



Australian Government

**Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs**

Part A: Outcome 7.5 - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Program Guidelines

Preface

These guidelines provide the framework for the implementation and administration of Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory.

The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA or the Department) has a suite of documents (the **Program Guideline Suite**) which provide information relating to the program. These provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in the program and form the basis for the business relationship between FaHCSIA and the funding recipient.

They are:

- **Part A: Program Guidelines** provides an overview of the Program and the Activities relating to the program;
- **Part B: Information for Applicants** which provides information on the Application, Assessment, Eligibility, Selection and Complaints processes; and Financial and Funding Agreement arrangements.
- **Part C: Application Information** provides specific information on the Activity, Selection Criteria, Performance Management and Reporting. This part should be read in conjunction with the [Standard Terms and Conditions](#).
- The **Application Form** which is completed by applicants applying for funding during a selection process.

FaHCSIA reserves the right to amend these documents from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

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1 Program Overview

Through the [Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory](#) (Stronger Futures) package the Australian Government has made a 10-year commitment to work with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to build strong, independent lives, where communities, families and children are safe and healthy.

The total Stronger Futures package provides a \$3.4 billion investment and responds directly to what Aboriginal people told the Government was important to them.

Through Stronger Futures, the Government will:

- work with Aboriginal people in both big and small communities to support more local jobs, tackle alcohol abuse and encourage children to go to school, as well as provide basic services, including health, education and police;
- talk to Aboriginal people in each community about how best to deliver services under Stronger Futures, providing Aboriginal people with more responsibility for services in their own community; and
- support Aboriginal organisations to deliver services under Stronger Futures; and
- will ensure all Stronger Futures services employ local Aboriginal people wherever possible.

Providing support for service providers to engage Aboriginal staff, particularly at the local level, and investing in their career development wherever possible, are key deliverables for all measures under the Stronger Futures package.

Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory supports a range of activities and services that form part of this broader Stronger Futures package.

FaHCSIA works collaboratively in whole of government arrangements. The Department's National Network (comprising State and Territory Offices, Regional Operations Centres, Indigenous Coordination Centres and locally-based staff) facilitates delivery of services and engagement with Indigenous communities, service providers, other levels of government and the non-government and corporate sectors.

The following components are included under Program 7.5: Food Security, Tackling Alcohol Abuse and Governance and Engagement. The Governance and Engagement component encompasses the secondary components of Evaluation, Communication and the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Classification Education Project.

Note: Administered funds in support of Communication, Evaluation and Community Safety and Justice activities are excluded from these guidelines. Communication and Evaluation funding components will be expended under contract arrangements in line with procurement guidelines, while Community Safety and Justice funds will be managed through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Territory Police.

Funding of over \$38 million over 10 years from 2012-13 to 2021-22 has been approved for a range of grant activities under Program 7.5.

The following amounts have been approved for the individual grant activity components under Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory:

- Food Security - funding of approximately \$13.4 million
- Tackling Alcohol Abuse - funding of approximately \$24.4 million
- Governance and Engagement - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Classification Education Project - funding of approximately \$1.1 million.

1.1 Program Outcomes

Program 7.5 - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory provides whole-of-government policy coordination and implementation of targeted measures to increase the wellbeing and safety of communities, including women and children, and improve engagement and development.

In recognition of the new 10 year funding commitment for the Northern Territory, Program 7.5 has been renamed from Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory to Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory.

1.2 Objectives

The aims and objectives of Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory are articulated through the aims of its three components:

- **Food Security** – the object of the food security measure under the Stronger Futures legislation is to enable special measures to be taken for the purpose of promoting food security for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. This measure is intended to enhance the contribution made by community stores to achieving food security for Aboriginal communities.

Specific funding under Program 7.5 supports this objective with the aim to promote food security for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and enhance the contribution that community stores make to this.

- **Tackling Alcohol Abuse** – the object of the tackling alcohol abuse measure under the Stronger Futures legislation is to enable special measures to be taken to reduce alcohol-related harm to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

This funding has been allocated under the Program 7.5 objective to contribute to the safety of women and children, reduce violence and associated alcohol and substance abuse and promote personal responsibility and community norms.

- **Governance and Engagement** – Program 7.5 funding in support of Governance and Engagement aims to strengthen engagement and governance capacity of government, community members and organisations in the Northern Territory.

The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Classification Education project is closely aligned to the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory legislation which enables special measures to be taken to protect children living in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory from being exposed to prohibited material.

2 Responsibilities and accountabilities under the program

This section sets out the responsibilities and accountabilities of FaHCSIA and funding recipients or applicants seeking to apply for funding in the course of a funding round, and the role of the Minister.

2.1 FaHCSIA responsibilities and accountabilities

Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory components will be managed through the relevant FaHCSIA Branch. The relevant FaHCSIA Branch responsibilities will include:

- Providing advice and reporting as required to the Minister;
- Identifying suitable service provider(s) to deliver activity(ies) to ensure the provision of effective, efficient, quality services to the community;
- Providing clear and concise advice to service providers in relation to the program and intended outcomes;
- Working in partnership with the service provider to ensure that the program is implemented;
- Providing the service provider with a clear and concise funding agreement and ensuring the service provider is accountable to government in the terms agreed;
- Providing constructive feedback to the service provider;
- Administering the operation of the program in a timely, accountable and efficient manner;
- Ensuring that the outcomes contained within the program guidelines are being met; and
- Evaluating the service provider's performance against program outcomes.

2.2 Service provider responsibilities and accountabilities

- Providing quality services which are effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted;
- Working collaboratively with the Australian Government and other government and non-government services in the delivery of the program;
- Contributing to the overall development and improvement of the program such as sharing best practice and participating in evaluation and review;
- Complying with all relevant Commonwealth and State or Territory legislation and policies;
- Meeting the obligations and accountabilities as stated in the Funding Agreement between FaHCSIA and the service provider;
- Conducting the service consistent with any Code of Conduct that may apply within the program and form part of the funding agreement; and
- Taking reasonable steps to protect clients, particularly children, from the risks of harmful content and harmful or inappropriate use of publicly funded computers and digital technology.

2.3 Role of the Minister

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has overall responsibility for the broad Stronger Futures package. The final decisions on funding agreements will be made by the Minister on advice provided by FaHCSIA for activities under the Food Security, Tackling Alcohol Abuse and Governance and Engagement components.

3 Risk management strategy

The Department is committed to a comprehensive and systematic approach to the effective management of potential opportunities and adverse effects. FaHCSIA's risk management decisions and practices are made in accordance with FaHCSIA's Strategic Framework, using consequence and likelihood to determine a risk rating for each of FaHCSIA's five key risk areas of governance; financial management; viability; performance management; and issues management.

As part of the overall risk management for Program 7.5 - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory, the Department requires service providers to:

- Identify and document risks in delivering services funded under the program, including obtaining suitably qualified staff to support implementation;
- Identify and document risk control strategies; and
- Implement adequate and effective policies and procedures to manage risks and achieve the control strategies through the funded period.

Funding Agreements will be managed according to their level of risk. As such, service providers will be subject to a risk management assessment prior to the negotiation of Funding Agreements.

3.1 Financial Reporting

The Program 7.5 - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory components will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles, the FaHCSIA Funding Agreement and will aim to maintain viable services and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided.

3.2 Evaluation

Evaluation of Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory components will feed into the overarching evaluation of the broad Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package. Individual components of the Program may also be required to meet specific review timeframes and requirements specified in the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory legislation.

4 Program Performance Framework and Reporting

4.1 Performance management and evaluation

FaHCSIA periodically undertakes or commissions program evaluations and reviews to ensure its programs are high quality, effective, efficient and appropriately targeted to the needs of individuals, families and communities. Extensive mechanisms have been developed for the review and evaluation of the Stronger Futures package. Reporting will be reviewed by program component and information will be required for six monthly progress reporting which will be publicly released and will:

- track implementation of measures;
- track and analyse progress of these measures against performance indicators under programs;
- track Aboriginal employment in service delivery generated by Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory funding; and
- draw on results from any government staff and service provider surveys.

FaHCSIA is responsible for resource management and tracking progress of the components of Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory covered in these Program Guidelines.

4.2 Performance framework and reporting

The success criteria for the implementation of Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory include:

- Timeliness - Extent to which key milestones are met;
- Quality - Policy delivered consistently across all measures in line with the Government's stated intent;
- Cross-agency coordination and responsiveness is cohesive, efficient and effective;
- Efficiency - Extent to which budgets are met;
- Extent of integration of the package; and
- Effectiveness - Policy delivers outcomes in line with government stated intent.

The [Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012](#) contains the Stronger Futures Tackling Alcohol Abuse and Food Security legislative provisions. This Act commenced on 16 July 2012 and provides for a review to be undertaken to consider the effectiveness of the Tackling Alcohol Abuse and Food Security measures among other special measures in the legislation. This review must be completed and a report prepared by July 2016.

The *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* further requires the Minister and Northern Territory Minister to cause an independent review of Commonwealth and Northern Territory laws relating to alcohol to be undertaken no later than 2 years after commencement. This means that the independent review of Commonwealth and Northern Territory laws relating to alcohol must occur no later than July 2014, and must be completed by July 2015.

Part 10 of the [Classification \(Publications, Films and Computer Games\) Act 1995](#), amended by the [Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory \(Consequential and Transitional Provisions\) Act 2012](#), contains the Prohibited Material measure. The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Classification Education Project of Program 7.5 falls under the Prohibited Material measure. Part 10 commenced on 4 September 2007 and requires an independent review to be undertaken of the first 7 years of the operation of the Part. This means that the review of the Prohibited Material Measure must commence no later than September 2014, and must be completed by September 2015.

Relevant milestones and indicators will be outlined in each funding agreement and be consistent with FaHCSIA standards.

Information about the components and activities

5 FaHCSIA 7.5 Program Components

There are three main components under Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory:

Food Security – Part 4 of the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* (the Act), which commenced on 16 July 2012, establishes a scheme for the assessment, monitoring and licensing of community stores in the Northern Territory. The object of Part 4 is to enable special measures to be taken for the purpose of promoting food security for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. In particular Part 4 is intended to enhance the contribution made by community stores in the Northern Territory to achieving food security for Aboriginal communities. Food security is defined as a reasonable ongoing level of access to a range of food, drink and grocery items that is reasonably priced, safe and of sufficient quantity and quality to meet nutritional and related household needs. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring community stores meet acceptable standards for community stores licensing, including in regard to the range, quantity and quality of goods and the retail, governance and financial integrity of their operations;
- working collaboratively with Aboriginal communities and other key stakeholders to improve food security options and to build the capacity of stores to meet the requirements of the community stores licensing requirements;
- using funds to assist licensed community stores in the Northern Territory with non-recurrent projects, which will lead to improvements in the operation and viability of stores and improve food security for the Aboriginal community(ies) that they serve. The funding will also assist store owners to continue to meet licensing requirements and, for currently unlicensed stores that will need to be licensed, to make improvements to store operations to meet licensing standards;
- undertaking an independent review of the first 3 years of the operation of the Stronger Futures Act as provided for by section 117 of the Act.

Tackling Alcohol Abuse – To enable special measures to be taken to reduce alcohol related harm to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. In addition, to contribute to the safety of women and children, reduce violence and associated alcohol and substance abuse and promote personal responsibility and healthy community norms.

- Funding will be used to support the development and implementation of Alcohol Management Plans in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.
- Each Alcohol Management Plan will include an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the Alcohol Management Plan, which would include an assessment of whether the services and programs delivered to support the Alcohol Management Plan's strategies have achieved desired outcomes.

Governance and Engagement – To strengthen engagement and governance capacity of government, community members and organisations in the Northern Territory.

- Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Classification Education Project – to provide education to Aboriginal people in remote communities in the Northern Territory on the classification system for films, computer games, publications and digital media. The approach to this project will aim to involve an Aboriginal service-provider organisation in delivery of the project and in doing so help to build the capacity of an Aboriginal organisation and of communities and individuals in the Northern Territory.

5.1 Activities

Activities under the components of Program 7.5 – Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory are:

Food Security - Activities in support of strengthening the remote stores measure under the Food Security component involve two elements and are therefore covered under separate Part C documents for each element. The respective Part Cs are for:

1. service providers that provide goods and services to owners and operators of community stores; and
2. store owners and operators in the Northern Territory.

Funded activities will usually fit within one or more of the following categories:

- *Innovative Solutions to Food Security* - Delivery of project(s) that provide innovative solutions to food security issues.
- *Governance Support* - Capacity building through the provision of governance support and or training to key stakeholders involved in the operations of a community store.
- *Retail Mentoring* - Provision of retail mentoring and/or training that will support the sustainable operation of the store.
- *Emergency Repairs and Maintenance* - Provision of funding to assist with emergency repairs and maintenance issues that could jeopardise food security.
- *Minor Infrastructure Upgrades* - Provision of funding to support minor infrastructure upgrades that will enhance food security for a community.

Tackling Alcohol Abuse – Specific activities may be agreed with Aboriginal communities in alcohol protected areas to develop and implement Alcohol Management Plans. Alcohol Management Plans are community driven and will reduce alcohol related harm and make communities safer for women, children and families. Activities to support a community in the development and or implementation of these plans may vary considerably according to community needs and each application will need to be considered individually. It is envisaged that activities will focus directly on community requirements for the introduction of an Alcohol Management Plan and include, among others:

- delivery of community led project(s);
- training of key stakeholders and/or community members; and
- community development and governance capacity building.

Governance and Engagement – activities in support of strengthened engagement and governance capacity for government, community members and organisations in the Northern Territory.

The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Classification Education Project will involve the development and delivery of an educational program for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. This program is to include, but is not limited to, information on the National Classification Scheme and the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory prohibited material restrictions, content that is suitable for children, and appropriate avenues for complaint. This project will aim to involve an Aboriginal organisation in development and delivery of the project and employ Aboriginal people in frontline delivery of the project.