opportunities for the Wiluna residents. This collaboration has led to some to good outcomes. Almost all councillors are now Aboriginal, the leadership and management of the Shire is more stable and some much needed infrastructure projects have been completed (a new sewerage treatment plant, school, swimming pool, and an Indigenous art centre and gallery).

The Fitzroy Futures Forum is a joint initiative of the Fitzroy Crossing community and the State Government. The chairpersons of the four main Aboriginal language groups in the region— Bunuba, Walmajarri, Kurungal and Gooniyandi—are represented on the Forum's governing committee. The Forum's recently completed infrastructure projects include a new district high school, new hospital, and the Nindilingarri cultural health centre. A new swimming pool and multifunction police facility are in the planning stages.

Council of Australian Government's Indigenous Reforms

The Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs 2006-10 has been superseded by the new COAG's reforms for Indigenous affairs which aim to "Close the Gap" on Indigenous disadvantage.

COAG's National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) is founded on 7 'building blocks': early childhood; schooling; health; economic participation; healthy homes; safe communities; and governance and leadership.

Closing the Gap targets are:

- closing the life expectancy gap within a generation;
- halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade;
- ensuring all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years;
- halving the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade;
- halving the gap in Indigenous students in year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020; and
- halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

The agreements that are particularly relevant to improving the living conditions and the health and welfare of Indigenous people in regional and remote communities are: the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation; the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing; and the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery.

National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery

COAG's National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery signifies a renewed commitment between governments to work together to improve the delivery of services to remote Indigenous communities.

Governments will work with communities to improve access to government services through a single government interface. The single government interface consists of one or more business managers who will oversee coordination.

Other features of the approach include: engaging with communities to develop local implementation plans; assisting with building community governance capacity; providing interpreter and translation services; and providing cultural awareness training for government officials working on the projects.

The Western Australian Government's contribution to implementing the agreement is \$12.1 million over five years.

Clusters of communities around the Dampier Peninsula, Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing have been chosen for the initial roll-out. Within these clusters, Beagle Bay, Ardyaloon and the town based communities at Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing have been identified as priority locations. Based on the 'hub and spoke model', outreach services will be provided to the small communities that use the towns as service centres.

Western Australian Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee

The Western Australian *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* provides for the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee (AACC) whose role is to coordinate effectively the activities of all persons and bodies, corporate or otherwise, providing or proposing to provide service and assistance in relation to persons of Aboriginal descent.

The AACC's membership comprises the Directors' General of the departments of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Premier and Cabinet, Education and Training, Child Protection, Housing, Health, as well as the Under Treasurer and the Commissioner of Police.

The AACC is investigating the systemic changes needed to enable the government to be more responsive to Indigenous need. In support of this, a Chief Operating Officer position is being established to build relationships with communities, coordinate departmental responses at the regional and local levels, and report directly to Directors General.

Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council

It is well established that success in reducing Indigenous disadvantage relies on government working in partnership with Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Advisory Council is in the process of being re-established under the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* to advise Government on all matters relating to the interests and well-being of persons of Aboriginal descent.

The Council will provide leadership, advice and direction to the Director General of DIA on:

- Indigenous aspirations on priority issues and interests;
- the necessary performance/outcome targets required to realise these aspirations; and
- the needs of the Western Australian Indigenous community and providing feedback to stakeholder groups.

The Council will comprise of twelve Indigenous people to be selected on the basis of their experience and knowledge. Cultural and geographical diversity, gender and generational perspectives will be a consideration.

It is expected that the Minister for Indigenous Affairs will announce the Council in the near future.

Many Western Australian Government departments have Indigenous groups with whom they consult. For example, the Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Agreement requires consultation with a range of Indigenous groups at the local, regional and State level to reduce the number of Aboriginal people as victims of crime, reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system, and having safe and sustainable communities.

Indigenous Implementation Board

The Western Australian Government is keen to identify and cut through obstacles that block progress to improving social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people, by seeking the advice of experts outside of Government on matters relating to Indigenous people. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs established the Indigenous Implementation Board in January 2009. The Board reports directly to the Minister, with the Department of Indigenous Affairs providing support to it. The Board's role is to help the Government develop Indigenous policy, including implementation, and to comment on its effectiveness. The Board is also charged with improving Indigenous people's engagement in policy and program development.

The Board's terms of reference are to:

- develop a framework to use to collaborate and focus resources for future agreements with the Commonwealth, local governments and other key stakeholders working with Indigenous Western Australians;
- establish accountability mechanisms to monitor achievement against agreed targets and focus resources to maximise positive outcomes for Indigenous Western Australians;
- deliver a bi-annual report to Cabinet on progress in the Indigenous affairs portfolio in Western Australia;
- drive fundamental policy shifts through stronger and more accountable Government governance, building trust through consistency and commitment;
- build effective participation of Indigenous people, and the broader Western Australia leadership, supporting effective community governance, leadership and structures necessary to engage with government; and

- provide advice on human and financial resources required for Indigenous people to participate in decision-making that affects community lives and the way services are provided.

Lt. Gen. John Sanderson, the former Governor of Western Australia, chairs the Board. Other members include: Professor Fiona Stanley, Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research; Dr Sue Gordon, a former Children's Court magistrate; Ms Ricky Burges, Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australian Local Government Association; Mr Mark Bin Bakar, 2008 West Australian of the Year; Mr Brendan Hammond, Horizon Power chairman; Mr Kim Bridge, trainer and consultant; Ms Dawn Wallam, Yorganop Child Care Aboriginal Corporation Chief Executive Officer; and Dr Helen Milroy, the Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health.

The Board works in close consultation with Indigenous community members and groups such as the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee and, in the future, will work closely with the Aboriginal Advisory Council. The Board has already raised with the Government the issue of lack of engagement with Indigenous communities, and has advocated regional Indigenous structures as a means of improving engagement.

MEASURING PROGRESS

One of the challenges for governments in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage is to be able to confidently measure the effectiveness of their policies and programs. The Western Australian Government has many programs and initiatives targeting the needs of Indigenous people in regional and remote areas (and a number of these are cited in the appendices to this submission).

It is often difficult to gauge the efficacy of policies and programs. The extent of Indigenous disadvantage suggests that some policies and programs are falling short of achieving results. It does not appear that government agencies routinely conduct evaluations. Evaluations are important to support the evidence base for policies and programs, and this is an area of government activity that deserves more attention and resources.

Equally important is having reliable data. However, it is often difficult to obtain data at the regional and local levels. Census data are only obtainable at five year intervals, and administrative data are not always accessible due to issues of quality or confidentiality, or the data simply are not collected. Survey data are available periodically, but generally only at the State and Territory levels (not regional or local). Despite these limitations, the Western Australian Government is intent on making sure that resources allocated for Indigenous programs are being used effectively, and will build on past effort to measure outcomes in Indigenous affairs.

Since 1995, the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (supported by a secretariat in the Productivity Commission and various working groups) has prepared the Report on Government Services (RoGS) annually. A compendium of Indigenous data compiled from the report has also been published. The report compares the efficiency and effectiveness of government

service provision across jurisdictions in key areas such as health and school education.

In 2002, COAG requested the Steering Committee to prepare regular reports on key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage: the latest was published in 2007⁷. The OID report aims to inform Australian governments about the effectiveness of their policies and programs in meeting the needs of Aboriginal people.

For Western Australia, the latest report has highlighted improvement in areas such as education and health outcomes for Aboriginal people, while revealing that there has been little or no improvement in other outcome areas.

The national OID report is limited to presenting information at the State and Territory levels only. So the Western Australian Government went one step further, and in 2004-05 prepared a Western Australian-specific OID report⁸. The WA OID report used the same framework as the national report but expanded the range of indicators and progress measures and, where data were available, provided regional-level analysis, including for remote areas. The report also included examples of successful initiatives.

The WA OID report improved the capacity of the Western Australian Government agencies to measure the impact of their policies and programs, and assisted to improve the identification of regional need—thus supporting and guiding more targeted policy development and government action.

In the future, the COAG Reform Council (supported by the Productivity Commission) will report annually on governments' performance against the targets in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA). The Western Australian Government will monitor and evaluate progress using the performance indicators and measures as a means of assessing policy and program effectiveness. This will include preparing regional and remote area analyses (subject to data availability), similar to the work undertaken for the WA OID report. To begin, the Department of Indigenous Affairs is preparing a baseline report using the performance indicators in the NIRA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S NEW EMPHASIS ON REGIONS

One of the Western Australian Government's electoral commitments was to focus more attention on the needs of people living in the regions. In 2008, the Government set up the Royalties for Regions program through which the equivalent of 25 per cent of mining and petroleum royalty revenue is invested annually in regional Western Australia. Currently this amounts to some \$675 million a year.

There are three funding streams under Royalties for Regions:

- Country Local Government Fund—provides tied funding directly to local governments and Regional Organisations of Councils for infrastructure

⁷ SGRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2007, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

⁸ Department of Indigenous Affairs, 2005, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in Western Australia: Report 2005*, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Perth.

provision and renewal (for example, for halls, recreation centres, council offices, swimming pools, parks, gardens and airports);

- Regional Community Services Fund—supports services and programs such as the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme, Boarding Away from Home Allowance, Royal Flying Doctor Service, and Community Resource Centre Program (formerly Telecentres); and
- Regional Structure and Headworks Fund—for strategic regional projects such as the Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project, housing for essential workers, upgrades to regional airports, and redevelopment of Kalgoorlie Hospital. Projects that expand economic opportunities for Indigenous people and/or strengthen Aboriginal culture may be funded through the Regional Grants Scheme operated by the nine Regional Development Commissions.

Royalties for Regions has a key role in supporting growth and prosperity in regional Western Australia. Indigenous people in regional Western Australia will benefit from the program.

HOUSING

There is a high need for more houses and for improvements to existing housing stock in regional and remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia. Well designed, well built and regularly maintained houses are fundamental to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, especially for children. Data from the Commonwealth's Fixing Houses for Better Health Program show that lack of regular maintenance accounts for about 65 per cent of health hardware (taps, toilets, electrical fittings, and so on) failure. Around 25 per cent of hardware failure is attributable to poor initial construction. Damage, overuse or misuse accounts for about 10 per cent of hardware failure.

Until recently in Western Australia, communities were responsible for managing and maintaining their houses. This approach is successful in communities where there is good community governance and capacity for housing management. However, most Aboriginal community housing organisations struggled with the housing management function.

The Western Australian Government acknowledges that there is a housing shortage in remote communities and that many houses are in poor condition, and is committed to making improvements.

The Western Australian Department of Housing (DoH) provides a housing construction program, upgrade program, housing management services (asset management, tenancy management, tenant support) to 2,400 houses in 140 discrete remote communities. The DoH will extend its services to other communities depending on the communities' sustainability and whether resources are available. The community sustainability measures include quantity and quality of water, risk of flooding, access to services, and access to employment and enterprise opportunities. Housing management services are provided directly by the DoH or through contracted regional service providers. It recently conducted a stock condition audit on the 2,400 houses. The audit revealed that over 10 years, around \$500 million is needed in housing upgrades, a further \$1 billion is needed for new housing, and \$500 million needed for ongoing management, including repairs and maintenance.

Since 2000, Commonwealth and State Indigenous housing funds have been pooled through various intergovernmental agreements, and administered by the DoH. The agreements included the provision of essential services as well as housing, and around 40 per cent of the funding was spent on capital infrastructure for power, water and waste water services.

As part of the COAG reforms, all governments have signed the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The agreement, through a ten year funding strategy, aims to improve housing amenity and reduce overcrowding in remote and discrete Aboriginal communities. The agreement specifies that public housing standards be applied to remote area Aboriginal community housing. The agreement also requires a progressive resolution of land tenure on remote community-titled land in order to secure government and commercial investment, economic development opportunities and home ownership possibilities.

The DoH does not own the houses in remote Aboriginal communities. The majority of Indigenous people living in remote communities occupy houses located on the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) estate. Legislative amendments are required to enable the DoH to legally provide housing management services. The DoH has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ALT, and is negotiating arrangements with individual communities to carry out this function.

The Native Title Act 1993 presents challenges with respect to building new houses on communities, because construction extinguishes native title. The Western Australia Government is negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements with the native title representative bodies about housing and infrastructure development. Ultimately, the best solution lies in the Commonwealth making the necessary amendments to the Native Title Act.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Another area of pressing need in regional and remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia relates to the provision of essential and municipal services. Like housing, having access to safe and reliable environmental health infrastructure, particularly power, water and waste water removal services, is critical to improving the health of Aboriginal people, and for closing the gap on life expectancy. As the data⁹ below shows, many Aboriginal communities have inadequate essential services.

Water

- The majority of communities (73 per cent) use bore water.
- Most (87 per cent) of small communities that is, with populations fewer than 20, have untreated water.

⁹ Environmental Health Needs of Indigenous Communities in Western Australia, The 2004 Survey and its Findings.

Electricity

- Most communities operate their own generators, and report regular power interruptions caused by fuel shortages, overload, lack of storage, equipment failure and natural hazards, such as lightning strikes.
- The Kullari region, which has the greatest number of small communities, experience the most disruptions to power supply (75 per cent of communities are affected by power interruptions).

Solid Waste Disposal

- 27 per cent of communities experience periods when household rubbish waste is not collected.
- 25 per cent of communities report unsatisfactory tip management.
- The majority of tips (72 per cent) are not properly fenced.

Sanitation

- 20 per cent of communities (representing around 8% of the discrete Indigenous community population) are without adequate sewerage disposal and treatment.
- 50 per cent of the communities using septic tanks report not having pump-out equipment for maintenance.

Dust

- 56 per cent of communities report high or excessive dust levels.
- 80 per cent of communities lack a dust suppression or revegetation program.
- 83 per cent of communities have unsealed roads, which contributes to dust generation.

Dog Programs

- 76 per cent of households own dogs.
- The Western Desert region has 115 households with five or more dogs.
- 52 communities report not having access to a dog program

Emergency Management

- Around 84 per cent of communities report being without fire-fighting equipment.
- Around 80 per cent of communities in cyclone-prone regions do not have emergency evacuation plans.

The responsibility for the provision of essential services in Aboriginal communities is split between State and Commonwealth governments resulting in fragmented policy and service delivery. Presently there are several WA and Commonwealth funding arrangements in place for communities including:

- WA funds:
 - contracted repair and maintenance services to communities.

- The Commonwealth funds:
 - capital works which is administered by the DoH under Commonwealth/State pooled funding arrangements;
 - a breakdown service, administered by the DoH for communities that do not meet State funding criteria;
 - the diesel fuel rebate through the Australian Taxation Office;
 - Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) which support essential services work in communities; and
 - communities to supplement the cost of essential services (diesel fuel, consumables and salaries for essential services operators).

The current system lends itself to the following problems including:

- no safety, quality or reliability standards being applied to non-regularised essential services in Aboriginal communities;
- essential services relying on communities fulfilling their responsibilities to undertake daily checks and maintenance without adequate resources or expertise;
- limited metering in communities results in inconsistent community contributions to the cost of services, inefficient use of resources and an inability to access government subsidies and rebates; and
- RAESP costs increasing rapidly with inadequate funding provision for services. Ultimately this has affected the health and safety of community residents.

Town Reserves Regularisation Program

The DoH manages the Town Reserves Regularisation Program which aims to upgrade and transfer services to mainstream providers in nominated communities. WA has allocated \$35.5 m over five years to progress regularised power services in town based communities. Also the Water Corporation has recently been engaged to establish water services.

The Aboriginal and Remote Community Power Supply Program

The Aboriginal Remote Community Power Supply Program (ARCPSP) provides electricity supply services in large, discrete remote communities. The Commonwealth and the State jointly funded the first phase of the program in five Kimberley communities. The Commonwealth declined to match the State's funding for the second phase of ARCPSP. WA has proceeded and allocated around \$20 million for power at Kalumburu and Noonkanbah communities.

The Remote Area Essential Services Program

The Remote Area Essential Services Program (RAESP) provides repair and maintenance services to 91 remote Aboriginal communities. The service includes: visits by regional service providers to each community every six to eight weeks for power, water and waste water infrastructure maintenance; emergency repairs; advice on capital works priorities and works scopes; and monthly water sampling

and monitoring. Day-to-day operation of essential services is the responsibility of each community.

COAG Negotiations

A State Government taskforce (2007) developed options for providing essential services to remote and town based Aboriginal communities. It recommended a hierarchy of service standards depending on community size and sustainability. The proposed model requires new service standards to be developed. It is estimated that providing essential services (power, water and sewerage) to communities will cost \$1.5 billion.

WA is negotiating future essential services delivery to remote Indigenous communities under COAG's National Indigenous Reform Agreement. By December 2009 COAG will receive proposal outlining the funding required for ongoing maintenance of infrastructure and essential services in remote areas (and also for municipal services); and a timetable for implementation of new arrangements, and for these arrangements to be in place from 1 July 2012.

WA regards essential services as one of its top five infrastructure priorities for consideration by Infrastructure Australia. Currently DoH is undertaking infrastructure audits in several remote communities to determine the cost of service improvement.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

There are around 25 local governments in Western Australia that have remote Aboriginal communities within their boundaries. The majority of these councils share features that impact on service delivery to communities—small populations, vast areas, harsh environments, low proportion of rates to total income, high needs, and narrow local economic bases.

Generally, local governments in Western Australia have not had direct involvement in servicing remote, Aboriginal communities. There are a number of reasons for this including:

- resourcing, together with an inability to collect rates on Aboriginal land;
- the poor standard of municipal services infrastructure in communities;
- the 'private' nature of Aboriginal communities and facilities;
- a history of Commonwealth, State and Indigenous agencies circumventing local government approvals and processes; and
- legal impediments preventing the application of public health laws being applied to communities.

Discrete communities manage local government-type functions themselves. The Commonwealth funds Indigenous communities to perform these functions through its Municipal Services Program (MUNS). The MUNS funding for Western Australia in 2007/08 was around \$22 million. However, \$9.2 million paid for diesel fuel to operate community power generators. A further \$7.5 million was allocated for community governance and community administration. This left around \$5 million to pay for local government type services which was inadequate.

The Commonwealth CDEP program has also been an important source of funding for community municipal services. The CDEP workforce and operational funding pays people to perform the local government-type tasks mentioned above. The Commonwealth Government reforms to the CDEP are expected to have a significant impact on the delivery of services in communities.

The Western Australian Government supports municipal services activities in Indigenous communities by funding environmental health officer positions, Aboriginal environmental field support officers and Aboriginal environmental health workers.

The Commonwealth provides general purpose funding to local governments. The Western Australian Local Government Grants Commission factors the needs of Indigenous people into its methodology for calculating grants, and many councils receive general purpose (but untied) funding in recognition of their need to service an Indigenous population. However, the overall funding available for distribution to councils is less than what is required to provide services to communities.

In December 2007, the Minister for Local Government asked the Local Government Advisory Board to inquire into local government service delivery to Aboriginal communities in Western Australia. Government is still considering the Board's report. The Department of Local Government and Regional Development (DLGRD) is investigating funding options to assist local government develop business plans so the cost of service delivery to Aboriginal communities can be estimated.

Western Australia and the Commonwealth in partnership with, the Shire of Halls Creek, have funded a project to develop a business plan for delivering local government services to the Aboriginal communities of Balgo, Ringer Soak, Billiluna and Mulan. Also, the DLGRD and FaHCSIA are collaborating to support the four above Shires investigate the feasibility of establishing a local government regional council to administer pooled funding for regional services deliver.

As mentioned earlier there are clear timeframes through COAG for planning and funding of municipal services which require arrangements to be in place by 1 July 2012.

The DLGRD is working towards greater Indigenous representation within local government through its Indigenous local government election strategy. The State currently has 34 Indigenous local government councillors, one Indigenous Shire President, and four Indigenous Deputy Shire Presidents.

COMMUNITY ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

There are around 700 Indigenous corporations in Western Australia. Around 87 per cent of Aboriginal communities are incorporated under the Commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006. The balance are incorporated under the State's Associations Incorporations Act 1987, which is administered by the State Department of Commerce.

The Indigenous Community Governance Project (ICGP), a partnership between the Centre for Aboriginal Economic and Policy Research and Reconciliation Australia, is demonstrating that strong and effective governance is critical in improving social,

economic and cultural outcomes for Indigenous people. Closing the Gap outcomes will not be achieved in Australia in the absence of strong Indigenous governance capacity.

The ICGP Year Two report notes that Indigenous people “seem more prepared to assess new governance arrangements as being legitimate when they have been generated through a process of re-thinking their own governance histories.¹⁰ Strongly endorsed outcomes also seem to arise when that historical journey is facilitated within a community development process.”¹¹

The ICGP report therefore recommends that Governments “support the development of ‘two-way’ effectiveness and accountability in Indigenous organisations by adopting a community development approach to governance, which strengthens legitimacy through capacity and institution building rather than focusing primarily on financial and technical compliance.”¹²

There is anecdotal evidence of a successful community capacity building approach being used at Balgo to build and sustain a local governance structure. DIA intends to evaluate the model to better understand the success factors, and whether the model could help inform governance development in other communities.

COAG has recognised the importance of building community governance capacity through the Indigenous reform agenda. Included in the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery is provision to build governance capacity in the communities selected for the initiative by developing leadership skills, financial management and administration capacity.

An important area of community administration is the role of community managers and chief executive officers in regional and remote communities. Inadequate funding of these positions is believed to be contributing to high staff turnover and causing disruption within several communities. Funding of these positions is poor and this is believed to partially contribute to the high turnover of staff in some communities.

There are around 60 community managers funded through MUNS. Some managers are employed part time, and carry out a wide range of activities from managing the CDEP, managing housing and essential and municipal services, dealing with Centrelink enquiries, dealing with community crises, organising transport, for example, to funerals, and so on. Generally, community managers are poorly paid, considering the demands of the job and the skills required to do it.

As governments attempt to regularise services in Aboriginal communities, the role of the community manager and other staff will inevitably change. The demands on Indigenous community councils regarding, for example, managing houses and

¹⁰ The notion of “governance history” can include the impacts on Indigenous systems of governance of: mission experience, forced relocations, changing legislative regimes, land rights and native title laws. All of these can affect relationships between communities, kin groups and extended family interests (Hunt and Smith, *op cit*, p. 5).

¹¹ Hunt and Smith, *op cit*, p. 24.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 28.

essential and municipal services, will reduce as governments take direct responsibility for these services.

The current allocation of funding for community governance and administration is inadequate, and is an issue that governments need to resolve for not the least, the sake of having better managed communities.

Governance training for Aboriginal communities has been delivered over the past five years by the WA Department of Education and Training (DET) TAFEWA and the University of Notre Dame (Broome). Community capacity building is a priority funding area under the DET access funding program, which enables delivery of local training to meet Aboriginal community needs across the State. This training is delivered by a number of registered training organisations.

The State recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations to jointly deliver corporate governance training to staff in regional and Perth-based Indigenous organisations. This will standardise corporate governance training in the future using an accredited training package.

JUSTICE

Indigenous Western Australians are around 20 times more likely to be imprisoned at any one time than non-Indigenous Western Australians. Western Australia has the highest rate of imprisonment of Indigenous people (both adults and juveniles) for any jurisdiction in Australia. In addition, both Aboriginal imprisonment rates and the ratio of over-representation are generally trending upwards over time, although this applies across Australia.

WA has the highest rate of over-representation since at least 2001. Around 60 per cent of Aboriginal young offenders in detention in Western Australia are on remand awaiting trial or sentence. The vast majority of these young people do not ultimately receive a custodial sentence.

Indigenous people are also around five times more likely to be victims of crime than non-Aboriginal people, although this is not fixed across the board—in 2006 Aboriginal people were ten times more likely to be victims of offences against the person than non-Aboriginal people.¹³

Research has found that offending behaviour among Aboriginal people is strongly correlated with factors of lower education attainment levels, unemployment, poverty, overcrowded housing, substance abuse and the inter-generational impacts of former child welfare policies. The role of alcohol as both direct and indirect cause of offending behaviour, particularly in violent offences, has been well documented.

The operation of the justice system can also impact differentially on Aboriginal people who may, especially if resident in more remote parts of the State, face

¹³ , Loh, N S N, Maller, M G, Fernandez, J A, Ferrante, A M, Walsh, M R J, *Crime and Justice Statistics for Western Australia 2005, 2007*, Crime Research Centre, UWA.

systemic barriers in terms of their capacity to respond to court summons, meet bail requirements, pay fines and/or fulfil community-based orders.

Other issues related to justice of particular significance to regional and remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia include:

Cultural Issues

There is considerable diversity within the Aboriginal portion of the State's population in terms of attachment to traditional culture and capacity to deal confidently with "mainstream" services and institutions. As a broad generalisation, however, it is probably fair to say that the residents of remote Aboriginal communities are less likely to be familiar and comfortable with aspects of non-Aboriginal society including the justice system. The Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's inquiry into Aboriginal Customary Law reported that "Aboriginal people often do not understand the court process and want more help to do so".¹⁴

Customary law considerations relating to avoidance of contact with certain kin, and/or the taboos surrounding the open discussion of men's and women's business, can also complicate the conduct of court proceedings and cause considerable distress to witnesses. In these situations judicial officers are likely to require expert advice which, depending on the cultural group in question, may not be readily available in regional court settings.

While cultural awareness training is in place for personnel within many parts of the justice system, there are still ongoing cultural barriers which cannot be covered in short courses such as those on offer.

Language Issues

A number of reports have raised issues about the lack of interpreter services for Aboriginal languages in Western Australia. While the Western Australian Department of the Attorney General (DotAG) has recently launched a Language Services Policy that guides personnel on the process of determining if an interpreter is needed, and how to arrange this, there are often significant practical barriers to ensuring the provision of competent Aboriginal language interpreters in court. The only Aboriginal interpreting services in Western Australia that have accredited interpreters is the community-based Kimberley Interpreting Service which operates with limited and insecure government funding, and Wangka Waltja Aboriginal Interpreting Service Pty Ltd, a new privately owned company in Perth.

The 2006 Census found that while 90 to 95 per cent of Aboriginal people in the less remote parts of the state spoke only English at home, in more remote parts (Kimberley, Pilbara and South-Eastern regions) between 60 and 64 per cent spoke English only. Of those Aboriginal people who said they spoke a traditional language and English "not well or not at all", nearly 60 per cent were in the Kimberley, 22 per cent were in the South-Eastern region, and 16 per cent in the Pilbara. Across Western Australia, 1306 people reported to use Kriol at home.¹⁵

¹⁴ Law Reform Commission of WA *Aboriginal Customary Law – Final Report* (2006) p. 345.

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007 c37c Western Australia

Language difficulties have many impacts in a justice context. This may range from people who do not seek a 'time to pay' order for a fine because they are not confident with English, through to a person's evidence being discounted or discredited because they apparently contradict themselves during proceedings, or a person being convicted of an offence due to not understanding what they are being charged with.

It remains an ongoing issue that people who speak adequate conversational English are presumed by court officials to understand complex matters such as court proceedings, especially while experiencing psychological stress. This is not limited to Aboriginal people, but is a feature for speakers of migrant languages as well. Yet migrant languages generally have qualified interpreters available, unlike Aboriginal languages including Aboriginal English, which have a dearth of qualified interpreters and a similar lack of interpreting services.

Distance and Access to Services

Most services provided by the DotAG (largely those related to Courts) are delivered in areas of high population, the major urban and regional centres. Access to justice services (such as Court circuits, victim support services, fines payment facilities and perpetrator treatment programs) for both victims and offenders based in very remote communities, is therefore limited.

Motor Driver's Licence Issues

Lack of access to driver training and licensing services may lead to people driving without licences, resulting in charges when people come to the attention of police. Repeated offences, compounded by driving under fine default suspension, may eventually result in a prison term for a person whose original offence was not having a driver's licence.

Licence-related offences play a significant role in the imprisonment of Aboriginal people in Western Australia. In the period from 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009, a total of 6,023 warrants for imprisonment were executed in the State for a total of 6,610 offences (including fine default) on 2203 individuals for the offences of Driving Under Suspension, no Motor Driver's Licence (MDL) (suspended), failure to hold a valid MDL or no MDL. Of those individuals, 46 per cent (1,022) were Aboriginal people.

Lack of Staff

Services in remote and regional areas have continual difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly suitably qualified health professionals (including psychologists and social workers). Services of this nature are, therefore, usually concentrated in urban and larger regional areas, which impacts on access for people outside these areas. This in turn affects the capacity of agencies to deliver treatment services, or to provide monitoring services for community based sanctions to remote and regional areas. Additionally, the demand for suitably qualified Aboriginal workers means that it is particularly difficult to recruit and retain such workers.

Information about justice-related services for Indigenous people in Western Australia can be found at appendix II.

TERM OF REFERENCE (c)—THE HEALTH, WELFARE, EDUCATION AND SECURITY OF CHILDREN IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

CHILD HEALTH

The 2005 Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS)¹⁶ cited a number of negative findings for Western Australian Aboriginal children living in regional and remote communities, including:

- high rates of recurrent infections;
- high rates of premature birth and low birth weight confirmed;
- children less likely to come into contact with doctors in remote areas;
- inadequate consumption of fresh vegetables;
- Aboriginal children were performing far worse at school than non-Aboriginal children;
- high rates of early teenage pregnancy; and
- high rates of maternal tobacco use.

There are some health benefits from living in regional and remote areas. The 2005 WAACHS cited a number of positive health findings among the regional and remote Aboriginal population including:

- higher rates of breastfeeding during infancy and early childhood;
- the proportion of Aboriginal children at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties was significantly lower in the most isolated areas of the state;
- low prevalence of asthma in children living in extremely isolated localities; and
- lower rates of disability in remote areas.

There are a number of impediments to providing health services to all regional and remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia including:

- The large number of small Aboriginal communities scattered over vast distances and the cultural diversity make it impossible to provide full health services on site to all.
- It is difficult to attract and retain health professionals in rural and remote communities due to levels of remuneration, lack of suitable housing, services and recreational facilities. The cost of providing services in regional and remote areas is high. Funding is also often provided for a fixed, short-term period.

The Western Australia Department of Health (the Department) employs strategies and programs to deliver the best possible health services to regional and remote communities. Visiting health professionals provide services to remote communities on a regular basis using aircraft or 4WD vehicles. For more serious cases, there is

¹⁶ WAACHS, Vol 1, Chapter 3, pp.103-104 and Vol 2, Chapter 2 p.26 and p.48.

emergency evacuation or transfer to a regional centre or Perth via the Patients Assisted Transfer Scheme.

Increasing numbers of Aboriginal people are being employed at all levels of health services in rural and remote regions.

Examples of health initiatives for Indigenous people, particularly children and youth, living in regional and remote communities are listed at appendix III.

The Western Australia Disability Services Commission (DSC) has a Rural Area Strategy which aims to trial and evaluate new community-based models of support for people with disabilities living in remote areas of Western Australia. A key element of the Remote Area Strategy is to develop sustainable services through community partnerships and acceptance of new models. Details of the DSC's Rural Area Strategy are also at appendix III.

CHILD WELFARE

Gordon Inquiry

There has been an intensive and sustained effort to deal with the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous children in Western Australia following the Gordon Inquiry¹⁷ in 2002. The Western Australian Government allocated over \$70 million to increase agencies' responses to reports of child abuse and family violence, and to improve agency coordination. Some of the key initiatives in the Government's responses to the Inquiry's report included:

- recruitment of 28 additional Child Protection Workers across the State to respond to reports of child abuse and to undertake child protection assessments;
- multi-function police facilities (MFPFs) at Balgo, Bidyadanga, Blackstone, Burringurrah, Dampier Peninsular; Jigalong, Kalumburu, Looma, Warburton, Warakurna, Warmun, and at Kintore in the Northern Territory (on the Western Australia border);
- 15 skilled Aboriginal Support Workers employed to provide practical counseling and assistance to vulnerable Aboriginal children and youth;
- the Strong Families Program expanded to 14 new locations across the State;
- 8 specialist Domestic Violence police officers placed in country police districts to provide coordinated responses to incidence of family violence;
- victim support services for adults and children extended to outlying and remote communities;
- sexual assault services expanded in five regional locations to respond to the needs of Aboriginal communities; and
- establishment of the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

¹⁷ Gordon, S. Hallahan, K and Henry, D 2002 *Putting the picture together, Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia.

An evaluation of the outcomes of the Government's response in 2008 found that the initiatives have been effective and resulted in improved responses, increased community confidence and greater feelings of safety.

Additionally the evaluation found that stronger law enforcement and protective responses are necessary, but on their own are not sufficient to deal with the socioeconomic disadvantage and alcohol abuse underpinning entrenched abuse and violence. These are issues that must be dealt with through a long term coordinated effort that focuses on the needs of specific Aboriginal families and communities.

Safer Communities, Safer Children

Safer Communities, Safer Children (SCSC) is an across-government initiative responding to the incidents of child sexual abuse in five Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley region (there were 98 arrests and 331 charges laid in relation to child sexual abuse as at July 2008). The model has been successful in achieving a rapid and effective response to disclosures of child abuse by integrating the efforts of key agencies to meet the needs of the victims, their families and the communities. Details of the model are at appendix IV.

Community Child Protection Workers

Community Child Protection Workers (CCPWs) ensure the safety and protection of Aboriginal children by developing community and family capacity to provide safe environments for children and other vulnerable people. Approximately 50 per cent of positions are held by Aboriginal staff. There are nine CCPWs dedicated to working in remote communities.

Mandatory Reporting

The mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse was introduced in Western Australia on 1 January 2009. It is a legal requirement in Western Australia for doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers and police officers to report all beliefs based on reasonable grounds of child sexual abuse to the Department for Child Protection (DCP).

Income Management

Voluntary income management began in Kununurra in November 2008, followed by Balgo, Halls Creek, Broome and the Dampier Peninsular in January 2009, and extended to the remainder of the Kimberley communities in February 2009. DCP refers families who are receiving income support from Centrelink for income management when there is evidence of child neglect. Income-managed families can have up to 70 per cent of welfare payments and 100 per cent of lump sum payments quarantined and spent on essential goods and services.

Voluntary income management has also been introduced in the Kimberley region in response to people asking for assistance to manage their money. More than 120 people in the Kimberley have signed up for income management. There has been positive feedback from the DCP and people in the Kimberley, especially women, who find income management helpful to budget for essentials. Participants on the program also have access to financial counselors.

Dealing with Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The National Drug Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Complementary Action Plan 2003-2006 stated:

Enquiries into the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have consistently commented on the detrimental effects of dispossession and alienation on health and wellbeing. The resulting grief, trauma and loss must be recognised as a contributing factor to the lower health and socio-economic status that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience today.

The Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2005-2009 identifies Aboriginal people and regional and remote communities as priority areas. The strategy is guided by the Strong Spirit Strong Mind–Western Australian Aboriginal and Other Drugs Plan 2005-2009.

In response to concerns about the extent of alcohol-related harm in some remote towns, the Western Australian Director of Liquor Licensing imposed restrictions on the sale and supply of liquor at Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Meekatharra, Mount Magnet, Newman, Nullagine, Port Hedland and Wiluna. Within the next six months the number of remote towns with liquor restrictions will most likely increase to around 25 to 30.

Restrictions are considered on a case-by-case basis. The types of restrictions that have been imposed include:

- restricting the hours that packaged liquor may be sold;
- prohibiting the sale of wine in casks or flagons and fortified wine;
- prohibiting the external promotion of certain types of liquor products;
- restricting the hours that liquor may be sold for consumption on the premises;

A preliminary evaluation of the liquor restriction strategy at Fitzroy Crossing showed that:

- There was a 27 per cent reduction in reported alcohol-related domestic violence for the period October 2007 to February 2008 compared to the same period in 2006-07.
- Month by month there has been between a 4 to 14 per cent increase in school attendance for the period.
- There was a 48 per cent reduction in the number of alcohol-related presentations by local residents to the Fitzroy Hospital emergency department, and within the first month of the restriction being applied, ambulance call-outs had reduced by 60 per cent.
- While there was an increase in the percentage of pure alcohol consumed on the two licensed premises in Fitzroy, this was greatly outweighed by the decrease in takeaway alcohol being sold, resulting in a 77 per cent reduction in available pure alcohol.

Some of the most compelling evidence of positive change came from the community members who live in and around Fitzroy Crossing who reported:

“Our elders feel they are respected more by family members and cultural practices are re-emerging, with young men being initiated into law ceremonies”.

“Children can now sleep better at night, are attending school more regularly and now more committed to learning. People now find it easier to socialise within the town and communities.”

EDUCATION

Progress is occurring to address the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. As children are part of families and communities, the issues which affect their attendance and performance at school, often mirror the wider issues within their lives such as dealing with poverty, overcrowding, substance abuse, mental health, hearing disorders and dietary deficiencies.

Other considerations include Standard English being an additional language or dialect for many students who speak one or more traditional languages as well as either Kriol or Aboriginal English, transience between communities is accepted as a normal way of life and there are many parents who had limited opportunities and/or negative experiences of formal schooling.

Coordination

The need for partnership and coordination between all tiers of government has never been more important. Coordination between government agencies requires strategic models of operation with across government agency planning, funding and collaboration. The lead agency or agencies need to be clearly identifiable when working on collaborative programs and projects.

Well coordinated interagency effort, both at the strategic level and for case management, is effective for sharing knowledge, committing resources and solving identified cross-agency problems. Currently interagency collaboration and support across the State is patchy in regularity and focus. Some areas have regular meetings and successfully resolve a range of local issues while others do not. The key issues are:

- Aboriginal specific areas of government agencies tend to concentrate on their own areas and only join forces on a project by project basis;
- early childhood 0-4 years is a priority area that requires increased coordination between departments, or coordination of programs by one department;
- there is a lack of meaningful community consultation that responds to the community wishes and aspirations on their terms; and
- community engagement and leadership not supported when there is a high turnover of government staff and short-term government interventions.

Schools in Regional and Remote Locations

The School Education Act 1999 recognises the right of every child to an education. Establishing a school in a remote location is far more costly than in metropolitan locations. This is a particularly important issue for Western Australia. The DET now

has 43 remote Aboriginal community schools, 11 of which are in outstations. It is not possible to establish schools in all the communities requesting one.

Where establishment of a school is not considered viable, other options may include:

- family relocation;
- boarding school (costs can be prohibitive for Aboriginal families in particular and many students feel homesick and/or alienated); and
- travelling to other communities or regional centres by bus where the journey is within the required time and distance guidelines.

The DET can create an annex school, which is a separate school facility with fewer student enrolments linked to a larger facility at an adjoining community or regional centre. Alternatively, students are enrolled in the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) which delivers primary and secondary school education in remote and isolated communities where there is no school.

All of these options have their own inherent difficulties. For example, travelling daily takes a toll on students and distance education can be more difficult for students with limited literacy skills. Aboriginal families from remote locations who relocate may experience poor or limited housing choices and a lack of community support. The children may experience social alienation and homesickness, especially where appropriate measures and support are not available.

Policies, Programs and Initiatives

The DET has developed a new five year Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy 2009-2013 which incorporates the directions of the COAG Productivity Agenda and Indigenous Reform Working Groups, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs Australian Directions in Indigenous Education, the Gordon Report, the Hope coronial inquests in the Kimberley, the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Surveys, the State Training Plan and the Skills Plan. The focus is on five key areas for improvement:

- readiness for formal schooling;
- attendance;
- literacy and numeracy;
- attainment of a Year 12 certificate or Certificate II qualifications; and
- industry recognised skills, qualifications and life skills training.

The Acts Amendment (Higher School Leaving Age and Related Provisions) Act 2005 increased the school leaving age for students from the end of their fifteenth year to the end of their seventeenth year in 2008. The policy resulted in more students remaining at school, but also led to regional and remote schools requiring extra staffing and developing alternative programs. It presents particular challenges in places where there are limited or no training or employment opportunities in the area.

Examples of educational initiatives are in appendix V.

Particular attention is given to: targeted literacy support; professional learning for teachers focusing on the recognition of a child's home language as a vital starting point in their education and the teaching of Standard Australian English to support student learning in all curriculum areas; improvements to conditions and remuneration to attract and retaining teachers and principals in regional and remote locations; and effort to enhance partnerships with Aboriginal parents and community members to improve student outcomes.

Barriers to successful implementation of Indigenous education initiatives in regional and remote areas include:

- Staffing

Attracting and retaining teaching and support staff is problematic when there is not quality accommodation; safety concerns and limited community services. Not all areas are classified as remote (eg. Meekatharra) and this can make it difficult to attract staff as they are not entitled to the benefits that remote area schools are (e.g. rent free housing, increased financial and leave benefits).

Inexperienced teachers working in regional and remote areas may not be adequately prepared for these circumstances, and there are challenges recruiting experienced Principals and teachers with knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and learning styles. Staff safety can be an issue in some communities. Additionally staff turnover contributes disconnected working relationships with communities.

- Curriculum

Standardised national assessments that do not cater for Indigenous learners' overall communicative abilities and the range of language development do not provide sufficient data to inform teachers about students' academic progress. A curriculum that has little or no connection to students' lives can be perceived by students as irrelevant and therefore they may disengage.

- Student issues

It can be difficult for schools in remote areas to successfully implement and monitor education programs. Attendance, retention and completion are chronically low in many remote community schools and this makes the implementation of programs difficult. Shifting class groups due to transiency often means that teachers are instructing a different group of students on any given day. This results in poor education outcomes.

- Cultural issues as children become teenagers

For many young people living in regional and remote areas, adult status and responsibility is awarded generally in early teenage years. There is a reluctance to attend school as it is perceived to be for children. There also may be some resistance by boys who are being taught by female school teachers.

- Early childhood 0-4 years

Currently in remote schools there is a lack of preparation and transition from home to formal schooling for students in the 0-4 age group and often a lack of facilities and organised groups to enable this to happen. Not only do remote community children generally start their school years far less 'school ready' than other Australian children, but they often start each school day less 'school ready'. Limited access to resources (e.g. text books, libraries, computers) and low incomes mean that

students may come to school without having their needs met (e.g. breakfast and lunch; uniforms; stationery).

- Secondary school provision

There is also lack of access to high quality secondary school provision which provides students with the capacity to become effective community leaders or participants. Small cohort numbers mean that schools are staffed as primary schools. For many young Aboriginal people, particularly in remote communities, there is no clear relationship between formal schooling, training and employment or other outcomes likely to improve socio-economic circumstances.

- Internal community problems

Some Aboriginal communities in regional and remote locations experience conflict, substance abuse, social and family dysfunction at various times. This dysfunction tends to exist in areas where there is a lack of health support, governance, law and order, housing and community development activities that build the social and civic capital within the community. The social and family dysfunction has a direct impact on student attendance, engagement and achievement levels within many communities.

- Parent involvement

Many parents have had limited opportunities and/or negative experiences of formal schooling. There is often limited involvement from parents and the Aboriginal community into the way schools are run and decisions are made. Parent and community engagement continues to be an area that the DET is addressing, for example, through School and Community Partnerships.

TERM OF REFERENCE (d)—EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES

EMPLOYMENT

One of the main routes out of poverty and social exclusion and for achieving fulfillment in life is through paid employment. However, many Indigenous people face barriers to finding and keeping a job. Many Indigenous people in remote communities need intensive support, not only to prepare them for work, but also to maintain their employment. The corporate sector and non-government organisations also have a pivotal role to play in helping Indigenous people to become work ready and to secure employment.

The 2006 Census revealed that the proportion of Indigenous people in employment varied considerably according to geographic remoteness and compared to non-Indigenous employment levels. The employment to population percentage¹⁸ of Indigenous Western Australians was 42.3 per cent, which was considerably less than the non-Indigenous percentage of 64.1 per cent. For Indigenous people in 'remote' areas employment rates are slightly higher (42.6 per cent) and considerably higher in 'very remote' areas (47.9 per cent). This reflects the inclusion of CDEP statistics in the figures.

Some regions in Western Australia have more employment opportunities for Indigenous people than others because of the types of industries available: for example, the Pilbara for mining, and the Kimberley for tourism and gas exploration.

The recent agreement struck between the State Government and the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr people to establish the State's next major industrial gas hub at James Price Point near Broome in the Kimberley, has the potential to deliver enterprise and employment opportunities to local Aboriginal people, along with other benefits to health and wellbeing.

From 2006 to 2008, over 1000 Indigenous people in the Pilbara region have achieved work readiness and have been placed in employment in both the mining industry and service economy. Earlier this year, the Pilbara town of Tom Price had only 23 Indigenous people remaining as part of the residual labour pool seeking employment. Pilbara mining companies, even in the current economic downturn, are continuing to maintain and expand their Aboriginal employment base. The potential exists, based on current projections, to achieve full employment for Pilbara Aboriginal people within the next 10 years.

In 2009, the Bloodwood Tree Association Inc. based in South Hedland, through the Regional Partnership Agreement between industry, government and Traditional Owners, will prepare over 200 Aboriginal people for work by providing training and support for identified employers. Bloodwood Tree's success in getting people work-ready involves in part, the active and continuous mentoring of individuals by

¹⁸ Employment to population ratio is the proportion of population aged 15 years and over in employment. It is useful for making Indigenous to non-Indigenous employment comparisons.

Aboriginal mentors over the first twelve months of their combined training and employment. Examples of other successful collaborative employment initiatives are cited in appendix VI.

Small remote Aboriginal communities with fewer than 50 or even 100 residents, face a different scenario with regard to employment opportunities. Almost all communities lack a local economy or market of sufficient size to generate the cash flows to support cooperative enterprises much beyond a community store. Communities located near tourist attractions are in a better position because of the potential to provide services to visitors.

There are some small communities on the Dampier Peninsula in the Kimberley region that have successfully established small-scale eco-tourism businesses through offering accommodation, bush tucker, cultural tours, and so on. A number of the outstations work together to provide a tourist "package": for example, accommodation is provided at one outstation, and tours are conducted by another. Indigenous Business Australia and the Small Business Development Corporation have assisted these enterprises through loans and/or funding to develop business plans.

However, for most of the small communities, and with most people living on income support, the ability to set up and operate business enterprises is extremely difficult. There are some opportunities to train local Indigenous people in roles such as teaching, nursing, health and community care, provided they have the educational prerequisites.

As mentioned above, many Indigenous people living in regional and remote communities rely on the Commonwealth's CDEP for work. The changes to CDEP are likely to have significant impact on employment for Aboriginal people in areas where alternative employment options are limited.

Through COAG's National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation, CDEP positions used for the delivery of government services will be converted to real jobs. This amounts to some 2000 nationally and 338 in Western Australia. All new jobs will be in rural and remote areas.

TRAINING FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE AREAS

TAFEWA makes every effort to tailor its programs to meet the specific needs of clients in regional and remote areas. Specific program funding is available to address Aboriginal training. Building trust with Aboriginal communities is a key priority. The client group may require more time for learning or additional opportunities for assessment to be provided for participants. Delivery methodology emphasises hands-on skills training and practical applications to develop knowledge. Additional and alternative opportunities to demonstrate competence are provided, where possible.

For the training sector, community capacity building projects are keys to improving employment and training opportunities and building leadership in regional and remote areas. The ability to provide local, targeted training has been enhanced by Kimberley TAFE, which has steadily increased the number of TAFE houses across

the Kimberley allowing an ongoing TAFE presence at several remote communities, including Balgo and Kalumburu. These positions have been moved off campus from regional centres.

A community capacity building program has been established to expand partnerships between Aboriginal people, communities, registered training organisations and industry to increase training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, Pilbara, South West, Peel, Mid West/Gascoyne, Goldfields, Great Southern and the Wheatbelt regions. The program has established a wide range of positive and valuable links with registered training organisations, job network providers, industry groups, local government, educational institutions, Aboriginal community agencies, and State and Commonwealth departments.

Literacy and numeracy is delivered in an integrated way that makes it relevant for students. A needs assessment is conducted for individual learners at the commencement of training, including English literacy assessment. Colleges generally take additional time in conducting courses to embed development of literacy skills connecting closely to the competency for the skill being taught. Literacy instruction for students is most successful when it is meaningful to the immediate needs of the job for which the training is provided. It is critical for industry purposes that students develop specific literacy skills which enable them to meet fundamental occupational health and safety requirements.

Mobile training units are operating in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Central West and Kalgoorlie regions. The courses to be provided by the mobile units are decided in consultation with each Aboriginal community.

Barriers to successful implementation of Aboriginal training initiatives in regional and remote areas include:

- Recruitment

It is difficult to secure and retain well qualified and experienced TAFE lecturers in regional and remote areas, especially when highly paid positions in some regional areas exist in the mining industry. Work is being done to develop plans for more flexible and alternative methods of recruitment. Lack of housing, work and home conditions affect the ability to attract staff, as do the very hard conditions encountered on the road and in communities when delivering on-site training.

- Costs

There are a wide range of issues for funding groups and training organisations which affect their ability to provide training in remote areas. There is a high cost associated with delivering training due to isolation and distance. Other factors are occupational health and safety considerations, difficulty in attracting quality lecturers with the required degree of cultural familiarity and experience to this type of work, the difficulty of achieving positive employment outcomes from training in many remote area Aboriginal communities where enterprise opportunities are limited, and lack of funding to allocate to development and innovative resources for use in remote areas.

- Lack of job readiness

Access to employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in remote areas is often limited by the legacy of generational unemployment which does not prepare recruits for being able to maintain the work day routines that go with jobs, as well as a lack of English literacy. Not having a driver's licence or transport and lack of childcare services also impact on ability to access employment. There is a lack of funding and resources for training organisations to assist students to access employment opportunities.

- Training to employment links

Training organisations have a limited capacity to use their contact with students and networks to assist students to take up job opportunities. The capacity of TAFEWA colleges to broker employment outcomes for their students is limited due to the absence of a specific corporate brief and complementary funding for this task, although in regional and remote areas it is taken on by colleges as part of course development, delivery and follow up.

Examples of State Government training programs and initiatives for Aboriginal people living in regional and remote communities are also at appendix VII.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA POPULATION - 2006 CENSUS
REVISED ESTIMATES (Aug 2008)**

INDIGENOUS STATUS BY REGION

REGION	INDIGENOUS (number)	INDIGENOUS (% of regional population)	NON- INDIGENOUS (number)	PERSONS (number)
PERTH	25,313	1.7	1,493,435	1,518,748
SOUTH-WEST	4,412	2.0	215,596	220,008
LOWER GREAT SOUTHERN	2,067	3.7	53,702	55,769
UPPER GREAT SOUTHERN	980	5.2	17,798	18,778
MIDLANDS	2,564	4.8	50,800	53,364
SOUTH- EASTERN	5,931	10.7	49,402	55,333
CENTRAL	7,128	11.6	54,236	61,364
PILBARA	7,430	16.8	36,659	44,089
KIMBERLEY	15,141	47.4	16,787	31,928
TOTAL WA	70,966	3.6	1,988,415	2,059,381

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION (INDIGENOUS VERSUS NON-INDIGENOUS)

REGION	INDIGENOUS (number)	% of total WA Indigenous	NON- INDIGENOUS (number)	% of total WA non- Indigenous
PERTH	25,313	35.7	1,493,435	75.1
SOUTH-WEST	4,412	6.2	215,596	10.8
LOWER GREAT SOUTHERN	2,067	2.9	53,702	2.7
UPPER GREAT SOUTHERN	980	1.4	17,798	0.9
MIDLANDS	2,564	3.6	50,800	2.6
SOUTH- EASTERN	5,931	8.4	49,402	2.5
CENTRAL	7,128	10.0	54,236	2.8
PILBARA	7,430	10.5	36,659	1.8
KIMBERLEY	15,141	21.3	16,787	0.8
TOTAL WA	70,966	100.0	1,988,415	100.0

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE INITIATIVES

The Aboriginal Justice Agreement and Partnerships

The Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), coordinated by the Department of the Attorney General (DotAG), is a partnership agreement between government agencies and community on justice-related issues for Aboriginal people in WA. Since its signing in 2004, the AJA has developed partnerships at local, regional and State levels, to work towards the goals of providing for safe and sustainable communities; reducing Aboriginal people as victims of crime; and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. At the local level, the AJA is supported by Local Justice Forums, comprising 50 per cent agency representatives and 50 per cent Aboriginal community representation. The regional forums and State Justice Congress are each made up of community representatives from the next level down.

When the AJA was first signed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) represented the Commonwealth. Since their abolition, the Commonwealth has not been a signatory to any of the agreements, although in some plans, the local Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) has been involved in specific actions. Consideration is presently being given to bringing Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) in as a signatory agency, given that this agency now has the lead role in Indigenous affairs at the Commonwealth level.

The AJA process has been recognised as an effective tool for government to engage with communities, with both the Drug and Alcohol Office and the Office of Crime Prevention using the existing AJA process and groups to engage with community and to avoid 'consultation fatigue'. Working in this way also allows agencies to share research and findings.

Aboriginal Court Liaison Officers

DotAG has employed Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs) located at nine courts around the State, including in the regional towns of Kununurra, South Hedland, Carnarvon, Broome, Karratha and Roebourne. The role of an ALO is to increase Aboriginal people's access to, confidence in and use of the range of services provided by the Courts; and to contribute to reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people as offenders in the criminal justice system. The ALOs have a diverse workload, including:

- increasing Aboriginal people's understanding of and access to 'time to pay' arrangements, and reducing rate of imprisonment as a result of fine default;
- increasing Aboriginal people's understanding of the need to comply with orders and bail conditions;
- increasing the number of Aboriginal people accessing services at the Court, through helping people build confidence and understanding;
- developing procedures and processes which take account of cultural issues, when appropriate; and

- increasing Judicial Officers' and court staffs' understanding of Aboriginal cultural and social issues.

Kalgoorlie-Boulder Community Court

This court was established to improve the experience of Aboriginal people of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area who plead guilty to an offence in the Magistrates Court. The magistrate is accompanied in court by a number of respected elders, who provide information about the offender's circumstances and social and cultural issues affecting that person. This assists the magistrate to make sentencing orders appropriate to the background and circumstances of the offender. The respected elders also address the offender to bring their behaviour into perspective in a meaningful way for them. Community support for the court is evident – 13 of the original 15 respected persons are still involved in that capacity.

The court is presently undergoing an evaluation, with a report expected by mid 2009.

Geraldton Family and Domestic Violence Court

The Geraldton Family and Domestic Violence Project was launched in December 2007 to address the over-representation of Aboriginal people in prison and the high number of people imprisoned as the result of family and domestic violence related offences. An Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) has provided important community input to the project's steering committee. The project has developed a new approach to addressing family and domestic violence in Geraldton, which may be used in the future as a starting point for the development of other regionally-based models. The model includes:

- alternative court processes based on the establishment of a Family Violence Court (Barndimalgu Court) using a round table approach with Aboriginal court advisors and justices of the peace. There is also participation by the accused, victims and families; support from a case management team that includes Police, victim support services, ARG representatives and legal aid. The first services to be offered through this project began on 8 August 2007 with the launch of Barndimalgu Court;
- programs and services including an adaptation of the Northern Territory Prison-referred and Community-based Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program; and development of new programs to meet the needs of the Geraldton Aboriginal community as well as evaluation of existing programs as a means of continuous improvement;
- public education about family and domestic violence victim and perpetrator services and programs, and court processes; and
- community-based support for victims of family violence and management of offenders and potential offenders. These may include men's group for peer support; Aboriginal men's time-out centre; a women's group; a safe house for women and children; family counselling and care; and youth support.

Sheriff/Community Development Officer (CDO)

This program was initiated to assist remote communities in accessing justice services. This service is provided through a partnership between DotAG and the Department of Corrective Services (DCS). Eight officers based in Kununurra, Broome, South Hedland, Roebourne, Carnarvon, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie travel regularly to remote communities to facilitate arrangements for the payment of outstanding fines and infringements; execute warrants for seizure of goods on behalf of the Sheriff; facilitate work options for people with a community work component to a community correctional order; and provide public awareness and information on justice matters to those remote communities. A process evaluation of this project is presently under way.

Cross-Border Justice Scheme

The scheme involves the Justice, Corrections and Police agencies of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia, following a call from women and children in the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands to help reduce the prevalence of violence and abuse in their communities. Under this scheme, the three jurisdictions have agreed to introduce a collaborative system of justice administration in the region around the borders, including the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia, the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in South Australia, and the central east and south of the Northern Territory. The intention behind the scheme is to facilitate justice outcomes in the area, particularly by providing services based on the whole region, rather than (from the point of view of the communities) an arbitrary division along imaginary lines. It particularly assists in the protection of women and children by removing the ability of offenders to escape across borders to evade justice. The scheme is supported by a number of Service Level Agreements between agencies. It is expected to be in full operation by August 2009.

Indigenous Justice Taskforce

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of WA formed the Indigenous Justice Taskforce (Taskforce) in July 2007 in response to a significant rise in disclosures of child sexual abuse in the Kimberley region. The Taskforce was formed with the aim of bringing together the judiciary and relevant government agencies involved in the delivery of justice services, to plan sufficient court and legal support services in order to expeditiously dispose of the increased number of sexual offences in the Kimberley. The Taskforce included members of the judiciary and representatives of Police, Legal Aid, Aboriginal Legal Service, Director of Public Prosecutions, DotAG and DCS with support provided through DotAG. The work of the Taskforce saw numbers of cases expedited through the court system. The Taskforce is not meeting at present, but is still established and, if circumstances warrant, will recommence meeting as required.

Audio-Visual Facilities

To improve access to judicial proceedings in regional and remote areas, particularly in cases of child abuse matters, the Western Australian Government has invested in an extensive rollout of video-conferencing

facilities for hearing evidence. Video conferencing facilities have been installed (or will be installed by the end of June 2009) at all metropolitan courts and at 24 non-metropolitan courthouses¹⁹ across the State, as well as at three Multi-Functional Police Facilities (Bidyadanga, Dampier Peninsula and Warmun) in the Kimberley region.

In addition, the Bail Act has been amended to explicitly allow bail hearings to take place through video link. This assists people in remote and regional areas to have bail hearings or appeals before a magistrate without the need to be transported to Perth or large regional centres.

As the cost of installing integrated video systems in courts is significant (about \$200,000 per courtroom), it is intended that the return on investment is maximised through making the facilities available to other parties. Aside from court purposes, there are other benefits that can be achieved by external parties. For example:

- police officers in country areas will be able to give evidence for proceedings in Perth (or vice versa);
- training sessions can be arranged for government agencies; and
- rather than briefing out matters to metropolitan law firms, rural practitioners will be able to appear in city proceedings by videoconference.

Since data began being collected on audio-visual usage within the Western Australian court system in September 2008 and up to end of February 2009, a total of 2,482 video conference calls had been reported, with a total duration of 945 hours²⁰.

Warburton Youth Diversion Project

The Warburton Youth Diversion Activity is an initiative of the Warburton Community which employs a youth worker with funding from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. The project promotes re-engagement by Aboriginal young people with their communities through empowering them to join in community decision making forums, and seeking to raise their self esteem. This is achieved through a range of activities such as visual arts, music, landscaping and traditional hunting and food gathering. Young people due for release or recently released from detention are one of the project's target groups, working to link them with positive peers and meaningful activity.

¹⁹ This includes four police courts (Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Newman and Wyndham) but excludes Cocos Islands.

²⁰ These figures are likely to be an underestimate given the management requirement to record video conferencing usage.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE INDIGENOUS HEALTH OUTCOMES IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Aboriginal Sexual Health Teams in the Pilbara, Goldfields and Kimberley: The teams deliver and coordinate a comprehensive sexual health program, including improving access to education, training, clinical services, health hardware, data management etc., with an emphasis on prevention and early diagnosis and treatment, and a commitment to intersectoral partnerships.

WA Child and Youth Health Network - Our Children Our Future: A framework of strategies to improve the physical and mental health, development and wellbeing of all children and young people including risk taking behaviours.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program: To provide and refer to social and emotional well being services, including culturally secure information, support and advice. Supports Aboriginal communities affected by family trauma, grief, loss, mental health problems and at risk of self harm.

Regional Alcohol Management Strategies: These support prevention, treatment and service coordination as well as the creation of safer, more responsible drinking environments.

Telethon Variety Ear Health Bus: The bus is fitted to conduct full paediatric and adult screening and assessment of ear and hearing function. An audiologist is on board. The bus uses schools as the locus but is mandated to focus on infants and families. Education and preventative strategies are developed.

Fitzroy Valley Health Partnership: Formal partnership between Nindilingarri Aboriginal Health Service and WA Country Health Service for coordinated service delivery in the Fitzroy Valley.

Regional Aboriginal Health Planning Forums: Quarterly multi-agency meetings of regionally based health and health related agencies and stakeholders. Objective is to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people in the targeted regions through a co-ordinated approach to the planning, funding and delivery of health and health related services.

The VET in Schools Program: A joint initiative of the Office of Aboriginal Health and the Western Australian Department of Education and Training. The Program aims to deliver Certificate II in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care over a two year period to Indigenous Year 11 and 12 students. It is hoped that involvement in this program will increase high school participation by Aboriginal senior school students and provide employment outcomes for graduates at the conclusion of their TEE year in health related services.

Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Action Plan - Priorities for Closing the Gap: Identifies specific strategies for maternal and child health which are intended to complement and enhance current effort in Aboriginal health provision. Includes an audit of current services.

Maternal and Child Health Project: An evidence based offer of universal antenatal visits to pregnant women in four sites across Western Australia. All pregnant women when they attend the maternity hospital or GP are offered a visit by a child health nurse in the antenatal period.

Child Health Project: A community health nurse led health care assessment for children in care to ensure that all eligible children receive physical, developmental and dental assessments on at least an annual basis. The pilot evaluation will inform the potential for state-wide expansion of the model.

Statewide Protection of Children Coordination Unit (SPOCC): SPOCC has been established by the Department of Health to coordinate the departments programs for the health and protection of children, including the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. SPOCC works in close partnership with the Department of Child Protection.

Mental Health: Under the COAG Agreement, the Department of Health will expand the statewide Indigenous Mental Health Service. A 10 bed residential Indigenous mental health facility has been established in Broome.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA DISABILITY SERVICES COMMISSION RURAL AREA STRATEGY

Allied Health Assistants' Project: A partnership with the Western Australian Country Health Services, Office of Aboriginal Health, the Commission and service providers to develop and trial an allied health assistant model to improve delivery of allied health, in remote communities.

Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health Cultural Orientation Resource for Therapists: A partnership has been developed between the Commission, the Cultural Orientation Resource for Therapists and the Western Australian Country Health Services to develop culturally secure orientation resources.

Midwest, Wiluna Project: A partnership between Ngangganawilli and the Commission where Commission funding is used to extend the hours of a Home and Community Care coordinator by eight hours a week to provide disability information and services. This has provided a vital link between Wiluna people and the Local Area Coordinator and provided information, referrals and links to the Local Area Coordinator visiting from Geraldton.

Midwest, Murchison/Meekatharra: A partnership between Local Area Coordinators and the Western Australian Country Services trialing a 'top up' of existing Western Australian Country Services, Home and Community Care and Early Development worker positions with funding from the Commission to provide additional disability and liaison support worker roles.

Yaandina Roebourne Engagement Project: This is a partnership with the Commission and the Yaandina Family Centre in Roebourne. It aims to identify children with developmental delays and facilitate parental linkages with local support services that can assist with the child's development and preparation for formal education. Project officers identify relevant families as part of their usual work role and link adults with disabilities to existing services, refer families who would benefit from contact with a Local Area Coordinator and liaise formally with the Local Area Coordinator every three months.

Kimberley Support Worker Accommodation, Broome: This partnership between the Commission and the West Kimberley Family Support Association in Broome recognises support officers' disproportionately high regional accommodation costs, which influences retention, service continuity and effectiveness. It is designed to enable a support worker to provide quality support to people with disabilities, without the distraction of looking for other work and/or accommodation.

It has initially been established to enable three people with disabilities to use their individual funding allocated through the Post School Options program to engage in inclusive and meaningful activities. It is anticipated that more people will be supported through this initiative.

Aboriginal Therapy Assistant Project, Western Desert: A partnership between the Commission, the Western Australian Country Health Services and National Disability Services formed to develop and trial an Allied Health Assistant model. The outcome is to improve the delivery of allied health and therapy services to Aboriginal people living in the remote Aboriginal communities of the Western Desert. The first stage is to develop a model of delivery that reinforces local community engagement and enables the effective deployment of remote services. The next stage will be to trial the program with therapy assistants in two Aboriginal communities in the Western Desert.

Capacity Building strategies are:

Respite for Older Carers of Children with Disability Project: Project funding was transferred through the Commonwealth Government's Disability Assistance Package to increase local, culturally relevant respite capacity initiatives in the Fitzroy Valley in partnership with the West Kimberley Family Support Association.

Mobile Respite Services: The Commission is involved in a collaborative mobile respite service funded by the Commonwealth that provides a mobile respite service to the Blackstone, Warburton and Warakurna Aboriginal communities. This collaboration includes Goldfields Individual and Family Support Service Association, Bega Garnbirringu Health Service – Kalgoorlie and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Tri-State Agreement: The Agreement between the Northern Territory, South and Western Australian governments has provided joint funding to the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Aboriginal Women's Council (NPY) to deliver services for people with disabilities in the Central Lands. This agreement has been managed by Western Australia for the past four years, but its continuation beyond the five year agreement is dependent on the commitment of the other governments.

The success of the initiatives identified above has been based on partnerships and the relationships established between agencies. It has often entailed the Commission providing top-up funding to expand the role of a person working with another agency, to provide disability information and link people with appropriate disability services.

SAFER COMMUNITIES, SAFER CHILDREN

The Safer Communities, Safer Children model facilitates the coordination of government services and offers the opportunity for non-government service providers to be included at the local level.

The model uses a phased approach:

Phase 1 – Initial Response:

The immediate and short term response in which:

- evidence is obtained by specialist interviewers;
- perpetrators are charged and case-managed within the court system;
- victims are provided with safety, support and intervention strategies; and
- community education is provided to raise awareness of legal processes and their implications.

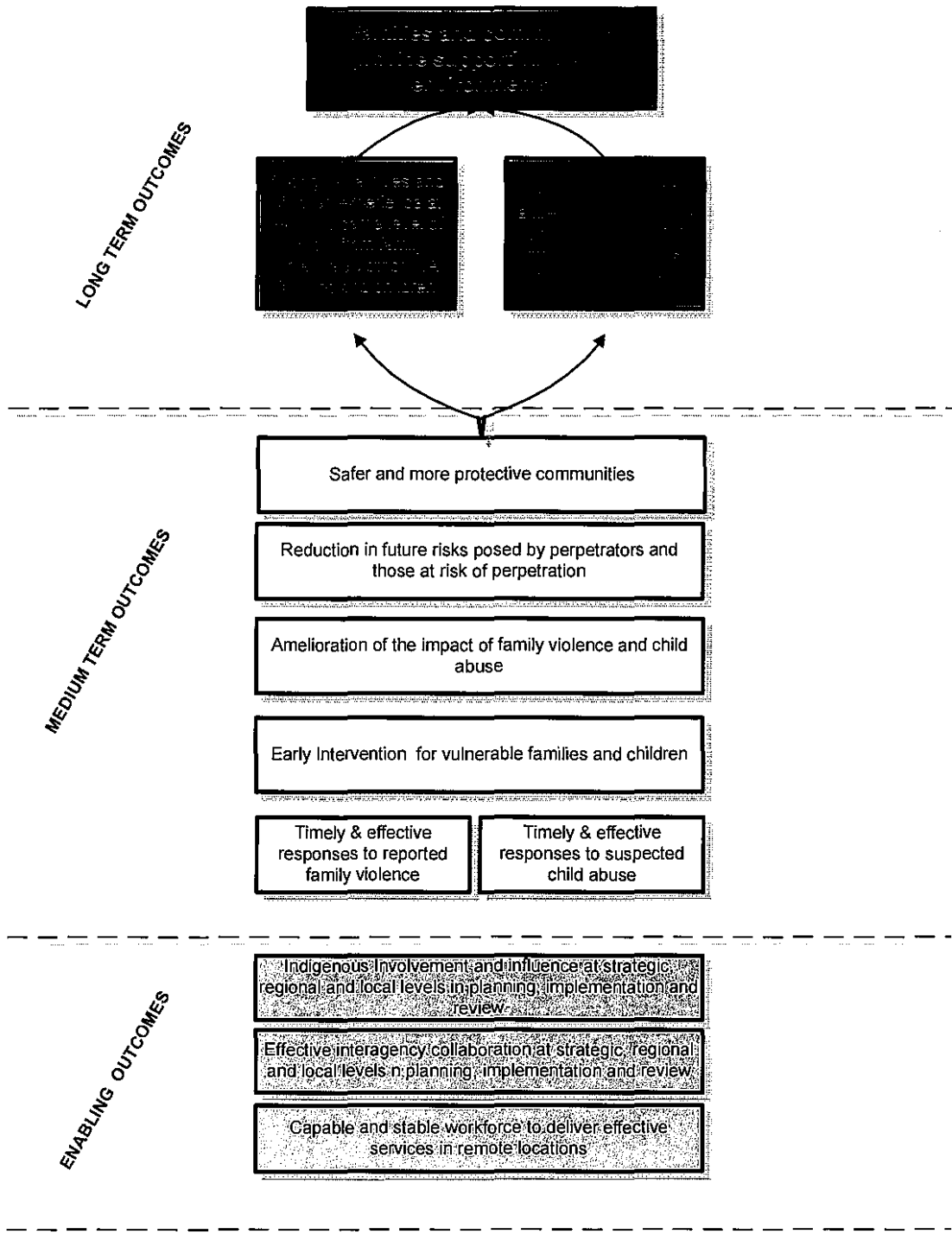
Phase 2 – Recovery

The broader community is supported to manage any issues that result from the allegations and arrests. This phase involves community healing and involves the establishment of arrangements for effective engagement. It includes provision of child victim support and responses to drug and alcohol and mental health issues; cultural and healing activities; protective behaviours programs; and alternative dispute resolution.

Phase 3 – Ongoing community building

The longer term community building process in which agencies work with communities to accomplish any cultural and societal changes needed to ensure the long-term safety and security of children. This phase involves ongoing partnerships to strengthen governance and service functions and includes community development, governance training, establishing structures for community participation, addressing housing and accommodation and public health needs.

SAFER COMMUNITIES, SAFER CHILDREN Medium & Long Term Outcomes



EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES TARGETING THE NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Curriculum

Inclusive Curriculum:

- The K-10 Syllabus for Society and Environment includes essential content that Western Australian students should be taught to value and respect cultural difference, Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal history and perspectives, Aboriginal leaders and their role in the broader Australian society. Curriculum support materials assist schools to implement the syllabus and develop cultural understandings.
- The teaching of Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal languages enables Aboriginal students to maintain their cultural and linguistic heritage and assists non-Aboriginal students to gain better understandings of Aboriginality. Aboriginal languages are taught to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in 70 metropolitan, urban, rural and remote schools across Western Australia. Teaching Aboriginal languages is a cooperative effort between the school and the Aboriginal community.
- An Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum website has been developed for teachers to access quality information in the teaching of Aboriginal Studies. Resources include lesson plans and links to relevant web-sites. This website was developed to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment in schools and to break down barriers to improve student and parent involvement in the education process.
- The Department of Education and Training has provided funding of \$350 000 to the Association of Independent Schools to develop Indigenous curriculum materials in remote and regional communities.

Online Curriculum Services Project and Learning with ICT Project: These projects assist Aboriginal students to engage and participate in ICT-enriched learning programs that make use of sound, graphics, interactivity and creative tools. In 2008/09, 193 remote and regional schools will participate in the Online Curriculum Services Project. Forty three remote and regional schools have received funding in 2008/2009 through the Learning with ICT project to support an ICT coordinator to develop their skills in using ICT in teaching and learning.

Literacy and Numeracy:

- The Aboriginal Literacy Strategy (ALS) is a highly structured language and literacy learning program delivered across 52 school sites, including Remote Community Schools and some regional schools. The program is designed to improve the Standard English language and literacy of Aboriginal students. Students in the program undertake a daily literacy session including the explicit teaching of standard Australian English.
- *English as a Second Language-Indigenous Language Speaking Students' Program (ESL-ILLS)* is a Commonwealth funded initiative that has been developed to support culturally and linguistically diverse Aboriginal students who commence compulsory schooling not speaking

Standard Australian English. A once only per capita grant is made provide intensive English language tuition for each eligible student. The program currently operates in approximately 60 schools in the Goldfields, Kimberley, Mid West and Pilbara education districts.

- *ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning* is a professional development program that is focused on improving literacy outcomes for Aboriginal students whose first language or dialect is not Standard Australian English. It is based on nationally recognised two-way research conducted collaboratively with key linguistic specialists on Aboriginal English, bidialectal and ESL education.
- *Getting it Right* is a literacy and numeracy strategy trains and places specialist teachers in selected primary and secondary schools. The strategy focuses on students whose standards of literacy and numeracy are behind those of the general population, with particular attention given to boys, students from language backgrounds other than English, students in rural and remote areas, and Aboriginal students.
- *Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)* aims to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Aboriginal students at educational risk and improving academic performance amongst students in upper secondary schooling. This program provides in-school tuition for students in Years 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 who have not met minimum standards in literacy and numeracy. Students in Years 11 and 12 may also receive tutorial support in specified subject areas.

Building Inclusive Classrooms: This is a strategy of additional specialist teaching personnel, professional learning and support to schools across the public school system. The strategy is designed to support schools in the development of inclusive school cultures. It also facilitates the development of teaching and learning environments which are responsive to the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties. In the Kimberley, where there has been difficulty in engaging staff, personnel travel to regional and remote schools to overcome this barrier.

Parent Involvement

School and Community Partnerships project: This project fosters cooperative partnerships between schools, Aboriginal parents and the local community. A formalised agreement is negotiated and developed, with the aim of improving Aboriginal student outcomes. Trials of the project were conducted in 2007 and 2008 and the project is being expanded from 2009 to schools with significant Aboriginal student enrolments.

Community Capacity Building: The Kimberley District Education Office has initiated the Community Capacity Building program which enhances the leadership capacity of Aboriginal staff. It is targeted at skills needed to work more effectively in assisting parents, carers and the broader community to fulfil their parental responsibility to support the school and their child in the education process. The program uses a problem based learning process supported through coaching and mentoring.

Attendance, Retention and Engagement

Follow the Dream - Partnerships for Success Program: This is a tertiary aspirations strategy targeting high achieving Aboriginal students as they commence their secondary education. It provides students with ongoing academic extension in a supportive environment and enables them to aim for completion of Year 12 and entrance into tertiary studies. The program is a good example of a partnerships approach involving teachers, local community members, representatives of the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation and local industry partners.

Attendance Grants to Districts and Schools: Australian Government funding is distributed to education districts and provides them with the opportunity to address local issues. Funds are used for attendance programs that are developed in consultation with local communities and the District Aboriginal Education Advisory Council. The employment of School Based Attendance Officers in some districts is an effective strategy aiming to improve attendance rates in targeted schools.

Sporting Academies: Sporting academies provide an important avenue for engaging Aboriginal students, who may otherwise have been at risk of leaving school early, in school activities. The academies provide mentoring to support students' transition through school and into post-school destinations. The Clontarf Foundation's Aboriginal Football Academy provides an education intervention program for Aboriginal students. In partnership with selected secondary schools and colleges, the football academies use Australian rules football as a medium to improve the participation, attendance and retention rates of Aboriginal students. There are eight funded football academies (plus two annexes) across the State, hosted by public schools, to improve attendance and retention for Aboriginal boys.

Education and Training Participation Plans: Each District Education Office has in place an Education and Training Participation Plan (ETPP) allocating funding to district level initiatives to improve student participation, overseen by a committee representing education, training, community and government agencies. Some programs that are funded through ETPPs target Aboriginal students and include basketball and netball sporting programs to improve attendance and engagement. In remote districts, ETPP funds are used to pay for accredited Vocational Education and Training activities in a variety of certificates and skill sets.

Participation Coordinators: The Department has undertaken a range of measures to develop more flexible and improved pathways for young people between schools, VET, universities and employment. This is a cross-sectoral, multi-agency initiative involving public and private schools, TAFEWA colleges and private RTOs, community organisations and employers. There are 85 field based workers (Managers Participation and Participation Coordinators) throughout the State to support young people to make successful transitions from school into further education, training and/or employment.

VET in Schools: Recent initiatives have been implemented to foster VET take up and employment pathways amongst young people including regional placements of dedicated participation managers and enterprise and vocational education officers in district education offices who work closely with students using individual pathways plans. VET in Schools opportunities have also been expanded. Students at remote area schools are provided with a wide range of VET opportunities including courses such as certificates in General Construction, Agriculture, Aboriginal Cultural Arts, Automotive, Business, Horticulture and Aquaculture.

Aboriginal School Based Training (ASBT): This program provides opportunities for Aboriginal students in Years 10, 11 and 12 to start training in school to gain a qualification, sustainable employment or go onto further education or training. There are three phases of ASBT: preparatory programs, preparing students for work, delivered by registered training organisations; pre-employment assessments, ensuring students are ready for the workplace, conducted by group training organisations; and apprenticeship and traineeship options (school based or full time) available for Year 11 and Year 12 students.

Group training organisations and registered training organisations are contracted to manage ASBT. Their role includes coordination of the Year 10 Certificate 1 programs, employment of those entering into apprenticeships or traineeships, and arrangement of mentoring and other support for the participants. There is a strong participation in the program in regional and remote areas. As at 3 April 2009, 317 regional and remote registrations for the Certificate 1 have been signed by students. Some barriers to participation in the program include: poor school attendance; low levels of literacy and numeracy; small class sizes; cost of delivering the program in remote areas; inability to cluster with students from another school to make up a viable class size due to distance or feuding; travel distance required of group training organisations to establish a program in remote areas; lack of suitable private registered training organisations in regional areas; expense of staff salaries and accommodation in regional areas.

Early Childhood Education

Aboriginal Kindergartens: Aboriginal kindergartens provide education programs for three and four year old Aboriginal students, which are inclusive of their Aboriginality, culture, language and learning styles. Aboriginal children are assisted in the transition from home to school through the kindergarten setting. There are 28 Aboriginal kindergartens in WA. All Remote Community Schools operate Aboriginal kindergarten programs. The strength of these programs is their connection with the Aboriginal community together with a sound cultural program.

Staffing

Remote Teaching Service: The Department is improving incentives available under the Remote Teaching Service to ensure that quality teachers are attracted to and retained in remote community schools. The annual Remote

Teaching Service Induction Conference aims to develop teacher skill and confidence in providing appropriate learning environments to support the learning outcomes of Aboriginal students. The induction includes: cultural awareness, Aboriginal literacy, health and safety, working with ESL students and strategies for working with students with conductive hearing loss.

Aboriginal Employment: The Department is committed to increasing the employment of Aboriginal people, as outlined in *Culture Strong, Career Proud: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2008-2010*. The Department employs local Aboriginal people who work as teachers, administrators, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs), cleaners, gardeners and bus drivers across the state. Increasing the number of Aboriginal people in employment across the education sector ultimately assists in improving outcomes for Aboriginal students by developing career opportunities and pathways for Aboriginal people, providing role models for the students and providing cultural advice and support for other school staff. Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers develop, promote and maintain communication networks between Aboriginal students, their parents and caregivers, the community and school staff so that learning programs are relevant to both educational and cultural needs. They support Aboriginal students in the areas of academic achievement, participation, attendance, discipline, retention and communication.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL, COLLABORATIVE, INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

Arts Commercialisation – Warakurna Artists

In the last four years, the Western Australian Government in partnership with the Commonwealth and Indigenous people, has assisted the development of six new art centres across the State. The art enterprises provide self employment, independent income and culturally-appropriate small businesses, contributing to overall community wellbeing and the regional economy.

The Arts Commercialisation Strategy is estimated to yield economic benefits in excess of \$10 million per annum to participating artists and their art centre organisations across Western Australia. Beyond the immediate wealth creation and economic benefits to individuals, families and communities, art centres also promote safe, healthy and supportive family environments, strengthen communities and help to maintain cultural identity and continuity.

Warakurna Artists was established in 2004 with financial assistance from the Government. Warakurna is approximately 100km west of the Western Australia/Northern Territory border in the remote Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Warakurna has a population of approximately 180 people. Prior to the inception of Warakurna Artists, there were no jobs in the community apart from the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

The art centre quickly developed to provide significant financial benefits to the community with approximately \$500,000 turnover annually and also delivering a range of social welfare outcomes. Warakurna Artists has become the heart of the community because the community is empowered by good governance to improved business awareness. This has created a sense of responsibility, ownership and pride, lending to the use of meaningful, appropriate employment practices. The art centre has 150 artists on its registry.

Exemplary best practice management has earned Warakurna Artists, Reconciliation Australia's 2008 National Indigenous Governance Award for organisations established for less than ten years. Warakurna Artists is also a pivotal member of the award winning Western Desert Mob Alliance. Western Desert Mob showcases works from six Aboriginal owned and managed art centres supporting Ngaanyatjarra artists.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rio Tinto Iron Ore on Aboriginal Economic Development

On 13 February 2008, the State Government and Rio Tinto Iron Ore (RTIO) signed an MoU for a cooperative working relationship in the delivery of economic development to the Aboriginal people of Western Australia. The MoU requires RTIO and the Aboriginal Economic Development (AED) Unit of the Department of Commerce to work together on a range of employment programs and business opportunities to maximise the participation of

Aboriginal Western Australians in the expansion of RTIO's mining and related operations in Western Australia.

A key initiative is the identification of up to 300 Indigenous workers from nominated regions, towns and communities for employment at RTIO's operations in a range of occupations over the next two years. The planning and implementation of a work ready program for potential Indigenous employees and the appointment of Work Ambassadors are important to achieving this goal.

- Workstart Program

The Workstart Program is an intensive, self paced 13 week pre-employment program that includes the following components: literacy, driver licences, alcohol and drugs, fitness for work, safety training, self development, and personal financial management.

The Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation and/or Pilbara TAFE run the the Workstart Program. It is an award winning work-ready program for Indigenous trainees in the Pilbara and has been adapted to best suit RTIO's continuous improvement needs. The program is being refined so that there is an effective process for selection, medical assessment, pre-employment training, recruitment, post employment training and ongoing mentoring and support throughout the traineeship with RTIO.

Successful completion of the Workstart Program secures the trainee a job with RTIO or a contractor, or trainees may choose to capitalise on the skills developed during the Program to secure employment elsewhere. In 2008, the Program was successfully delivered at Roebourne (eight graduates), Roebourne Prison (nine graduates), Karratha (18 graduates), Onslow (14 graduates), Tom Price (eight graduates) and Nullagine (11 graduates).

- Aboriginal work ambassadors

AED presented the concept of Aboriginal Work Ambassadors to RTIO as an effective way of providing the link between the company and Traditional Owners (TOs). The Ambassador promotes employment and other economic opportunities to the TOs at an individual, family and group level and provides mentoring and support to Aboriginal people who make a commitment to take up work or programs that prepare them for work. The Ambassadors are selected on the basis of being culturally respected and accepted by the TOs they represent and have good working relationships with RTIO managers to ensure culturally appropriate processes are implemented. RTIO has so far trialed placement of two ambassadors to their TO groups, the Kurama Marthdudunera and Nyiyiparli, and is considering appointing ambassadors for a number of other TO groups.

- Flexible employment model

RTIO and AED have collaborated on the development of a flexible employment arrangement for TOs to work on the mine sites, and is trialing it at RTIO's West Angelas operation in the Pilbara. RTIO provides members of

GMY with employment opportunities where they are not yet at a level to work full time at the mine sites but are interested in a flexible and developmental employment pathway. Up to six members of the GMY Group have been recruited to work at the West Angelas operation on gardening and maintenance duties and are transported from town to the mine site five days a week. This mode of employment appeals to the long term unemployed or those who have never been employed as opposed to long shifts on mine sites away from the family. RTIO works closely with the group to support members with health and fitness-for-work issues and encourages members with future employment prospects.

In the first year of the MoU, 59 Aboriginal trainees (excluding those in prison and yet to be released) have completed the Workstart Program and 58 have been placed in employment with RTIO or other local employers. This is an outstanding achievement given that most of the employable Aboriginal people in the region are already in employment and those targeted under the MoU require significant support in developing skills and work habits necessary to succeed in employment in the Pilbara.

Biodiesel Fuel Production

Fuel is a significant component of the cost of energy in remote Indigenous communities. The Department of Commerce funded a feasibility study and business plan on the conversion of waste vegetable oil from a catering facility on Aboriginal land in the Pilbara to service nearby mine sites with bio-diesel fuel. Subsequently, the Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) set up a pilot plant in Tom Price and Onslow and is now selling bio-diesel fuel to the Shire of Ashburton. The corporation also assisted a neighbouring Indigenous pastoral station, Peedamulla, to gain fuel sufficiency through the production of its own bio-diesel fuel. The AAC hopes to share this expertise with other Indigenous remote communities.

Economic Development in Gnaala Karla Booja Country

The Boddington Gold Mine (BGM) is located 100 km south east of Perth in Gnaala Karla Booja (GKB) country. BGM and representatives of the Gnaala Karla Booja people signed a community partnership agreement in August 2006 which commits to employing 100 Aboriginal people during the 20 year life of the mine. The aim is to meet this within the first five years of the agreement.

The Boddington Gold Mine, located 17kms north of the town of Boddington, has one of the largest gold deposits in the world and will be one of Western Australia's largest gold mine when it resumes production in 2009. It is expected to produce one million ounces of gold for the first five years, with an average of 850,000 ounces per year over its life span. It will produce some copper and silver and there is potential to extend the mine life.

The projected workforce is 650 permanent employees with an estimated 120 working as contractors largely associated with the maintenance and operation of mining equipment. At the end of December 2008, 12 permanent Aboriginal

employees have been employed in BGM operations, with a further 30 working with sub-contractors.

TRAINING PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Aboriginal Education, Employment and Training Committees (AEETCs): All TAFEWA colleges have an AEETC to advise on matters affecting Aboriginal training and contribute to the development of annual plans for the delivery of training and utilisation of State and Commonwealth funding directed towards Aboriginal training. They identify local training needs and develop local strategies to encourage high levels of Aboriginal participation in VET.

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance: Australian Government and State funds are allocated to TAFEWA colleges and Curtin Vocational Training and Education Centre, Kalgoorlie, (VTEC) to enable delivery of a range of Aboriginal training initiatives. The colleges are required to develop Aboriginal training plans which include targets, in consultation with their AEETC. In addition, funding is provided to Karrayili Adult Education Centre Aboriginal Corporation (Fitzroy Crossing) and Ngaanyatjarra Community College (Warburton) to meet specific community needs.

Mobile training units: Mobile training units are operating in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Central West and Kalgoorlie regions. The courses to be provided by the mobile units are decided in consultation with each Aboriginal community. Central West TAFE has two mobile training trailers enabling delivery of building and construction; metals; and art programs in remote locations where suitable equipment may not be otherwise available. In 2008 the college received funding through the Department for the purchase of a large mobile training unit to further enhance regional delivery, particularly in trades' related areas. The mobile trailers have proved particularly effective in the delivery of VET in schools delivery in more remote regions.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy: The development of training delivery approaches where literacy and numeracy is contextualised for students and delivered in an integrated way that makes it relevant for students is a primary consideration for TAFEWA colleges in their regional and remote area training delivery. Individual learner needs assessment, including English literacy, is conducted by lecturers at the commencement of training. Colleges generally take additional time in conducting courses to embed development of literacy skills connecting closely to the competency for the skill being taught. Experience has shown that literacy instruction for students is most successful when it is meaningful to the immediate needs of the job for which the training is provided. It is critical for industry purposes that students develop specific literacy skills which enable them to meet fundamental Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

Aboriginal Education, Training and Employment Officer (AETEO) Program: This program is a community capacity building program based on initiatives and activities which aim to establish and expand partnerships between Aboriginal people, communities, registered training organisations and industry to increase training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in regional areas. AETEOs are located within a range of agencies across the state in the following eight regions: Kimberley, Pilbara, South West, Peel, Mid West/Gascoyne, Goldfields, Great Southern and the Wheatbelt. The AETEO reports reflect a wide range of positive

and valuable links established with registered training organisations, job network providers, industry groups, local government, educational institutions, Aboriginal community agencies, and State and Commonwealth departments. In 2008, there were 631 clients statewide. AETEOs identified 165 job opportunities and followed these up with canvassing to clients, 122 clients were assisted to find employment, 273 were assisted to enter further education and VET training courses and 31 gained a traineeship or apprenticeship.

Adult Community Education (ACE) Project Grants: ACE grants are available for non-accredited learning programs designed to increase participation in learning by people who are marginalised or disadvantaged. The overall aim is to increase confidence and interest in undertaking learning and educational activities.

Equity Development and Innovation (EDI) Program: Targeting similar participants to ACE, these can fund non-accredited training programs that develop clear pathways into accredited training, or training at the accredited level that provides customised and supported training to suit the needs of the students. EDI projects are funded for one year initially but may be extended for up to two years.

EDI Project (2008-2009): "Bringing Training to Home Country": A collaborative partnership between Challenger TAFE and Morapoi Station Community (2 hours drive north of Kalgoorlie between Menzies and Leonora). In 2008 the delivery of Certificate I Indigenous Tourism and Certificate II Leadership piloted a model for remote and regional indigenous training delivery that was based on community consultation, ownership and delivery in culturally appropriate settings, meeting Indigenous learning styles. Its learning focussed on cultural tourism which was immediately relevant and met an identified need in developing tourist tracks/tour guides supporting the Morapoi tourism enterprise. The model has had a very positive impact on the community in building not only skills to support employment, but confidence and empowerment. While it continues to be funded in 2009, it faces barriers of ongoing funding to support the development of this community enterprise, and building their skills and capacity in governance, tourism, hospitality and conservation and land management.

ACE projects funded in 2009: Esperance Indigenous Women's Learning Group (Yorga Barmah). This project, run through Escare, will be informal, flexible and fun and is targeted at Indigenous intergenerational women in the Esperance community. The program will consist of 15 workshops over a seven month period. Workshop topics will include; cooking, craft/sewing, cultural learning, pottery and using technology in the community. The program of workshops will promote strengths that participants have and provide an opportunity for new learning experiences.

Transformation - A Diversity of People Brought Together Through a Diversity of Arts to Create a Sense of Community: Tom Price Community Arts & Cultural Centre. This project is designed mainly for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, and those who wish to develop skills otherwise unobtainable because of their remote location. The project will be a feast of the arts with 44 workshops as well as an Arts Feast. The project consists of 12 different Appetiser workshops for people to try out something new; and four Main Course workshops

with three sessions each to develop some of the skills which have been introduced in the appetisers.

Midwest Expressions ACE Art Project Geraldton-Greenough: Women's Health Resource Centre (Inc). This project will mainly target disadvantaged community members, including Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and persons on income support. The program will involve a series of innovative art classes, targeting participants who have not taken part in ACE classes before. It will present art tuition in a friendly, fun, inclusive and collaborative way, boosting creative ability, promoting self esteem, confidence, team work and communication skills, and enthusiasm to seek subsequent learning opportunities. It will provide centrally located weekly workshops and several larger one-off collaborative workshops at satellite locations, culminating in a community art exhibition, showcasing and promoting students' work.

Access Program: The Access program funds private and public Registered Training Organisations to deliver nationally and State recognised training programs to clients from various target groups. There is an element specifically for courses developed to meet identified local training.

Industry and Indigenous Skill Centre Projects - Formerly VET Infrastructure for Indigenous People (VIIP) Program: Funded through the Australian Government, capital funding is provided to assist in the delivery of VET to Aboriginal people. Focus is on improvement of major buildings and equipment for training; increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people in the delivery of VET; and increasing VET opportunities for Aboriginal students. This program is expected to be in place by mid 2009.