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Closing the Gap

in the
Northern Territory

**Monitoring Report
January- June 2012**

Part Two

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Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory - Whole of Government Monitoring Report

Introduction

This Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Monitoring Report brings together performance information for each measure from 31 December 2011 to 1 July 2012. However, in many instances information is provided for the entire period 1 July 2007 to 1 July 2012.

This report will be the last Monitoring Report published under this agreement however regular six-monthly Monitoring Reports will continue under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement.

The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement commenced 1 July 2012 and replaces the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement. Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory is a comprehensive long-term strategy, underpinned by \$3.4 billion in funding over ten years. It draws on the existing evidence base and the lessons learned from the Closing the Gap initiative over the past four and a half years.

1. Early Childhood

This Building Block seeks to improve access to quality early childhood education and care services, including pre-school, child care and family support services such as parenting programs and support. Appropriate facilities, a sustainable early childhood education and health workforce, learning frameworks and opportunities for parental engagement are also important. Action in the areas of maternal, antenatal and early childhood health is also relevant to addressing the infant and child mortality gap and to early childhood development.

1.1. Crèches

Funding under the Supporting Families Measure for the NTER provided for new crèches to increase access to childcare and the upgrading of 13 existing crèches to address urgent health and safety issues.

Key Developments

As at 30 June 2012 eight of the nine new crèches have been established and upgrades to all 13 existing crèches have been completed.

New Crèches

- Eight of the nine new crèches are operational: Milikapiti, Peppimenarti, Robinson River, Areyonga, Docker River, Papunya, Yarralin and Timber Creek; and
- Funding for the Lajamanu crèche and childcare centre has been allocated. Construction is close to completion.

■ **Employment**

As at 30 June 2012, 34 Indigenous people were employed in childcare under the NTER crèche measure. This is consistent with the same reporting period last year.

Utilisation

The most recently available (April 2012) aggregated data for the eight operating NTER crèches are as follows:

- The total number of children enrolled in the crèches is 195. This is a 23% increase in enrolments in comparison to the same period last year; and
- Crèches are being utilised by an average of 90 children daily, which is consistent with the same reporting period in the previous year.

The NTER crèche measure has created the opportunity for an additional 95 children to utilise an early childhood education and care service which would otherwise not have been available.

Upgrades

Funding under the Northern Territory Emergency Response Supporting Families Measure provided for the upgrade of 13 existing crèches to address urgent health and safety issues. Upgrades have all been completed in the following communities: Ntaria, Nyirripi, Santa Teresa, Gunbalanya, Borrooloola, Maningrida, Minjilang, Minyerri, Gapuwiyak, Wugularr, Atitjere, Pirlangimpi and Warruwi.

1.2. Playgroups

Background

The key objectives of the playgroup program are:

- To improve early learning outcomes through a focus on developing fine motor skills, gross motor skills and cognitive development;
- To promote the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous children;
- To build parent and carer knowledge and capacity;
- To strengthen community connections and social networks; and
- To act as a referral point, linking families to mainstream support services. The program is directed at 0-5 year olds and their parents/carers.

Key developments

There is a strong focus on training and recruiting local Indigenous people to work as Early Childhood workers, so as to provide children with a culturally safe environment. In addition to this many activities that are offered such as music, dance, craft, and outdoor activities are designed to be culturally appropriate.

The use of mobile playgroups and the provision of transport to playgroups provide families with the opportunity to attend regularly.

1.3. Locational Supported Playgroups

Between 1 January and 30 June 2012, 210 adults and 219 children participated in 341 Locational Supported Playgroup (LSP) sessions. Across the reporting time period, this included:

- 42 adults and 43 children participated in 69 LSP sessions in Numbulwar;
- 36 adults and 38 children participated in 56 LSP sessions in Milingimbi;
- 54 adults and 53 children participated in 57 LSP sessions in Lajamanu;
- 49 adults and 54 children participated in 94 LSP sessions in Gunbalanya; and
- 29 adults and 31 children participated in 65 LSP sessions in Yuendumu.

Progress

Numbulwar Locational Supported Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 42 adults and 43 children participated in 69 playgroup sessions delivered by Anglicare Northern Territory (NT).

Anglicare NT has employed and trained five local Indigenous women to run the playgroup.

The playgroup collaborates closely with other local service providers and participates in the Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings. Playgroup participants also have opportunities to engage with a range of mainstream services in the community.

Anglicare NT facilitated a two day 'We Grow Them Up Learning Festival' held in Darwin. The theme '*Good Practice in East Arnhem – Celebrating Indigenous & Non Indigenous Child Rearing Practices, Sharing Knowledge and Learning from Each Other,*' addressed parental approaches to language and culture, and implications for families. There were 173 registered participants, including four Indigenous male speakers and ten Indigenous female speakers from Arnhem Land.

Anglicare NT also worked collaboratively with the Numbulwar Health Clinic, Roper Gulf Shire and CAG to launch a number of Playgroup community activities, aimed at promoting healthy babies and positive parenting as part of the 2012 National Aborigines and Islanders Day of Observance Committee (NAIDOC) celebrations.

Milingimbi Locational Supported Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 36 adults and 38 children participated in 56 playgroup sessions delivered by Anglicare NT.

Anglicare NT has continued with training four local Indigenous women, employed to deliver the playgroup. An Indigenous mentor with many years of experience in both child and adult education, and highly regarded in the community, supports playgroup staff.

Playgroup staff collaborate closely with other local providers including the Families as First Teachers – Indigenous Parenting Support Service delivered by the Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Training. The playgroup also provides opportunities for participants to engage with local services.

During the six months to June 2012, a number of local playgroup staff completed the eight week Families and Schools Together (FaST) Program, providing an opportunity to continue to build the capacity of locally based staff.

Lajamanu Locational Supported Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 54 adults and 53 children participated in 57 playgroup sessions delivered by the Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Training. This represented a significant decrease from the previous reporting period (1 July to 31 December 2011) due to various issues such as reduced service delivery as the playgroup venue was rebuilt and resettled; a number of funerals and sorry business held during the dry season; and other cultural events. The playgroup is integrated into the Families as First Teachers – Indigenous Parenting Support Service.

The playgroup employed an Indigenous Family Liaison Officer and three part-time Indigenous playgroup leaders to facilitate dual generational playgroups.

During the six months to June 2012, 75 Indigenous parents and carers participated in specific capacity building activities. These activities aimed to increase capacity and knowledge on parenting and child-rearing practices, child development, financial management and behaviour across the community.

Mothers and playgroup leaders were supported to undertake Certificates I and III in Children's Services. Playgroup leaders are provided on-the-job training and mentoring by a Family Educator and Program Advisor.

Gunbalanya Locational Supported Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 49 adults and 54 children participated in 94 playgroup sessions delivered by the Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Training. This represented a significant decrease from the previous reporting period due to a number of regular participants experiencing some health issues; an increased of funerals and sorry business held various issues such as illness and disease during the dry season; and other cultural events. The playgroup is integrated into the Families as First Teachers – Indigenous Parenting Support Service.

The playgroup employs two Indigenous Family Liaison Officers and three part-time Indigenous playgroup leaders, who are supported by a qualified Family Educator.

In April 2012, all Playgroup Leaders commenced Certificate III in Children's Services training. In addition, Family Liaison Officers attended professional development workshops, including the Learning Together Program and Early Years Learning Framework held in Darwin in February and March.

During the six months to June 2012, 49 Indigenous parents and carers participated in specific capacity building activities. These activities aimed to increase capacity

and knowledge on parenting and child-rearing practices, child development, financial management and behaviour across the community.

Yuendumu Locational Supported Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 29 adults and 31 children participated in 65 playgroup sessions delivered by the Central Desert Shire Council.

Playgroup sessions continue to run from the Yuendumu School. This encourages families to build positive relationships with the school and to engage with other services, including the clinic, to promote healthy messages and child wellbeing.

During the six months to June 2012, the playgroup was delivered from the Yuendumu Pool on Fridays, weather permitting. Staff and families reported an increased engagement and participation as a result.

Following each playgroup session, staff and families visit the Yuendumu Childcare Centre to promote the importance of participating in early childhood education services and programs in their community.

1.4. Intensive Support Playgroups

Key developments

Between 1 January and 30 June 2012, 187 adults and 344 children participated in 264 Intensive Support Playgroup (ISP) sessions. This included:

- 136 adults and 186 children participated in 72 ISP sessions in the Katherine communities of Binjari and Rockhole;
- 33 adults and 72 children participated in 96 ISP sessions in Tennant Creek; and
- 18 adults and 86 children participated in 96 ISP sessions in the Borroloola communities of Garawa, Mara and Yanyula.

These three ISPs are currently operational as part of the NTER and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory. Two ISPs have been operational since 2007-08 and the third ISP, funded in late in 2009-10, has been operational since December 2010.

Progress

Katherine Intensive Support Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 136 adults and 186 children participated in the Katherine playgroup, delivered by Good Beginnings Australia. Playgroup sessions are held weekly during school terms, once a week in Rockhole and twice each week in Binjari, with a total of 72 sessions held.

Mobile playgroup sessions are held in Rockhole and Binjari to allow Indigenous families without access to transport, the opportunity to regularly attend a supported playgroup. Playgroup sessions are delivered in a culturally appropriate way with parents and carers encouraged to participate and engage with their children during various play based activities.

Preschool teachers reported that children who have regularly attended playgroups, transitioned more successfully into the preschool environment.

The Family Support Worker continued to provide ongoing support to playgroup participants, with a trained Indigenous worker assisting in the development and delivery of programs. This support has resulted in clients being connected to other services. Clients have been referred to appropriate agencies and ongoing family focused support has resulted in positive improvements for families.

Good Beginnings Australia also facilitated a BabyFAST program which was integrated into a number of playgroup sessions. The program focussed on building the relationship between young new parents and their baby, a supportive adult and community agency professionals. The Early Childhood Worker took a leadership role, supporting five families in successfully graduating from the program.

Tennant Creek Intensive Support Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 33 adults and 72 children participated in 96 playgroup sessions delivered by Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation.

During this reporting period, 17 women aged 18 to 38 participated in a 12-week Domestic Violence Education program. The program aims to increase awareness about community safety and reporting on incidents involving alcohol, drugs and substance abuse. The Family Support Worker team has been working closely with community members, community agencies and Julalikari's Tenant Support Program to develop a number of key strategies in response to the problem of overcrowding.

Parents and carers who attended playgroup participated in activities that assisted in increasing their understanding of the linkage between nutrition and child behaviour and importance of connecting with their child. Children attending playgroups were assisted to develop self-care, gross and fine motor skills.

Julalikari also conducted parental support sessions in which parents learn to understand the needs of newborns as well as basic settling techniques for young babies.

Borroloola Intensive Support Playgroup

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 18 adults and 86 children participated in 96 playgroup sessions delivered by the Smith Family. The service provider works collaboratively with a local Indigenous organisation, Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association, in the delivery of playgroup sessions. Good Beginnings Australia provided mentoring support to the Early Childhood Workers (ECW).

Seven ECWs, including five local Indigenous women, are employed through the Borroloola Playgroup. During the reporting period, all ECWS completed Certificate I, II and III in Community Services.

The Smith Family, Good Beginnings Australia and Mabunji have been working towards increasing clinic referrals, and educating ECWs and parents about early intervention so that children can receive appropriate treatment for common conditions such as 'glue ear' to prevent permanent hearing loss.

Increased attendance at playgroup sessions and daily data collection have assisted staff in identifying a number of children who should have been enrolled in school, with referrals made to the Northern Territory Government Department of Education's, Families as First Teachers program.

1.5. Parenting Programs

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 168 adults, 124 children and 149 youth participated in Invest to Grow (ItG) activities. These activities included: The Let's Start Program, Child Nutrition Program, Core of Life Program and the Indigenous Children's Program:

- 10 adults and 6 children participated in the Let's Start Program in the Tiwi Islands communities of Milikapiti and Wurrumiyanga;
- 51 adults, 95 children and 50 youth participated in the Child Nutrition Program; and
- 107 adults, 23 children and 99 youth participated in the Core of Life Program.
- 66 adults, 38 children and 10 youth participated in the Indigenous Children's Program in Berrimah.

1.5.1 Let's Start Program

Key developments

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 10 adults and 6 children participated in the Let's Start program delivered by Menzies School of Health Research, in the Tiwi Islands communities of Milikapiti and Wurrumiyanga.

Background

The Let's Start program is a targeted, early intervention program led by trained group leaders, which runs for 10 weeks, during the school term. The program has been specifically developed to assist Indigenous children and their parents, but is available to children of all backgrounds, aged 3-7 years. The project coordinator works with teachers and parents to refer children to the program.

Progress

During the six months to June 2012, the Let's Start staff in Pirlangimpi continued to conduct follow ups and home visits, with the program temporarily suspended to focus on resource development. The 10 week program continued to be delivered throughout the reporting period in the Milikapiti and Wurrumiyanga communities.

The Tiwi Islands Coordinator attends children's classrooms weekly, providing an opportunity to engage with the school community regularly and observe learning's of the Let's Start program participants in a classroom environment.

The Let's Start program continues to strengthen links with the Communities for Children program in the Palmerston/Tiwi region, improving service coordination for Northern Territory children and families.

The program continues to employ local people to support community engagement and culturally appropriate program delivery. The recruitment of a local male Project Officer from the Tiwi Islands, aims to strengthen the capacity of the Let's Start team to assist in engaging fathers and male carers in a family with accessing the Let's Start Parent-Child Program.

An Early Childhood Development workshop was held, which provided an opportunity for early childhood and family support services across the Tiwi Islands to participate in a free professional development opportunity that focused on early childhood and Let's Start program practices.

1.5.2 Child Nutrition Program

Key developments

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 51 adults, 95 children and 50 youth participated in the Child Nutrition Program delivered by the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council.

Background

The Child Nutrition Program provides prevention and intervention sessions in NPY Northern Territory (NT) communities, to at risk families and children. Service delivery includes individual education, support and case management, community education, and a range of community development strategies to develop the capacity of communities to support vulnerable and at risk families and children.

Progress

During the six months to June 2012, the Child Nutrition Program provided assistance to families and children in the NPY NT communities of Imanpa, Docker River, Mutitjulu, and Finke through the provision of case management for children identified as failure to thrive, growth faltering or at risk. Case management included:

- Education and support for families in their communities, working with clients in Alice Springs at Stuart Lodge, Town Camps and Alice Springs Hospital;
- Networking and liaison with other agencies;
- Organising/attending case management meetings;
- Advocacy and case management support for children and their families involved in child protection intervention;
- Health promotion and nutrition awareness activities such as bush picnics, formal school education sessions, community events, and workshops in family centres, child care and pre-schools; and
- Early intervention activities for families and communities through the School Nutrition Program's participation in regional youth and school health promotion activities (see dot point above), and by sourcing and producing nutrition based health promotion resources appropriate for use with schools, early childhood centres, and children and families.

During the six months to June 2012, staff coordinated regular supervised access for families whose children are in foster care.

1.5.3 Core of Life Program

Key developments

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 107 adults, 23 children and 99 youth were assisted by the Core of Life (COL) program delivered by Youth & Family Education Resources.

Background

The Core of Life's 'Pregnancy, Birth, Breastfeeding and Early Parenting' Program is a 'hands on' health education program providing current research based information about pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and early childhood to both male and female adolescents. The program is strengths-based and respectful of local language and cultural needs. The program works by training facilitators who then present the program to young people. Facilitators may include midwives, school nurses, teachers, community members and youth educators.

Progress

During the six months to June 2012, facilitator training workshops were held in the Maningrida and King Valley Station communities. The workshops also aimed to produce culturally appropriate training resources and assist with identifying and planning training sessions for local Indigenous trainees. Participants were provided with an updated facilitator training manual and program CD to assist in delivering training to others in the community.

A two day workshop was held in the Maningrida community, with the Families as First Teachers educator, Child Health Nurse, Indigenous health worker and 20 community women attending.

A workshop was also held at the Banatjari Strong Women's Camp in the King Valley Station community as part of a partnered facilitator training between the Smith Family Katherine and NTER. In total, two teenage girls and sixteen local Indigenous women attended, including ten grandmothers. The training actively worked with participants to develop a culturally appropriate program to teach young women about relationships, pregnancy, birth and parenting.

Weekly Core of Life, Youth Education sessions continue to be delivered in the Ali Curung community by the secondary school teacher and local community COL facilitators.

1.5.4 Indigenous Children's Program

Key Developments

From 1 January to 30 June 2012, 66 adults, 38 children and 10 youth participated in Indigenous Children's Program (ICP) activities, delivered by the Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services Incorporated (CAAPS).

Background

The ICP supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who are experiencing alcohol and other drug issues through the CAAPS residential based, Healthy Families Program.

The ICP is a holistic approach to the delivery of early intervention and prevention services, educating and informing children on protective behaviour, whilst their parents undertake the 12 week Healthy Families Program. In addition to children learning basic reading, writing and numeracy skills, activities are focussed on strengthening culture and improving relationships, family health and school readiness.

Progress

The ICP provides daily sessions on routine activities, personal hygiene, protective behaviour, and cognitive and motor skills development through play-based activities.

ICP workers actively encourage and assist Indigenous people to access various mainstream services. For example, participants are referred to health professionals (child psychologists, doctors, dentists, eye and hearing specialists, and dieticians) and other relevant service providers.

ICP staff work with families to increase parental involvement in their children's education. As a result, they have observed improvements in children's literacy and numeracy levels, an increased school attendance and greater readiness for entry to school.

2. Schooling

This Building Block seeks to support responsive schooling that requires attention to infrastructure, workforce, curriculum, student literacy and numeracy achievement and opportunities for parental engagement and school/community partnerships. Transition pathways into schooling and into work, post-school education and training are also important. Life-long learning is important and attention is also needed regarding adult literacy and numeracy skills.

2.1. School Enrolment Attendance

School enrolment, attendance and participation are essential for the educational achievement of all students, and for closing the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. The factors that impact on student attendance and engagement are complex and multi-faceted and range from in-school factors to the family, broader community and individual factors. Governments, education providers, school communities and families need to work together to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student school attendance.

Key Developments

- School attendance: The average school attendance rate in the NTER communities in June 2012 was 60.4%. This compares with 59.5% in June 2011;
- Total school enrolments decreased by 189 students between June 2011 and June 2012 (from 8,481 to 8,292).

Analysis

Table 2.1 shows preschool, primary school and secondary school enrolment and average attendance rates in NTER communities between June 2011 and June 2012. Table 2.1 indicates that:

- Overall NTER school enrolments (i.e. combined preschool, primary and secondary) decreased by 70 students between January 2011 and June 2012 (from 8,959 to 8,889);
- From January 2011 to June 2012 preschool enrolments increased by 28 students (from 732 to 760), although primary school enrolments decreased by 320 students (from 5,779 to 5,459), and secondary school enrolments decreased by 375 students (from 2,448 to 2,073);
- Preschool attendance rates ranged from 55.9% in January 2011 to 53.1% in June 2012;
- Primary school attendance rates ranged from 65.0% in January 2011 to 63.4% in June 2012; and
- Secondary school attendance rates ranged from 56.4% in January 2011 to 55.0% in June 2012.

Table 2:1 School enrolment and attendance

	January 2011		June 2011		% Points Change in Att % Jan 11 to June 11	January 2012		June 2012		% Points Change in Att % Jan 12 to June 12
	Enrolls	Att %	Enrolls	Att %		Enrolls	Att %	Enrolls	Att %	
Preschool	732	55.9	796	55.2	-0.7	670	59.7	760	53.1	-6.6
Primary	5779	65.0	5535	62.6	-2.4	5689	64.1	5459	63.4	-0.7
Secondary	2448	56.4	2150	53.3	-3.1	2530	50.4	2073	55.0	4.6
TOTAL	8959	61.9*	8481	59.5*	-2.3	8889	59.8*	8292	60.4*	0.5

Date notes: This report uses enrolment and attendance data from Collection 1 and 8 for 2011 to 2012. Collection 1 occurred in week 4 of Term 1 and collection 8 occurred in week 8 of Term 4. In 2011 there were 73 schools included in this report. For this report, Primary includes T - Year 6 and Secondary includes Year 7 - Year 12.

*figures are weighted averages

Each of the eight annual enrolment and attendance collections (conducted by NT Department of Education and Training (DET) in Weeks 4 and 8 of each of the four school terms) is reported as an aggregated number (enrolments) or an averaged percentage (attendance).

Closer inspection of school level data indicates that progress is being made in a number of locations, many of which face extremely complex and multi-faceted challenges ranging from in-school factors to the family and broader community. In many schools, intensive support is being directed towards improving the attendance and engagement of cohorts of students who are most in need of targeted intervention. While attendance rates for these cohorts have improved, the achievement is masked by the aggregated level of reporting. Highly mobile populations and seasonal factors create further challenging circumstances. However, many individual school improvements are occurring through cooperative efforts over time.

As part of Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory legislation package, the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) will be improved and expanded in the Northern Territory and be aligned with the NT Government's, Every Child Every Day (ECED) strategy. Both Governments will work together to support families to ensure that all children are enrolled and attending school every day.

2.2 School Nutrition Program

Key developments

As at 30 June 2012, 67 schools (62 Government, 5 non-government) servicing the 73 NTER communities were supported by the School Nutrition Program (SNP).

- In the period 1 January to 30 June 2012 an estimated 3,080 breakfasts and 4,654 lunches were provided each school day (7,734 meals in total); and
- In the period 1 January to 30 June 2012, over 200 people were directly employed by the SNP program in meal delivery, of whom 171 are local Indigenous people.

Background

The SNP is a breakfast and/or lunch program for school-aged children attending school within NTER communities of the Northern Territory. The aim of the program is to contribute to improving students' engagement at school leading to better literacy and numeracy outcomes for remote Indigenous children. The program also provides job opportunities and training for local community members in addition to food preparation skills and nutrition.

The program is administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on behalf of the Australian Government. The department funds SNP providers in each community to employ local workers to prepare and deliver the meals, ensure that adequate kitchen facilities and equipment are available and to support related professional development activity.

Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the program by making voluntary deductions from Income Managed Funds via Centrepay or electronic funds transfer.

In October 2011, KPMG undertook an evaluation of the program. The review is published on the DEEWR website¹

2.3 Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy

Note – this initiative was previously named the Quality Teaching Package and Enhancing Literacy measures.

Under the Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy measure, the Australian Government has committed \$44.3 million over three years (2009-10 to 2011-12) to Northern Territory education providers to develop career pathways for Indigenous staff; increase the number of Indigenous staff with education qualifications; and provide support and programs to enable teachers and students to achieve improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy in NTER remote communities. The schools involved in these reforms are a sub-set of those involved in the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership. The reforms align with, supplement and enhance those undertaken through the Smarter Schools National Partnership Agreements.

¹ Evaluation of the School Nutrition Program, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, October 2011. http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/documents/evaluation_of_the_school_nutrition_program.docx

There are 92 schools participating in NTER initiatives across the Northern Territory, 67 of them are located in the NTER communities and 25 are outside the NTER communities. These 25 'exception schools' are included in the Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy because they support significant numbers of Indigenous students who reside in NTER communities.

The Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy combine systemic, regional/sectoral and school based services which are focused on building workforce capacity in schools and enhancing the education experiences of students.

Achievements

The following progress has been achieved between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2012:

2.3.1 Quality Teaching

The Quality Remote Teaching Service Team has continued to improve workforce recruitment and selection processes to enhance teacher quality and retention.

The development of Indigenous staff in remote schools continues to be a key priority under the Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy, with the aim to enhance the opportunities available for Indigenous staff to complete qualifications in education related fields. Site-based learning/training is offered where possible to school staff completing or upgrading their qualifications to enable them to continue working and living in their home communities for the duration of their course.

There are 15 Indigenous Workforce Development specialists working with Indigenous para-professionals and professionals across the Northern Territory to enhance, strengthen and grow remote Indigenous workforces in schools by implementing the following range of measures:

Government sector:

- The Remote Indigenous Teacher Education program is being delivered at two sites: Maningrida School and Shepherdson College in Galiwinku;
- The Indigenous Teachers Upgrade Program is enabling Indigenous teachers with a three year Associate Diploma of Teaching/four year Diploma of Teaching to obtain a bachelor degree qualification;
- Support for school-based para-professionals to complete qualifications such as Certificates III and IV in Education Support, Diploma of Education Support and the Certificate III in Children's Services; and
- A total of 130 Assistant Teachers have attained Certificate III or higher level qualifications – Graduate Certificates, Diplomas or Degrees (in 2011, 56 staff completed qualifications).

Non-government sector:

- The Catholic Education Office's Growing Our Own initiative is being delivered at six remote sites:

- Ltyentye Apurte Community Education Centre, Santa Teresa;
 - Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School, Wurrumiyanga;
 - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic School, Wadeye;
 - St Francis Xavier School, Daly River;
 - St Joseph's College, Katherine; and
 - Xavier Community Education Centre, Wurrumiyanga.
- This initiative is a professional learning and pathways program that is delivered within the Catholic education sector to grow and stabilise the Indigenous workforce in schools;
 - At Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Wadeye, three para-professionals at the school have recently upgraded their diplomas to degrees, enabling them to become fully qualified teachers at the school. As local Indigenous teachers, they are mentoring the next cohort of para-professionals undertaking study. As members of the schools' Indigenous Leadership group, these teachers are also planning and delivering the culture and community program which involves integrated curriculum programming and community participation; and
 - Since 2008, the Growing Our Own program has contributed to a total of 46 staff members completing in-service qualifications and/or Certificate or Bachelors qualifications in education (in 2011, 20 staff completed the program).

2.3.2 Supporting Strong Start, Bright Futures

Much of the effort under the Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy complements Northern Territory Government initiatives by focusing on reform in the 20 communities identified by the Northern Territory Government as Growth Towns and supporting the Northern Territory Government's Strong Start, Bright Futures (SSBF) education delivery model at these sites. All of the Northern Territory Growth Towns are NTER communities with the exceptions of Borroloola and Elliott.

SSBF includes support for the coordination of early childhood services; enhanced program delivery to encourage student engagement; enhanced use of cultural programs; and after hour's programs that offer training and alternative education programs for disengaged and at risk students.

In 2011, the SSBF, was in operation at West Arnhem College (Gunbalanya and Jabiru Schools); Ngakwurra Langwa College (Alyangula, Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra Schools); Shepherdson College; Warlpiri-patu Kurlangu Jaru College (Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi Schools); and N'taria College.

Strong progress is being seen at these sites through community involvement and leadership. Through these school and community partnerships, the SSBF colleges held school governance workshops to assist in local planning. They extended school programs, such as 3-9 programs and after hour's libraries and are engaging community members in adult learning and students who were previously

disengaged with traditional schooling. The development of beyond school pathways through partnerships with local business and industry, as well as the expansion of VET offerings, is positioning colleges as the means through which young people can enter into job and career pathways. This is increasing student engagement, in particular for male students in the secondary years of schooling.

2.3.3 Supporting Indigenous parents and children

Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy provide support for parents and children to engage with education in the early years and post-school pathways for students in later years. Support to Indigenous parents and children include:

- Assistance to young people in their transition into the workforce, further training or education through the second phase of the Remote Personal Learning Plan subject. The Remote Personal Learning Plans subject is being delivered in Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Millingimbi, Umbakumba, Yirkala Homelands and Angurugu. Across these communities 96 students were enrolled in the subject in 2011, which is a 22% increase from 2010 when 77 students were enrolled in the subject; and
- Enhanced services to support students with otitis media (middle ear disease) and Conductive Hearing Loss, such as professional learning programs for teachers and assistant teachers and action plans for individuals and groups of students who are diagnosed with these conditions. Conductive hearing co-ordination activities have focussed on the use of hearing continua to implement whole school approaches to assisting students with hearing loss and the development of plans for auditing sound field systems in schools.

2.3.4 Literacy and Numeracy

The Remote Improvement Team continued to work intensively with targeted government schools to support whole school approaches to literacy, enhancing data analysis, and supporting targeted professional development. The Remote Schools Specialist Support Team also continued to work with remote Catholic schools in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching, literacy and numeracy, early childhood, health and wellbeing and the transition of secondary students to higher education.

Improvement is starting to be seen in outcomes for Indigenous students. In 2011, the proportion of students at, or above, National Minimum Standard improved across all year levels assessed (years 3, 5 and 7) and both reading and numeracy in 2011 compared with 2008. This achievement is strengthened by a parallel increase across all year levels of students participating in NAPLAN testing for reading, writing and numeracy. Tracking of matched students' achievement against the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework, demonstrated that accelerated improvements are being seen in both English and Maths. Supporting young people to pursue pathways beyond schooling is also showing signs of improvement as the number of Indigenous students completing at least one VET unit increased by 40% in 2011 as compared to 2010.

Across government schools the delivery of literacy and numeracy learning to Indigenous ESL learners continues to be a challenge. Enhanced in-school support

to assist teachers and school leaders to better develop and monitor work in this area is beginning to see improvement. Indigenous student performance against the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) increased between 2010 and 2011, with students demonstrating a 22% improvement in English and a 40% improvement in Mathematics, averaging the Term 2 achievements across the two years.

Twenty six Literacy and Numeracy coaches worked with school teachers and leaders across the government sector in the Northern Territory to enhance literacy and numeracy instructional teaching. Their support is changing the way in which school leaders plan for literacy and numeracy from pre-school to senior years, and is shifting the ways in which literacy and numeracy teaching is delivered in classrooms. Six Teaching Multi-Lingual Learners specialists have been working with school leaders and teachers across all regions to enhance teachers' understandings of ESL Phases & Pathways, to demonstrate quality teaching practice for targeted teachers and to support student support plans.

2.3.5 Relationships with Indigenous communities

A number of measures funded under the Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy focus on rebuilding relationships with Indigenous communities. For example:

- The Inclusive Leadership model of cultural advisors and community mentors assists principals to improve liaison with community leaders, develop strong models of cultural leadership and shared responsibility, integrate local community culture in curriculum and school business and improve the cross cultural skills and knowledge of staff; and
- Regional Indigenous Education Managers are supporting regions and school leaders to engage and work closely with Indigenous communities/stakeholders and develop plans to prioritise Indigenous education reform activity at all sites.

2.3.6 School leadership

Strong and effective school leadership is a key enabler for school improvement, and ultimately the improvement of student outcomes. Supplementing support provided under the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership, the measure focuses on the requirements of teaching in remote and very remote contexts.

The Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development has delivered Preparation for School Leadership Programs to 74 teachers across government and non-government schools in the Barkly, Palmerston and Rural, Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine regions.

2.3.7 Enhancing school planning

Critical Friends² consultants continued to enhance school improvement planning processes with government schools. Schools access these services as required and

² A key aspect of working together is engagement in professional dialogue as teachers discuss student learning, reflect on teaching strategies and act as critical friends.

are supported through their respective sectors to undertake quality improvement planning.

2.4 Additional Teaching Staff

As part of its 2007 election platform, the Australian Government announced it would support Northern Territory remote schools with an additional 200 teachers.

The target was to provide an extra 50 teachers each year, with a total of 200 additional teachers deployed by the end of 2012.

As at 30 June 2012, 196 full-time equivalent additional teachers had been funded by the Commonwealth and deployed by Northern Territory education providers. This number comprises:

- 170 in DET schools (from NT DET report April 2012)
- 21 in Catholic schools (from NT CEO report July 2012)* and
- 5 in Independent Schools (NT CEO report July 2012).*

*noting that the non-government sector is implemented under the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* (IETA).

Reporting from the NT Government sector indicates the full allocation of 170 full-time equivalent teachers have been recruited and the NT Catholic and Independent sector reports the measure is on track to meet its target of 30 teachers by the end of 2012.

2.5. Teacher Housing

Since 2009 the Australian Government has provided \$35.7 million for the construction of teacher housing in remote areas of the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Getting the best and brightest teachers to commit to teach in remote locations, and stay on long enough to make a real difference, depends on a number of critical factors. The provision of housing is an important component of the overall package offered to teachers in remote and very remote communities.

2.5.1 NTER Teacher Housing

\$11 million was provided for the construction of at least 22 additional teacher houses under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement.

The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training received \$9.35 million for the construction of up to 22 additional teacher houses in remote communities and the remaining \$1.65 million went to the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office (CEO) for the construction of up to four teacher houses.

DEEWR agreed to pool the Australian Government funding with existing housing funds from the Northern Territory for the same purpose into a Remote Teacher Housing Development Funding Pool. As a result of the pooling of funds, this measure has contributed to the construction of 47 teacher dwellings. All 47 houses are now on site complete and fully operational occupied.

2.5.2 Northern Territory Catholic Education Office

(includes NTER Teacher Housing and the Wadeye Teacher Housing measure)

NTER Teacher Housing: The Northern Territory Catholic Education Office received \$1.65 million for the construction of 4 teacher houses in remote communities (2 dwellings at Wadeye, 1 dwelling at Bathurst Island and 1 dwelling at Santa Teresa). All 4 houses have been completed.

Wadeye Teacher Housing: Additionally, In 2009 the Australian Government provided \$5 million to the NT CEO for the Wadeye Teacher Housing project, for the construction of teacher houses. Five of these dwellings have been completed. Savings in the construction costs will allow the remaining 5, plus 2 additional dwellings to commence construction at Wadeye in the second half of 2012;

NT CEO has reported savings in the budgeted construction costs of dwellings under the Wadeye Teacher Housing project. These savings have also been pooled with the NTER Teacher Housing funding which has enabled the NT CEO to construct 1 additional dwelling at Santa Teresa and 2 additional dwellings at Bathurst Island. The pooling will result in a total of 18 dwellings being constructed across both programs.

3. Health

This Building Block seeks to achieve improved health outcomes for Indigenous people. Increasing Indigenous Australians' access to effective, comprehensive primary and preventative health care is essential to improving their health and life expectancy, and reducing excess mortality caused by chronic disease. All health services play an important role in providing Indigenous people with access to effective health care, and being responsive to and accountable for achieving government and community health priorities. Closing the Indigenous health gap requires a concerted effort in the area of child and maternal health as well as the prevention, management and treatment of chronic disease. These services need to be readily accessible to Indigenous children and their parents.

3.1. Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative

Key developments

- Expansion of primary health care through the Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative (EHSDI) commenced in July 2008 and continued throughout the current reporting period to June 2012. Over this period the NT Government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations have advised that 222 additional³ health positions were continued or established within the Northern Territory (15 medical practitioners/specialists, 24 nurses, 20 Aboriginal Health Workers, 61 Aboriginal Community Workers, 30 program delivery and allied health staff, 72 management and service support positions).
- Of the 222, a total of 39 positions were established or continued to provide Northern territory-wide primary and secondary prevention services for chronic disease and hearing health and audiology services from hubs in Darwin and Alice Springs.
- A tender process commenced for an evaluation of the Northern Territory-wide Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework being implemented through EHSDI. The system-wide approach provides funding to assist service providers to employ local CQI Facilitators. It also provides funds to assist service providers to employ local CQI Coordinators. The evaluation will be undertaken in the second half of 2012.
- The Department of Health and Ageing is leading a joint process to further develop guidelines for regionalisation to drive greater progress.
- Establishment of a Senior Officer's Group (SOG) consisting of representatives from DoHA, NT DoH and AMSANT to progress regionalisation at a strategic level.
- In the period 1 January to 30 June 2012, the Commonwealth Government provided funding to the Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) to place 306 health professionals in remote Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory on short term placements – 66 general practitioners, 140 nurses, 29 allied health professionals and 71 dental personnel.

³ Positions created since 1 July 2007

Background

In October 2011, the Australian Government approved the Investment Plan for 2011-12 totalling \$46.8m and agreed to an allocation of funds for the following elements:

- \$33.7m for Primary Health Care Expansion;
- \$6.2m for PHC regional reform;
- \$6.1m for the Remote Area Health Corps; and
- \$0.8m for evaluation.

The process being undertaken to regionalise primary health care services, through Health Service Delivery Area HSDA Regionalisation Steering Committees, provides a mechanism for strong community engagement. The purpose of these committees is to ensure communities have an increased involvement in health decision making and to provide a platform from which to develop regional health services for those regions. The future primary health care delivery systems in the Northern Territory will be based on a number (probably 14) of HSDAs. These HSDAs establish agreed regional boundaries within which governance, health planning and health service delivery frameworks can be developed.

To address difficulties in recruiting short term clinical positions within Northern Territory primary health care services, the Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) was established to supplement existing recruitment efforts. The primary focus of the RAHC is recruitment and deployment of urban-based health professionals, on a short term basis, to provide increased primary health care, targeting priority health needs for Indigenous people of all ages.

Progress

During the period 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2012, there was further progress in the health system reform process. Key outputs include:

- East Arnhem Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA): in February, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation undertook a Regional Readiness assessment; preparation was under way for transfer of the first NT Government clinic to Miwatj Health from 1 July 2012; a draft Final Regionalisation Proposal for the East Arnhem HSDA was submitted on 28 June 2012;
- West Arnhem HSDA: Red Lily Health Board revised their constitution and engaged a Governance and Business Manager to set up governance and corporate systems and finalise the regionalisation plan for West Arnhem by early 2013;
- Alyawarra HSDA: the regionalisation steering committee is seeking to bring existing Aboriginal community controlled services into one organisation as the first step in regional reform;
- Anmatere/Arrente languages HSDA: the regionalisation steering committee is seeking to bring the existing Aboriginal Health Services into one organisation as the first step in regional reform; and

3.2. Child Health Check Specialist and Allied Health Follow-up Services

Key developments

Between 1 January to 30 June 2012:

- 683 children received audiology follow-up checks (719 checks provided); and
- 1,489 children received dental follow-up services (1,984 services provided).

The Australian Government has continued to fund a range of specialist and allied health follow-up services in high priority areas as agreed with the Northern Territory Government and set out under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement.

Progress

Follow-up of Child Health Check (CHC) referrals through existing Primary Health Care or specialist services available in the Northern Territory often commenced soon after the checks were completed. The Australian Government provided additional follow-up funding to both Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and the then Northern Territory Department of Health and Families (DHF) health clinics.

Data on follow-up service delivery is available from two sources: 1) audiological testing, and 2) dental services. Funding for Ears, Nose and Throat (ENT) service delivery finished on the 31 December 2010. The number of follow-up services provided is shown in Table 3:1.

- **Audiological Testing:** Audiology is not in itself a therapeutic intervention but part of a larger process of care. Audiological testing assesses hearing and is repeated through treatment for children with ear disease to measure response to therapy. It is expected that many children will require further action following audiological assessment. These services are being provided to children who had a CHC, as well as other Indigenous Australian children aged 15 years or less who live within the prescribed areas of the Northern Territory;
- Funding for ongoing hearing and audiological services, including pre and post-operative care, is supported through expanded primary health care services and the existing Northern Territory Government services;
- **Dental Services:** Under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement, the Northern Territory Government targets all Indigenous children under 16 years of age referred for dental follow up through a CHC. Children who were eligible for CHCs from NTER communities and town camps could also receive a service. Services include oral assessment, oral health promotion and dental treatment including dental surgery under general anaesthetic; and
- Funding is also available to a number of Aboriginal Medical Services in the Northern Territory to provide follow up dental services. Services include oral assessment and dental treatment. Children requiring dental surgery under

general anaesthetic are referred to the Northern Territory DHF. Dental follow-up funding from the Australian Government is available until June 2012.

Table 3:1 Number of ENT, Audiology and Dental Follow-Ups

	1 Jul 2008 – 31 Dec 2008(1)	1Jan 2009 – 30 Jun 2009(1)	1 Jul 2009 - 31 Dec 2009(1)	1Jan 2010 – 30 Jun 2010(1)	1 Jul 2010 - 31 Dec 2010(1)	1 Jan 2011 - 31 Jun 2011(1)	1 Jul 2011 - 31 Dec 2011(1)	1 Jan 2011 - 31 Jun 2012
Number of children who have received audiology follow up*(2)	2,213 checks for 2,005 children	1,381 checks for 1,247 children	583 checks for 566 children***	1, 201 checks for 992 children	776 checks for 697 children	705 checks for 676 children	667 checks for 645 children	719 checks for 683 children
Number of children who have received dental follow-up^	2,366 dental services for 1,851 children	2,079 dental services for 1, 522 children	2,086 services for 1,512 children	385 services for 1,593 children	1,860 services for 1,336 children	1,783 services for 1,440 children	1,858 services for 1,514 children	1,984 checks for 1,489 children
Number of children who have received ENT follow-up ** (2)		1, 472 ENT services provided since 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009	550 services for 469 children	1,490 services for 1,224 children	781 services for 708 children			

*Services commenced in February 2008

^Services commenced in August 2007

** Services commenced in July 2009.

***In this period, audiological service delivery became integrated within an expanded hearing health program.

No data collected on number of children receiving services for this period.

Note:

(1) The number of children seen may include some children also seen in a previous period.

(2) Non-consent information for Audiology and ENT from August 2009 were received in August 2011 and included in this table.

(3) This program was completed in the 31 December 2010.

Source: AIHW CHCI database as at 27 August 2012.

The proportion of children with specific referrals for follow-up who have been seen at least once (up to 30 June 2012 as at 31 July 2012) are as follows:

- 100% (1,057) of 1,060 children who were on active audiology referral list*;
- 94% (2,646) of the 2,828 children who were on active dental referral lists*;

- 97% (1,342) of the 1,380 children who were on active ENT referral list * (includes children who received an ENT service after 31 December 2010).

* These follow-up percentages take into account children lost to follow-up. Lost to follow-up is defined as that services providers have attempted to provide services to children on three separate occasions and have been unsuccessful. The reasons for this include declined service, moved interstate, unable to locate child in the community and unable to locate parent/ guardian to provide consent for child to receive services.

Evaluation and monitoring - of the Child Health Check Initiative (CHCI) and the Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative (EHSDI)

In June 2009 Allen and Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists Ltd (Allen and Clarke) commenced an independent evaluation of the Child Health Check Initiative (CHCI) and Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative (EHSDI). The evaluation assessed the performance of these initiatives in relation to their appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency and contribution to the refinement of policy and practice. The evaluation report is available on the Department of Health and Ageing website.⁴

The final report provided a useful resource to inform the Australian Government's planning in relation to the health component of the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* and helped shape its long term investment in the Northern Territory primary health care system.

The AIHW, in partnership with the Department of Health and Ageing, has continued to publish detailed reports on the implementation and outcomes of the oral and hearing health programs. In April 2012, the AIHW published the *Dental Health of Indigenous Children in the Northern Territory* report. This report found some positive signs in the oral health status of children seen:

- For children who received more than one course of care, the prevalence of untreated caries decreased by 14 percentage points (from 51% to 37%) and mouth infections decreased by 6 percentage points (from 6.9% to 1.4%); and
- The overall proportion of children with at least one oral health problem has decreased by about 13 percentage points (from 54% to 41%).

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Health Key Performance Indicators (NT AHKPIs) will support long term monitoring and evaluation of the program as well as CQI and planning activities. Indicators will enable monitoring of: episodes of care, timing of first antenatal visit, birth weight, immunisation, nutritional status of children (including weight and anaemia levels), and chronic disease management.

3.3. Northern Territory Hospitalisation Data

Note: This section presents data on the long-term trends in hospitalisation for Indigenous children aged 0-14 years living in the Northern Territory. The purpose of the data is to assess whether these children's health status is changing over time. It

⁴ <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Health-oatsih-nter-eval-chci>

is difficult to measure the level of ill-health in the population and hospital statistics are used as a proxy measure of ill-health in the absence of better sources. The hospitalisations data need to be viewed with caution. There are several limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the data. These are:

- Hospital separation data does not capture the full extent of ill-health in the population. Some sick people will be managed in a primary care setting and some sick people will not seek treatment at all;
- Hospitalisation data can also be influenced by the capacity of primary health care to detect and manage conditions at an early stage thus averting a more serious illness that would require hospitalisation;
- Hospitalisation may be influenced by the availability of services or by changes in treatment practices reflecting new technologies and drugs or understandings of disease; and
- Hospitalisation is influenced by the remoteness of the patient, with generally a lower threshold for admission and a longer length of stay for residents of remote and very remote locations. It is also true that remote primary health care centres undertake diagnosis and treatments of a higher level of complexity than is routinely available through urban primary health care services, managing many conditions entirely in the community that elsewhere would be managed in hospital.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released, on the 30 November 2011, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2010 Report: Northern Territory* (NT HPF report). The report provides information on a range of indicators on health status, determinants and the health system performance in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory. The report is based on the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2010 report, detailed analysis*. The HPF report has been designed to inform policy analysis, planning and program implementation, and to monitor progress towards achieving COAG targets on closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

Table 3:2 provides data for a ten year period from 2000-01 to 2010-11 on hospitalisation rates for Indigenous children 0-14 years in Northern Territory public hospitals based on analysis from the NT HPF report (updated to include 2010-11 data). The data are for 'principal diagnosis', that is, the condition chiefly responsible for the hospital admission. Overall, the age standardised rate of hospitalisation for Indigenous children remained stable: from 253.8 per 1,000 people in 2000-01 to 224.5 per 1,000 in 2006-07 and to 244.7 per 1,000 people in 2010-11.

There have been some changes over the period 2000-01 to 2010-11 in the age standardised hospitalisation rates when principal diagnoses are examined. Table 3.2 shows there was a:

- Significant decrease in the hospitalisation rate for infectious and parasitic disease declining from 45.5 per 1,000 population in 2000-01 to 24.5 per 1,000 population in 2010-11 which is a 46% decrease over the period;

- Decrease in the hospitalisation rate for disease of the respiratory system declining from 64.1 per 1,000 population in 2000-01 to 51.1 per 1,000 population in 2007-08 then increasing to 61.3 per 1,000 population in 2010-11. This is a decrease of 14.8% over the ten year time period, however this was not statistically significant; and
- Increase (not statistically significant) in the hospitalisation rate for category 'injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes' increasing from 21.1 per 1,000 population in 2000-01 to 28.8 per 1,000 population in the 2010-11. This is a 32% increase over the period.

It is also possible to look at the additional diagnoses for each admission. These identify any co-existing conditions that the person had during their stay in hospital. Caution should be used when only reviewing principal diagnoses as conditions such as nutritional anaemia and malnutrition may be a factor in many hospitalisations even though nutritional anaemia and malnutrition are relatively infrequent principal diagnoses.

The NT HPF report examined additional diagnoses for selected nutrition related conditions of Indigenous children aged 0-15 years. This analysis, updated with 2010-11 data, shown in Table 3.3 found that:

- There was a significant decrease in the age standardised hospitalisation rate for nutritional anaemia (any diagnosis) over the period 2000-01 to 2010-11. The rate declined from 32.2 per 1,000 population in 2000-01 to 14 per 1,000 population in 2010-11 which is a 68% decline over the period; and
- A significant decrease in the age standardised hospitalisation rate for malnutrition (any diagnosis) declining from 14.5 per 1,000 population in 2000-01 to 5.1 per 1,000 population in 2010-11 which is a 56% decline over the period.

This is a positive signs in terms of the hospital separation data indicating there have been some improvements to Indigenous children's health in the NT over this period.

Caution needs to be used when interpreting analysis of additional diagnoses as there is the capacity to record up to 50 diagnoses for a single hospitalisation separation. There is a demonstrated propensity in the NT, over time, to increase the number of diagnoses reported for each hospital admission. Investigation of this has found a 4.5% annual increase in the average number of diagnoses per separation in the NT hospital datasets between 1976-77 and 2006-07.

Table 3.3 demonstrates a trend of a fall in annual rates of admission with nutritional anaemia (-2.2%) and malnutrition (-0.8%). These modest declines may significantly underestimate the true fall if there was an 'average' increase in the propensity to report these two conditions. The information bias associated with recording nutritional anaemia and malnutrition may arguably be even greater, as these two conditions have been widely publicised over the last ten years and may have been increasingly recorded by doctors and then subsequently coded thus increasing the reporting of nutritional anaemia and malnutrition.

While comparative data are not presented here, it is well known that Indigenous children in the Northern Territory have very poor health status with high rates of ear disease, gastrointestinal disease, respiratory disease, oral health problems and skin

disease. The hospitalisation data in Table 3:2 and 3:3 suggest that the health status of Indigenous children in the Northern Territory (to the extent that it can be measured by hospitalisation rates) has not changed markedly over the ten year period. There are, however, some signs of long term improvements in hospitalisation rates for infectious and parasitic disease and selected nutrition related diseases (any diagnosis).

Table 3:2 Age-standardised hospitalisation rates (a) of Indigenous children aged 0-14 years, selected principal diagnoses, Northern Territory, 2001-01 to 2010-11

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Infectious and parasitic disease	45.5	47.2	42.7	41.6	37.7	44.5	35.9	37.2	33.1	31.4	24.5
Disease of the respiratory system	64.1	61.2	69.7	68.8	54.0	52.8	52.1	51.1	59.6	58.0	61.3
Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	21.1	22.7	25.1	24.8	24.1	24.6	24.3	25.0	25.9	29.3	28.8
Total hospitalisations	253.6	252.0	257.1	250.6	233.5	240.8	225.8	237.9	258.9	258.1	244.7

* Represent results with statistically significant increases or declines at the $p < 0.05$ level over the period

(a) Directly-age-standardised by 1-year age groups using the 2001 Indigenous children population in the Northern Territory

(b) Average annual change in rates determined using linear regression analysis

(c) % change between 2000-01 and 2010-11 based on the average annual change over the period

Notes: Excludes separations with a principal diagnosis of care involving dialysis (Z49), care types 7, 3,9,10 and private hospitals in the NT

Source: AIHW update of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health Performance Framework 2010 report, Northern Territory

Table 3:3: Selected nutrition related age-standardised hospitalisation rates ^(a) of Indigenous children aged 0-15, any diagnosis, Northern Territory 2000-01 to 2010-11

	200 0-01	200 1-02	200 2-03	200 3-04	200 4-05	200 5-06	200 6-07	200 7-08	200 8-09	200 9-10	201 0-11	Annual change ^(b)	%chan ge over period ^(c)
Nutritional anaemia ^(d)	32.2	33.2	32.6	34	27.3	23.7	21.6	16.6	15.7	19.1	14	-2.2*	-68.3*
Malnutrition ^(d)	14.3	14.0	15.0	14.2	10.1	8.3	9.1	9.3	11.1	9.4	5.1	-0.8	-55.9*

* Represent results with statistically significant increases or declines at the p < 0.05 level over the period

(a) Directly-age-standardised by 1-year age groups using the 2001 Indigenous children population in the Northern Territory

(b) Average annual change in rates determined using linear regression analysis

(c) %change between 2000-01 and 2010-11 based on the average annual change over the period

(d) Nutritional anaemia is any diagnosis of ICD10 AM codes D50-D53. Malnutrition is any diagnosis of ICD-10 AM codes E40-E46

Notes: Excludes separations with a principal diagnosis of care involving dialysis (Z49), care types 7,3,9,10 and private hospitals in the NTSource: AIHW update of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health Performance Framework 2010 report, Northern Territory

3.4. Healthy Under 5 Kids Program

The NT HPF report also contains detailed analysis of data from the Healthy Under 5 Kids (HU5K) Program (formerly the Growth Assessment and Action or GAA collection). This data has been reported on in Chapter 6 'Improving Child and Family Health' of the NTER Evaluation report.

The HU5K program measures underweight, wasting, stunting and anaemia among Indigenous children aged 0-4 years in the Northern Territory based on World Health Organisation (WHO) 2006 standards⁵. This analysis is contained in Table 3.4 and shows that there have been statically significant improvements in two of the indicators (stunting and anaemia) from 2004 to 2011. The age standardised rate

⁵ Wasting is defined as 'below minus two standard deviations from median weight for height of reference population', Stunting is defined as 'below minus two standard deviations from median height for age of reference population', and Underweight is defined as 'below minus two standard deviations from median weight for age of reference population'.

WHO Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/en> and UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2001, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc01/tables> Table 2

for stunting decreased by 23% and anaemia by 28% from 2004 to 2011. The HU5K data along with the analysis of hospitalisation rates for selected nutrition-related conditions (any diagnosis) may indicate some improvements to Indigenous children's health in the NT over this period.

Given the relatively short time frame it is difficult to assess whether changes from 2007 to 2011 are statistically significant but some changes are evident. There was a significant decline in the age standardised rate of anaemia from 25.1 per 100 in 2007 to 20.9 per 100 in 2011. There was also a significant decline the age standardised rate of stunting for Indigenous boys from 2007 to 2011.

Table 3:4: NT HU5K data 2004 to 2011 Age standardised rates per 100 population(a)

Year	Stunting	Underweight	Wasting	Anaemia
2004	16.3	10.0	6.3	28.1
2005	15.8	9.4	5.9	28.6
2006	15.4	7.7	4.9	25.7
2007	15.0	7.1	4.3	25.1
2008	13.7	6.3	4.3	24.6
2009	12.5	6.9	4.7	22.6
2010	13.4	8.1	4.7	21.7
2011	13.0	7.9	5.2	20.9
Annual change ^(b)	-0.5*	-0.3	-0.2	-1.1*
% Change over period ^(c)	-23%*	-20%	-18.6%	-28%*

Represents results with statistically significant increases or declines at the p<0.05 level over the period 2004-2011

a) Directly-age-standardised by 1 year age groups using the 2006 Indigenous children population in the Northern Territory

(b) Average annual change in rates determined using linear regression analysis

(c) Per cent change between 2004 and 2011 based on the average annual change over the period

* Statistically significant increase or decline at the p<.05 level.

3.5. Child Special Services

Key Developments

- From 1 January to 30 June 2012 the Mobile Outreach Service (MOS) and MOS Plus teams made a total of 210 visits to 61 communities and town camps across the Northern Territory; provided 544 case-related services to children and/or their family members and delivered 863 non-case related services to service providers and community members;

- Since the commencement of the MOS in April 2008 to 30 June 2012 teams have made a total of 1,163 visits to 87 communities and town camps in the 12 eligible HSDAs of the Northern Territory;
- As at 30 June 2012 the MOS Plus employed 27 staff and had teams located in Darwin and Alice Springs; and
- As at 30 June 2012, the Centre for Remote Health and the Northern Territory DHF had delivered Child Special Services Workforce Training and Development funded activities to 1,169 participants from the health and community services remote workforce in the Northern Territory.

Background

The Australian Government provided funding to the Northern Territory DHF (now Department of Children and Families (DCF)) under the NTER to develop and implement the Northern Territory Sexual Assault MOS to respond to child sexual assault and related trauma in remote communities that had not previously received a service from the Northern Territory's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Through both the 2008-09 *Better Outcomes for Hospitals and Community Health* and the 2009-10 *Closing the Gap - Northern Territory Indigenous health and related services* budget measures, MOS Plus is being implemented across remote Northern Territory communities.

The 2009-10 funding expanded the program (now known as MOS Plus) from November 2009. MOS Plus now aims to provide culturally safe counselling and support services in response to any form of child abuse-related trauma, and is being implemented through an Implementation Plan under the *National Partnership Agreement on Health Services*. The Australian Government's commitment to funding a therapeutic response to neglect and abuse is complemented by appropriate non case-related services to children and their families and communities. MOS Plus is one of a range of investments that contribute to Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory, and complements the role of many primary health care providers in this challenging area. The program is also intended to increase referral pathways through the development of partnerships with the broader remote health and community services sector. The Implementation Plan, agreed on 18 June 2010, can be accessed on the Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations website.⁶ MOS Plus teams consist of professional counsellors and Aboriginal Therapeutic Resource Workers who provide casework services, community education and professional development services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, and communities in remote Northern Territory.

Child Special Services Workforce Training and Development provides funding for training of remote Northern Territory primary health care and community workers to build workforce capacity in responding to child abuse-related trauma.

⁶http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_partnership_agreements/health/health_services/Northern_Territory_Mobile_Outreach_Service_Plus_IP.pdf.

Progress

MOS *Plus*: From the commencement of MOS in April 2008 to 30 June 2012 teams have made a total of 1,163 visits to 87 communities and town camps in 12 eligible HSDAs of the Northern Territory. As at 30 June 2012, MOS *Plus* employs 27 staff, and has teams located in Darwin and Alice Springs. Darwin based teams provide services to the Top End and Katherine regions. Alice Springs based teams provide services to the Central Australia and Barkly regions.

Case-related and non-case-related service data available from Northern Territory DCF for 2011-12 indicates that in the six month period 1 January to 30 June 2012, MOS *Plus* teams made a total of 210 visits to 61 communities and town camps across the Northern Territory, provided 544 case-related services⁷ to children and/or their family members, and delivered 863 non-case related services⁸ to service providers and community members.

Up to 30 June 2012, Child Special Services Workforce Training and Development funded activities had delivered 73 training workshops and information sessions to 1,169 primary health care and community services workforce participants in remote Northern Territory communities. Between 1 January and 30 June 2012 the Centre for Remote Health delivered five training workshops to 90 primary health care and community service workers from remote Northern Territory communities.

Evaluation of the Mobile Outreach Service (MOS) Projects

The Department of Health and Ageing commissioned an independent evaluation of the Northern Territory Sexual Assault MOS and the Northern Territory MOS *Plus*. The evaluation assessed the implementation of the MOS Projects model and their impact on and outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in their families and communities.

The evaluation found support for the key principles and characteristics of the MOS Projects, and that as a new and evolving service model, there are some service elements and approaches requiring further development and improvement.

The evaluation found that a threat to respectful engagement was the potential of services not being culturally competent and highlighted was the importance of an Indigenous staff model. Regularity of service visits was also considered to be a key factor in ensuring successful community engagement.

The evaluation notes that the data does show MOS *Plus* is starting to gain traction in communities, to begin achieving its short term outcome measures. A key recommendation of the report is that further development of the MOS *plus* services align with service planning and development in response to both the recommendations of the *Growing them stronger, together* Report⁹ and the primary

⁷ Case-related services do not equate to numbers of children or numbers of child cases.

⁸ Non case related services include community education and professional development services to Aboriginal children, families and community members. NB All six month case related and non case-related data is derived from summation of quarterly data.

⁹ M. Bamblett, H. Bath & R. Roseby, *Growing them strong, together: Promoting the safety and wellbeing of the Northern Territory's children*, Northern Territory Government, Darwin, 2010

health care reforms, to ensure an integrated family and children's services response in remote communities.

The final report of the Evaluation was released in January 2012 and can be found on the Department of Health and Ageing website.¹⁰

3.6. Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Rehabilitation Services

Key developments

A total of \$2.6 million (\$1.5 million under the Closing the Gap – Northern Territory – Indigenous Health and Related Services Measure and \$1.1 million under the 2007 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Closing the Gap – Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Services measure) was allocated in 2011-12 to continue the key activities of the NTER. This includes:

- Increasing the drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation workforce across six Aboriginal Community Controlled Medical Services and five stand-alone services, including additional registered psychologists, nurses, social workers, Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) workers and community support workers located across Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy. In addition, significant achievements have been made through the provision of alcohol and other drug positions for Indigenous people, along with professional development and training opportunities for people in those positions.
- Increasing the capacity of six treatment and rehabilitation services throughout Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs; and
- Providing drug and alcohol workforce education and professional development through the Northern Territory Department of Health and Families.

Progress

Increasing the AOD Workforce

In the period 1 January to 30 June 2012, organisations continued to work towards developing models of service delivery specific to the requirements of their communities and regions. The creation of employment opportunities targeting Indigenous Australians has been a significant achievement. These workers are well respected in their communities and are developing skills in AOD assessment and treatment working closely with therapists who have high level skills in provision of evidence based counselling. Difficulties recruiting and retaining staff in some locations remain, although organisations continued to actively fill vacant positions in 2011-12. Workforce support and development is essential to building a sustainable workforce and supporting primary health care services to integrate substance use interventions into core health service provision.

¹⁰ <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/drugtreat-pubs-moseval-toc>

Funding is provided to increase the drug and alcohol workforce to improve access to treatment and rehabilitation services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout the Territory. This is complemented by an increased capacity of selected drug and alcohol services and education and training programs to support the additional workforce.

Workforce Support and Development

As at 30 June 2012 all 26 positions have been filled.

The NT Department of Health also receives funding for a Clinical Director to provide training to the drug and alcohol workforce.

Evaluation of the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Response Measure

Origin Consulting and Bowchung Consulting were engaged through an open tender process in August 2008 to undertake an independent evaluation of the AOD component of the Measure. The Review has now been finalised and is publically available on the Department of Health and Ageing website.¹¹

The Review found that appropriate AOD services were available when the initial alcohol restrictions were introduced under the NTER and there was no surge in demand with the introduction of new alcohol control measures, the AOD Response was implemented in a culturally appropriate manner and there is now greater workforce capacity to assist people requiring AOD services in the Northern Territory. The Review also reported that the AOD component has strengthened the health system's response to AOD issues in the Northern Territory through the expansion of a skilled workforce and clinical guidance from the role of the Clinical Director.

The Review noted that additional support for the Indigenous AOD sector was required and recommended strategic planning between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments as well as the community controlled sector for future investment, improving training opportunities for workers across AOD and related services, broadening the representation of the sector in decision making mechanisms, and improving the quality of the residential rehabilitation services.

The information contained in this Review will continue to inform the Commonwealth's future planning for investment in the AOD sector of the Northern Territory.

3.7. Food security and community stores

In order to provide food security to communities, it is essential that governments at all levels improve the capacity of store operators and boards in Indigenous communities to soundly manage the business of stores to ensure the continuous supply of a good range of reasonable quality food to communities. The way community stores operate and the quality of food they provide is critical to the Australian Government's efforts to improve the lives of Indigenous people through the Closing the Gap initiatives.

¹¹ <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-closinggap-reviewalcohol-drug>

A licensing system was put in place for community stores in prescribed areas in the Northern Territory. Stores that are licensed in these areas are able to participate in the income-management arrangements.

Key developments

- As at 30 June 2012, a total of 91 community stores have been licensed.
- A total of 81 visits to community stores were undertaken from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2012, which included 16 assessments for store licensing purposes and 65 monitoring visits.
- In the period 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2012, no community store licences were revoked or refused.

Background

The NTER introduced a licensing scheme for community stores. The aim was to:

- To improve the range and quality of groceries available in communities; and
- To make sure stores are well managed and able to take part in the income management arrangements.

There are longstanding concerns about the management of stores and the quality and range of food available in some remote stores. The community stores licensing scheme addresses these concerns by setting standards for food and grocery quality, store retail practices and store governance.

Licences are issued for up to a period of 12 months (some licences may be issued for a shorter period if significant operational issues are identified during the assessment process that need to be rectified within a specified time).

There are a number of assessable matters that are taken into account when considering if a licence should be issued for a store. In broad terms the assessable matters relate to:

- The store's capacity to participate in, and where applicable their record of compliance with, the requirements of the Income Management regime;
- The quality, quantity and range of groceries and consumer items, including the promotion of healthy food and drink, available in the store;
- The financial structure, and retail and governance practices of the store;
- The character of the manager, employees and other persons associated with the business;
- The business structure and governance practices; and
- Other matters relating to food security that are considered relevant.

It is a condition of a community store licence that the holder of the licence must operate the store in a satisfactory manner having regard to the assessable matters.

A community store licence may be revoked or refused if, among other things, there are reasonable grounds to believe the store is in breach of licensing conditions and/or operated in an unsatisfactory manner. When a licence is revoked or

refused, Centrelink will also cancel their Income Management agreement with the store. The effect of these actions is that income-managed funds are not able to be used in that store for any purchases.

Monitoring of Community Stores and Support to Community Store Owners and Managers

During this period Community Stores administered funding supported store owners and managers with governance mentoring and specialist retail advice and provided key infrastructure/hardware requirements and the installation and training in the use of Point of Sale retail systems. Store owners and managers have been provided with professionally developed community store resources (templates and guides) to assist stores develop and implement store policies and procedures, business plans and store budgets. Twenty store managers attended training workshops to obtain a Certificate IV in Retail Management.

4. Economic Participation

This Building Block seeks to ensure that individuals and communities have the opportunity to benefit from the mainstream economy. Economic participation needs to extend to disadvantaged job seekers and those outside of the labour market. Welfare needs to promote active engagement, enhanced capability and positive social norms. The Government has developed both specific employment packages in the Northern Territory, as well as implementing nationwide reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, the Indigenous Employment Program, and mainstream employment services so Indigenous Australians acquire the skills they need to get and keep a job.

Under the Northern Territory Jobs Package¹², between December 2008 and June 2010, 2,241 ongoing jobs were created in Australian and Northern Territory government service delivery.

The additional services to communities under the NTER have also created jobs for Indigenous people in the NTER communities. This Monitoring Report shows that between 1 January and 30 June 2012, there were 1,000 Aboriginal people employed in NTER related services. These include 350 Indigenous people employed in night patrols, 169 in the School Nutrition program, 222 health positions, 54 employed in Safe Houses, 25 as Indigenous Engagement Officers and 180 Indigenous people were employed as rangers in the Working on Country Program.

Remote Jobs and Community Program

In the 2012-13 Budget, the Government announced a \$1.5 billion Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) for people living in remote areas of Australia. The RJCP Program will see jobseekers assisted by a single provider with a permanent presence in their region, ensuring they are receiving better support to get the skills needed to get a job. Job seekers will get personalised support from this single, local point of call, ensuring they are assisted to have the right skills needed to match local job opportunities.

4.1. Job Placements

Key developments

Between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2012, the number of Job Placements by Job Services Australia providers in the NTER communities was 1149. The figures suggest a consistent rise in job placements since the commencement of the Closing the Gap in the NT National Partnership.

Analysis of indicator

The data series at Table 4.1 is a measure of successful job referrals made by Job Services Australia providers for job seekers (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who

¹²Also referred to as CDEP job conversions.

resided in a NTER community at the time of the job referral. Job placements for the period 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2012 were 10% higher compared with the equivalent 6 month period for 2011.

Table 4:1 Job Placements

	Total 1 July 2009 - 31 Dec 2009	Total 1 Jan 2010 - 30 June 2010	Total 1 July 2010 - 31 Dec 2010	Total 1 Jan 2011 - 30 Jun 2011	Total 1 July 2011 - 31 Dec 2011	Total 1 Jan 2012 - 30 June 2012
Job Placements in the NTER communities	574	824	895	1044	1075	1149

Date source: Employment Services System

Data Notes: Comparisons cannot be made with the period 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2009 due to changes with the methodology used to source the data. The method of reporting job placements has changed since the introduction of Job Services Australia on 1 July 2009.

4.2. Work Experience

Whilst job seekers usually move into the Work Experience Phase after 12 months servicing by a Job Services Australia provider they are able to participate in Work Experience at any time. In this Phase, Job Services Australia providers facilitate Work Experience Activities for job seekers which will enhance their chances of finding employment and provide ongoing assistance through regular contact with providers. Job seekers with activity test and participation requirements are required to undertake at least one compulsory activity, for example a Work Experience Activity or job search, on an ongoing basis (see table 4.2 for examples of Work Experience activities).

Analysis of indicator

At 30 June 2012, there were 8,269 job seekers on the Job Services Australia active caseload in the 73 NTER communities. Of these job seekers, 4,290 (52%) were participating in a Work Experience activity,¹³ up from 46% at 30 June 2011.

At 30 June 2012, there were 3,712 job seekers in the Work Experience Phase¹⁴ of the Job Services Australia active caseload in the 73 NTER communities. Of these job seekers, 2,412 (65%) were participating in a Work Experience activity (up from 63% at 30 June 2011).

¹³ Job seekers can volunteer to participate in a Work Experience activity before they reach the Work Experience Phase. Not all job seekers are required to participate in Work Experience Activities (WEA). Job seekers may not be participating in WEA for a range of reasons including: aged less than 18 years or greater than 49 years, exempted from Activity Test or Participation Requirements, the job seeker has not been commenced in the Work Experience Phase and is not required to participate, or the job seeker has gained part time or the prospect of full-time work.

¹⁴ Work Experience Phase means the period when Fully Eligible Participants in Stream 1-4 are required to undertake Work Experience Activities and when the Provider is eligible for the Work Experience Phase Service Fees.

Work Experience Activities

Table 4.2 provides a breakdown of the types of Work Experience activities job seekers in the 73 NTER communities have participated in. Job seekers can participate in more than one activity over each reporting period.

Table 4:2 Job seeker participation in Work Experience activities

Work Experience Activity Type	As at 31 Dec 2009	As at 30 June 2010	As at 31 Dec 2010	As at 30 June 2011	As at 31 Dec 2011	As at 30 Jun 2012
Accredited Education and Training (Vocational)	520	1,000	1,177	1,966	1 569	1,616
Addictions Intervention (Non-vocational)	<20	0	0	<20	<20	<20
Brokered Unpaid Work Experience	<20	29	<20	<20	51	<20
Cultural Services (Non-vocational)	0	35	<20	<20	<20	<20
Defence Force Reserves	0	<20	<20	0	0	0
Green Corps	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20
Medical/Health Related Services (Non-vocational)	0	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20
Vocational Assistance (formerly Non accredited Training vocational)	52	103	75	115	193	168
Part Time/Casual Paid Employment	56	80	101	145	129	181
Skills Training (Non-vocational)	27	24	<20	<20	37	25
Training in Job Search Techniques	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20
Voluntary Work in community/non-profit sector	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20
Work for the Dole	79	125	57	145	124	239
Other Approved Programs (e.g. CDEP)	1,382	1,899	2,386	2,756	3,178	3,557
Total	2,779	3,855	4,239	5,459	5,298	5,826

Source: DEEWR Employment Services System.

Data notes: The data above shows the change in the number of work experience activities job seekers on the Job Services Australia active caseload in the 73 NTER communities. Cells with a value less than 20 have been recorded as '<20' to protect the privacy of individuals.

4.3. Income Support

Individuals are assessed for income support against a standard set of criteria. Age, family and financial circumstances are the main considerations when assessing a person for income support.

People aged 16 to 64 are assessed for working age benefits such as Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment (Single or Partnered) and Youth Allowance.

People 65 and over are predominantly assessed for the Age Pension.

People who are of working age but for caring or health reasons are unable to participate in the labour force are considered for such benefits as the Carer Payment or Disability Support Pension.

The total number of income support recipients in NTER communities decreased by 3% between June 2011 and June 2012. In the same period, the number of Youth Allowance (other) recipients dropped by 13% and Disability Support Pension recipients decreased by 6%. See table 4:3.

Table 4:3 Income Support Recipients in the NTER Prescribed Areas

Payment Type	Jun-11	Jun-12	Change %
Newstart	7109	7194	1%
Parenting Payment Partnered	2498	2480	-1%
Parenting Payment Single	2181	2194	1%
Youth Allowance (other)	1577	1374	-13%
DEEWR-administered payments	13365	13242	-1%
Age Pension	2787	2670	-4%
Disability Support Pension	6346	5940	-6%
Carer Payment	616	631	2%
Other	770	608	-12%
FaHCSIA-administered payments	10519	9849	-6%
TOTAL	23884	23091	-3%

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data - DEEWR Blue Book dataset and community data supplied by Centrelink.

Data Notes: Includes the following recipients who are determined to be current (i.e. entitled to be paid): Recipients of Newstart Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance on the Centrelink payment system, and not in receipt of CDEP Participation Supplement and are not zero paid, Recipients of ABSTUDY (Living Allowance), Austudy, Bereavement Allowance, Parenting Payment, Widow Pension and Youth Allowance Recipients of Sickness Allowance and Special Benefit, Age Pension, Carer Payment, Disability Support Pension and Wife Pension or suspended on the Centrelink payment system. Recipients reside in a community identified on the Centrelink payment system either as an Indigenous community or a town/community with a high Indigenous population that may provide access and services to surrounding Indigenous communities.

4.4. Financial Penalties

A Participation Report is a report submitted by an employment service provider to Centrelink when a job seeker fails to meet a participation requirement. The report is processed by Centrelink, who then discuss the matter with the job seeker to determine if they have a reasonable excuse for failing to meet a requirement and if they do, whether they could have been expected to give their provider prior notice of the reasonable excuse.

If a job seeker fails to meet a requirement and a provider has been unable to contact the job seeker to discuss the reason/s why, the provider can use its discretion and submit a Contact Request (instead of a Participation Report) to

Centrelink if it believes that formal compliance action is not the most appropriate path to take. Centrelink receives the Contact Request, establishes contact with the job seeker and books a re-engagement appointment with the job seeker's provider. Job seekers do not incur penalties (financial or otherwise) through Contact Requests.

Eight week non-payment penalties referred to in table 4.4 were applied to job seekers who:

- Voluntarily left a job without a reasonable excuse or were dismissed due to misconduct;
- Refused to commence or accept a suitable job; or
- After a Comprehensive Compliance Assessment, were found to be persistently non-compliant (i.e. they were seen to be deliberately avoiding their obligations). Comprehensive Compliance Assessments were introduced on 1 July 2009 – prior to this job seekers incurred an automatic eight week non-payment penalty after three applied participation reports in a 12 month period.

A No Show No Pay failure occurs when a job seeker fails, without giving prior notice of a reasonable excuse, to attend or engages in misconduct at an activity (e.g. Work for the Dole) or a job interview. Job seekers lose one tenth of their fortnightly income support payment for each No Show No Pay failure applied.

A Reconnection failure occurs when a job seeker fails to meet a reconnection requirement (e.g. fails to attend a reconnection appointment with the employment services provider) without giving prior notice of a reasonable excuse. Job seekers lose one fourteenth of their fortnightly income support payment from the date they fail to meet their initial reconnection requirement until they comply with a further reconnection requirement.

Analysis of indicator

The job seeker compliance framework which was introduced on 1 July 2009 takes a fairer approach to job seeker engagement than the compliance framework that was in place before that date by ensuring that barriers to participation are considered and job seekers receive the right support. Under the previous framework, an eight week non-payment period was automatic once a number of failures to participate had been recorded.

Further changes to the compliance framework were introduced on 1 July 2011 to allow the immediate suspension of payment for job seekers who failed to attend appointments with providers or Centrelink or who became disengaged from an activity. Once job seekers were contacted and agreed to re-engage they were back paid, though they could still incur a failure and/or penalty under the compliance framework. Reasonable excuse provisions were tightened from 1 July 2011 to encourage job seekers to give prior notice when they were aware they would not be able to attend an appointment or activity.

There was no direct financial penalty prior to July 2009 (i.e. No Show No Pay) for not attending a required activity, for failing to attend a job interview or for behaving inappropriately at a job interview. Rather, these failures would incur a participation

failure. Three participation failures would in turn lead to an eight week non-payment period.

The previous and current compliance frameworks are not directly comparable in the context of the other (smaller) penalties. Under the old system, three applied failures of any type (e.g. failing to attend an appointment or activity) within a 12 month period automatically resulted in an eight week non-payment period.

Under the current system, three applied failures of the same type (i.e. three applied No Show No Pay or three applied connection/reconnection failures) within a six month period trigger a Comprehensive Compliance Assessment, which is conducted by Centrelink with a job seeker. If Centrelink deems that a job seeker has been persistently non-compliant, the job seeker may incur an eight week non-payment penalty.

Contact Requests are another new feature of the compliance framework introduced on 1 July 2009. In the period from 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 there were 2,865 finalised Contact Requests in relation to job seekers residing in NTER areas. During this period Contact Requests represent 28% of the combined Participation Report and Contact Request total in the NTER prescribed areas compared with the national average for the same period of 22% of the combined total. There has been a significant decrease in the use of Contact Requests compared with the 2010-11 financial year, when Contact Requests represented over 44% of the combined Participation Report and Contact Request total in the NTER prescribed areas. This reflects a national trend which suggests that providers are becoming more inclined to use formal compliance action in an effort to engage with job seekers.

The data in Table 4.4 shows that penalties are being applied against job seekers without reasonable excuse for failing to meet a requirement. The number of financial penalties incurred by job seekers in NTER prescribed areas has increased under the current compliance framework.

Furthermore, the data also shows that in each 6 month period from 1 July 2009 onwards there has been a significant increase in the number of penalties being applied. This increase in the applied number of penalties is consistent with the increase in applied penalties in other parts of the country.

The increase in the number of applied penalties is due to an increase in the number of Participation Reports being submitted by employment services providers, as well as an increase in the proportion of these Reports being applied by Centrelink.

Table 4:4 Financial Penalties

Performance Indicators	1 Jan 09 to 30 June 09	1 July 09 to 30 Dec 09	1 Jan 10 to 30 June 10	1 July 10 to 30 Dec 10	1 Jan 11 to 30 June 11	1 July 11 to 30 Dec 11	1 Jan 12 to 30 June 12
Number of activity tested job seekers serving an eight week non-payment period	40 eight week non-payment periods for 40 people	19 eight week non-payment periods for 19 people	48 eight week non-payment periods for 48 people	110 eight week non-payment periods for 110 people	190 eight week non-payment periods for 187 people	337 eight week non-payment periods for 323 people	328 eight week non-payment periods for 319 people
No Show No Pay & reconnection Failures (i.e. short financial penalties)	N/A	8 No Show No Pay & reconnection penalties for 6 people	75 No Show No Pay & reconnection penalties for 65 people.	441 No Show No Pay & reconnection penalties for 328 people	769 No Show No Pay & reconnection penalties for 484 people	1,429 No Show No Pay & reconnection penalties for 823 people	1,802 No Show No Pay & reconnection penalties for 964 people

Data Notes: Data was sourced from the DEEWR administrative systems. The job seekers represented in this data resided in the NTER prescribed areas at the time when the financial penalty was applied. Please note that an individual is only counted once within either the short-term financial penalty or the eight week non-payment penalty within the same period.

Refer to the section above titled 'Analysis of Indicator' for an analysis of results for the 1 January to 30 June 2012 period and for the entire period.

4.5. Off-benefit outcomes

The off-benefit outcomes data in this report follows the progress of persons in receipt of Newstart Allowance (NSA) or Youth Allowance (other) (YA(o)) at 1 July in a given year in moving off income support for at least 13 weeks over the next six months.

Table 4:5 compares the number of persons in receipt of NSA or YA (o) on 1 July 2011 with those for 1 July 2009 and 1 July 2010 who exited income support in the following six months. An exit from income support is counted when a recipient exits income support and remains off payment for at least 13 weeks.

For the purpose of this analysis a maximum of one exit is counted for an allowee in the period of analysis. Allowees can be on NSA or YA (o) and participating in CDEP.

As this analysis is based on the allowee's community at 1 July, the exit from income support may have occurred outside their community.

Analysis of indicator

The data in Table 4:5 shows an increase in the proportion of exits between 2009/2010 and 2012. The majority of this improvement relates to an increase in the proportion of YA (o) exiting during the six month period.

As the reasons for many exits are unknown, it is not possible to make a reliable assessment of how many exits are related to employment outcomes.

Table 4:5 Off-Income support outcomes for Newstart/Youth Allowance (other

Exits from NSA/YA(o) within 6 months from Indigenous communities			
	2010	2011	2012
Current NSA/YA(o) at 1 January	6,888	6,545	6,523
% exited from IS within 6 months	12.8%	13.9%	15.2%

Data Notes: The 2012 exits (15.2%) may be subject to a slight reduction in future reporting as a small number of exits which occurred late in the reporting period have been provisionally counted even though the full 13 week period after exit has not yet elapsed.

The monitoring date of 1 January can deliver atypical results due to the higher numbers of school leavers present in the data at this time of year.

4.6. Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) provides language, literacy and numeracy assistance to job seekers who experience significant disadvantage in the labour market due to low levels of language, literacy and/or numeracy.

The Australian Government has provided \$3 million over three years from 2009-10 for an additional 162 LLNP places for Indigenous Australians in nine Indigenous communities.

LLNP's target of nine Priority Indigenous communities is set over three years (2009-12), equating to three communities per year. Historically, LLNP contracted providers have delivered to a larger number of communities. LLNP is currently delivered across four communities: Milingimbi, Milikapiti, Nguiu and Yirkala.

Under LLNP, the 'engagement rate' refers to the number of job seekers 'recommended for training' and referred to the program by a referring agency (Centrelink, Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Service providers) who commence in LLNP.

Table 4:6 sets out the level of client engagement, calculated by the number of clients who have been referred to and who have commenced in LLNP under the NTER since its commencement on 1 August 2007. The table reports on the delivery of LLNP before and after the commencement of the Closing the Gap in the NT National Partnership on 1 July 2009.

From 1 July 2009, LLNP has been delivered under a community-based model. The community-based service model aims to facilitate strong community engagement, utilising existing infrastructure to generate successful training outcomes through improved client participation and retention rates.

Table 4:6 demonstrates that the community-based service model is producing positive outcomes with increased NTER client participation since its introduction on 1 July 2009. Under the community-based model, NTER engagement has increased by 10 percentage points (to 27%) compared with the rate under the old service model (17%) from 1 August 2007 to 30 June 2009.

Table 4:6: Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program

	Old Service Model				Community-Based Model						
Performance Indicators	1 Aug – 30 Jun 2008	1 July – 31 Dec 2008	1 Jan – 30 Jun 2009	Total 2007- June 2009	1 July – 31 Dec 2009	1 Jan – 30 Jun 2010	1 July – 31 Dec 2010	1 Jan – 30 Jun 2011	1 July – 31 Dec 2011	1 Jan – 30 June 2012	Total 2009- Jan 2012 2011
Number of LLNP referrals in NTER communities.	809	530	366	1705	240	113	393	232	119	111	1208
Number of LLNP commencements in NTER communities	Commencements for 1 August 2007 to 30 June 09 ¹ : 282			282	Commencement for 2009-10 ² : 115		92	69	19	28	323
Engagement Rate (%)	17%			17%	33%		23%	30%	16%	25%	27%

1 A 6-monthly/annual breakdown of commencements for 2007-09 is not available at this stage.

2 Commencement data for 2009-10 is available by financial year only.

Data Notes: Please note information reported from 2009-10 relates to funding provided as part of NTER for additional 162 places over 3 years as announced in the 2009-10 Budget. The 2009-10 referral data are not directly comparable with earlier periods as the LLNP training delivery, number of places and funding has changed substantially. These changes are leading to improved LLNP outcomes for Indigenous clients under NTER as noted below.

Key achievements

- LLNP achieved a 27% engagement rate from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2012.
- Between January and June 2012 there were 111 referrals to the LLNP. Of these 111 referrals, 28 eligible job seekers commenced training.
- Between 1 January and 30 June 2012 LLNP achieved an engagement rate of 25%.

The LLNP engagement rate is affected by the availability of infrastructure to secure suitable training facilities within communities, by the ability of providers to build working relationships with influential community members and the capacity of local referring agencies to ensure adequate take up of the program. These problems affected the delivery of LLNP in Angurugu, Galiwinku, Beswick, Barunga, Milingimbi, Ali Curung and Epenarra. The department is working closely with service providers to improve client engagement. Because LLNP providers do not provide a fly in fly out service, the time taken to establish sites can be lengthy as they work to secure accommodation, build community relationships and work with local referring agencies to ensure a minimum of 10 LLNP participants for a full time training load. LLNP providers work closely with communities to ensure that the LLNP training is locally relevant and appropriately contextualised.

4.6. Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP) program

The objective of the CDEP program is to improve the capacity of Indigenous Australians to participate in the economy by strengthening Indigenous communities and supporting Indigenous people in remote areas through community development and participation opportunities that develop skills, improve capacity, work readiness and employability and link with local priorities.

The CDEP program assists Indigenous job seekers by delivering Services and Projects in two streams: Work Readiness and the Community Development.

- Work Readiness Stream— helps job seekers to develop their skills, improve their chances of getting a job, and move to work outside of the CDEP program through training and work experience.
- Community Development Stream— focuses on supporting and developing Indigenous communities and organisations. The overall objective is to strengthen Indigenous communities and support Indigenous people in remote areas through community development and participation opportunities that develop skills, improve capacity, work readiness and employability and link with local priorities.

Key developments

- In the period between 1 January and 30 June 2012, CDEP services in the NT were delivered by a total of 27 CDEP providers throughout the reporting period; and
- From 1 January to 30 June 2012, CDEP participant numbers in the NT increased by approximately 14.9%. At 1 January 2012 there were 4,295 active CDEP

participants. At 30 June 2012 the total number of CDEP participants in the NT totalled 4,934.

Background

Reforms to the CDEP program, introduced on 1 July 2009, included the cessation of CDEP in locations with access to established economies, and continuation of CDEP only in remote communities with limited and emerging economies. Prior to these reforms, the CDEP program had become a destination for many of its participants rather than a pathway to employment and economic independence. The program was also providing an ongoing wage subsidy for many Indigenous people working in government service delivery or private sector enterprises when they should have been properly employed, paid a real wage and receiving other employment benefits such as superannuation, paid leave entitlements and training.

'New' Participants who commenced on the CDEP program from 1 July 2009 receive the appropriate income support payments while from Centrelink as CDEP meets participation requirements. CDEP 'Continuing' Participants (those who were already on CDEP on 30 June 2009) continue to have access to CDEP wages as long as they remain eligible.

On 9 December 2010, Ministers Macklin, Arbib and Plibersek the Australian Government announced the cessation extension of the CDEP program from until 1 April 2012. All CDEP participants were to be transitioned to income support payments on a community by community basis between 1 April 2012 and 30 June 2012. This decision was short-lived.

Following the Government's decision to review remote employment and participation services the Government delayed the phasing out of CDEP wages until July 2013 to align with the introduction of new services. As part of the Government's announcement of the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) it announced a further extension of grandfathering arrangements. Current Grandfathered participants will participate in the RJCP from 1 July 2013 and wages will be extended to 30 June 2017. See *Looking Forward* section for more information on the RJCP.

From 1 July 2010 the funding of positions supporting Australian government service delivery was transitioned to the program budget of the relevant agencies for another four years (to 30 June 2014). The matched funding arrangement between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments supporting local government service delivery expired on 30 June 2011. From 1 July 2011 a new Shires Indigenous Workforce Package was established, which is funding 530 positions for Shire Councils to deliver core local Government services. These positions include civil works crews (road construction and maintenance, parks and gardens, grass and weed management), waste collection and dump management, companion animal management, front desk and back office customer services, library services, emergency services, council building maintenance and plant maintenance.

CDEP providers work in partnership with FaHCSIA, DEEWR, Job Services Australia and Indigenous employment program providers. Employment service providers work with individual job seekers to develop Employment Pathway Plans.

Progress

CDEP providers who are implementing the Government's reforms continue to be supported, through regional workshops and through Development and Support funding for the implementation of Community Action Plans and the employment of Community Development Officers and Mentors.

Looking forward

In the 2012/13 Budget, the Government announced a \$1.5 billion Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) for people living in remote areas of Australia.

The RJCP Program will see jobseekers assisted by a single provider with a permanent presence in their region, ensuring they are receiving better support to get the skills needed to get a job.

This will provide people with better service on the ground, rather than the fly-in-fly-out support that currently operates in many places. It will also ensure people who are not working are participating in activities that contribute to developing strong and sustainable communities.

Job seekers will get personalised support from this single, local point of call, ensuring they are assisted to have the right skills needed to match local job opportunities.

The RJCP is the culmination of a comprehensive review of remote participation and employment servicing arrangements. In June 2011 the Government announced consultations regarding the future of Remote Participation and Employment Services (RPES) arrangements which were led by DEEWR along with FaHCSIA and the Department of Human Services (DHS)/Centrelink). This was in recognition that unique solutions to participation and employment service delivery were required to respond to remote labour markets and the requirements of remote job-seekers.

On 16 August 2011, the Government released a discussion paper entitled *Future of Remote Participation and Employment Servicing Arrangements (RPES)* developed by the RPES Engagement Panel. The discussion paper is available via the DEEWR website.¹⁵

Community consultations occurred in a diverse range of communities throughout August and September 2011. Consultations focused on:

- Participation and compliance;

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<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Consultation/Pages/RemoteServicingReviewConsultations.aspx>

- Simplifying and streamlining current servicing arrangements between CDEP and JSA providers; and
- Increasing the range of participation and employment activities and services available to communities.

CDEP Resource Units have been established to help ensure sector-wide issues such as literacy and numeracy are improved and targeted training for the CDEP sector is now available.

4.7. Youth in Communities

Key Developments

Over the period 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2012, approximately, 11,837 attendees participated in Youth In Communities activities, with an additional 1,152 attendees participating in suicide prevention activities/services¹⁶.

Funding in 2011–12 has also been used to enhance the provision of suicide prevention services to Indigenous youth including supporting:

- Existing YIC service providers to incorporate suicide prevention training and education activities; and
- Three service providers not previously funded through YIC to expand the reach of their suicide prevention and youth self-empowerment services.

Progress

The YIC Interim Evaluation has been completed and is published on the FaHCSIA website.¹⁷ The Interim Evaluation of the Youth in Communities program found that YIC programs are delivering immediate benefits and are on track to deliver intermediate outcomes for youth participants.

Approximately 80 full time and part time youth workers and Indigenous youth worker trainees are employed through YIC funding.

Five infrastructure projects have been completed as at June 30 2011.

A range of programs and activities are being delivered by YIC service providers, including:

- A Case Management program which aims to assist youth in improving the general health and wellbeing of each individual referred to the service;
- Peer monitoring programs to facilitate the development of dynamic one-to-one interactions to inspire and encourage vulnerable youth;

¹⁶ Some attendees attend two or more activities

¹⁷ http://fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/nter_reports/Pages/youth_in_communities.aspx

- Youth committees & forums to ensure activities are youth driven and youth focused;
- Diversion activities including music, art, sport and cultural re-connection to elders/culture;
- Alternative education programs which aim to give disengaged youth the social skills and confidence to return to education; and
- Employment and training opportunities to expand choices for all possible career aspirations.

5. Land Tenure

5.1. Five Year Leases

During the reporting period, the Australian Government held five year leases over 63 NTER communities by operation of the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007* (NTNER Act). These leases were acquired to facilitate the administration of the NTER, providing security of tenure and prompt access for the delivery of services, repair of buildings and development of infrastructure in communities. Twenty-six of the leases commenced on 18 August 2007 while the balance of 38 leases commenced on 17 February 2008. The five-year leases over communities that entered a township lease terminated at the time the township lease took effect. Where communities have signed a long term lease, for example over public housing, those lands have also been excised from the five year lease. Regardless of their start date, all five year leases expired in August 2012.

Key developments

Rent

- On 24 October 2008, the Australian Government asked the Northern Territory Valuer-General to determine reasonable amounts of rent to be paid by the Commonwealth for the five year leases that had been compulsorily acquired under the NTER;
- Rent payments for the two five year lease communities on the Tiwi Islands (Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi) have been made up to 1 April 2011. The Tiwi Land Council has distributed these rent payments to the relevant land owners;
- Following the Valuer-General's final rent determination, on 25 May 2010 the Australian Government started paying rent to the Northern and Central Land Councils for the benefit of the Aboriginal land owners of the remaining 45 five year lease communities on *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* land. The rent payments were backdated to the commencement of the leases, and include rent for the period up until 1 April 2010;
- Since May 2010 the Northern Land Council has not distributed payments to the traditional owners. The Central Land Council has commenced consultations and disbursements of rent payments to traditional owners.
- As some valuations in the NT had increased markedly since 2007 and valuation methodologies evolved since the original valuations, new valuations from the NT Valuer-General were provided in December 2011;
- The Government is continuing negotiations with the Land Councils about the payment for five year leases;
- It is expected that top up payments will be made to all 61 eligible five year lease communities once agreement has been settled with the Land Councils; and
- There are an additional 16 five year lease communities that are known as Community Living Areas. Rent payments had been made for three of these

communities and the Department is currently working with the Northern and Central Land Councils regarding arrangements for the remaining communities.

Background

The underlying title of the land is not affected by the leases. Aboriginal land owners still own the land. All existing arrangements have been retained. People using the land immediately before the commencement of the five year leases have continued to do so.

For the duration of the five year leases, the Government is responsible for approving new and changed uses of land in five year leased communities.

Government Facilities within NTER Communities

The five year leases have been used to underpin NTER measures including:

- The installation of Safe Houses;
- The improvement of conditions through the Community Clean-Up Program;
- The installation of Night Patrol bases; and
- The installation of Government Business Manager (GBM) accommodation complexes.

The five- year leases also underpin housing refurbishments and reformed property and tenancy management arrangements.

Land Use Approvals

As leaseholder the Australian Government (through FaHCSIA) has a range of responsibilities including the management of five year lease land. Prior to the five year leases:

- The Northern Territory Government's Department of Lands and Planning performed town planning functions, allocating administrative lots, but it was not its role to consider land tenure arrangements;
- Land Councils and landowners were not involved in the day-to-day regulation of land in townships; and
- A large proportion of those occupying land did so with no legal basis.

On behalf of the Commonwealth, during the five year lease period FaHCSIA is responsible for progressing land use approvals using the process established from 1 July 2008. Through these processes all parties seek Australian Government approval (through FaHCSIA) for proposed new and changed uses of five year leased land. The *Northern Territory National Emergency Response (Land Use Approvals) Guidelines 2010* have enhanced the land use approval process. The result is a consistent and transparent process of allocating land to provide certainty to users. Parties using land immediately before the commencement of five year leases have not been required to seek approval to continue using those areas, as existing arrangements were generally retained.

In processing land use requests, FaHCSIA undertakes a number of steps including obtaining planning comments, considering any competing claims to the land, and seeking information on community views through the relevant GBM. In addition, the Land Use Approval Guidelines require FaHCSIA to consider whether the proposed use of the land will improve the delivery of services in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and whether the proposed use is likely to promote economic and social development. Under the Land Use Approval Guidelines, FaHCSIA must also consider the potential impact of the proposed use on existing interests in the land and the potential impact of the proposed use on sacred sites. FaHCSIA must also consider whether to impose conditions on the proposer in relation to use of the land.

For the six month period from 1 January to 30 June 2012 inclusive, FaHCSIA received requests for approval to use approximately 231 areas of land. The Department approved approximately 268 applications for land use in the same period. The number of applications approved does not mean that the Department has rejected applications. Rather the difference may reflect applications which are pending were withdrawn by the applicant or found to be not applicable; for example where a section 19 lease is in place or the area of land fell outside the five year lease boundary.

Where longer term use is envisaged, parties are encouraged to negotiate longer term leases with land owners. Longer term leases over five year leased areas will not take effect until approved by the Minister for FaHCSIA. Once approved by the Minister for FaHCSIA, the areas will be excluded from the five year leased area.

The Department worked with the Land Councils and the Northern Territory Government to transition land users who had Australian Government authorisation to use land and infrastructure until 17 August 2012 to negotiate leases with the land owners. In January 2012, letters were sent to all such land users and flyers were distributed in five year lease communities providing information on the end of the five year leases. The Department also required evidence of long term lease negotiations to proceed with land use approvals.

The Department stopped accepting new land use applications in May 2012. All applicants with an outstanding land use request were notified of the imminent end of the five year leases and asked to complete their applications.

Permits

In summary, the status of the permit system during the reporting period was as follows:

- Government employees and contractors did not require a permit to perform relevant duties;
- All those involved with the NTER including the above and also including medical teams and volunteers did not require a permit for the period of the NTER;
- The public could access common areas of 52 major communities;
- The public could reach the 52 major communities by air, sea and public road;

- The public required permits for all non-public roads; and
- The public still required a permit to visit the vast majority of Aboriginal Land.

The permit system controls access to Aboriginal land held under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. Except in specific circumstances it is an offence to enter or remain on any Aboriginal land without a permit. *The Aboriginal Land Act (NT)* allows the Northern Territory Land Councils, traditional owners, and in some cases, the Northern Territory Government to issue and revoke permits. The police have the power to remove people where they are in violation of permit requirements.

The 2007 NTER legislation package made changes to the permit system removing the necessity to obtain permits for certain people in certain circumstances.

Government employees and contractors no longer required a permit to enter Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory to perform relevant duties. This change took effect with the commencement of the NTER legislation in August 2007 and continues beyond the end of the NTER period. In addition, all those involved with the NTER, including medical teams and volunteers, did not require a permit for the period of the NTER, which ceased at 17 August 2012.

Further changes introducing limited public rights of access took effect from 17 February 2008. As a result, common areas in 52 major communities became accessible by members of the public without the need to obtain a permit if arriving by air, sea or public roads. These changes continue beyond the end of the NTER period.

The day to day operation of the permit system remains the same as before the NTER took effect and continues beyond the end of the NTER period. The issuing and revocation of permits has been and continues to remain a matter for the Land Councils, traditional owners and the police as required. The process for responding to a person who is in violation of the permit requirements (by contacting the relevant Land Council and/or the police if necessary) remained unchanged during the NTER, and the police still had the power to remove people where they are in violation of permit requirements. This process remains unchanged beyond the end of the NTER period. During the reporting period the Australian Government encouraged people wishing to access Aboriginal land to contact the relevant Land Council regarding visits to communities even in relation to areas where a permit was not strictly required. The Australian Government will continue this practice with the end of the NTER period.

5.2. Long term Leasing Arrangements

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring secure land tenure arrangements are in place before making substantial investment in fixed assets like housing or other buildings or infrastructure on Indigenous-held land. This policy has been agreed to by all relevant State and Territory Governments through COAG National Partnership Agreements on Remote Indigenous Housing and Remote Service Delivery (RSD).

As at 30 June 2012, long term leases have been agreed in 15 of the 16 communities receiving major capital works in housing. Township leases are in

place in the Tiwi Island communities of Wurrumiyanga (Nguju), Milikapiti and Ranku and the Groote Eylandt region communities (Angurugu, Milyakburra and Umbakumba).

Forty year leases over public housing have also been agreed in 24 of the 51 smaller communities across the Northern Territory during the reporting period (for the communities of Amanbidji, Areyonga, Barunga, Belyuen, Beswick, Bulla, Bulman, Canteen Creek, Gunyangara, Kaltukatjara, Manyallaluk, Minjilang, Mt Liebig, Nturiya, Palumpa, Papunya, Peppimenarti, Pigeon Hole, Pmara Jutunta, Ramingining, Rittarangu, Waruwu, Weemol and Yarralin).

Secure tenure arrangements are in place in the Tennant Creek town camps and in all 18 Alice Springs town camps allocated to receive housing and infrastructure work. This housing and infrastructure work continues to progress across the town camps, with the majority of housing works completed.

The Australian Government, the Northern Territory Government and the Land Councils are negotiating leases in the remaining communities covered by the five year leases during the reporting period. Interim arrangements have been agreed with the Northern Territory Government and Land Councils to ensure there is no interruption to service delivery of property and tenancy management in communities while long term leases are negotiated at the end of the five year leases.

6. Safe Communities

This Building Block involves improving family and community safety through law and justice responses, victim support, child protection and preventative approaches. Addressing related factors such as alcohol and substance abuse will be critical to improving community safety, along with the improved health benefits.

The impact of violence and other crime comes at an enormous cost to families, and in particular women and children. Providing a safe and stable home environment for children is also a critical foundation for making inroads into areas like education, health and employment. The Government has focused on a number of connected aspects to improve community safety, including increased child protection and support for families, addressing family violence, providing youth diversionary activities, increasing police numbers and facilities, providing legal services and addressing the impact of alcohol and drugs.

Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory

Since 2009, there have been three reports produced which relate to policing in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

In 2011, a review was conducted of the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAIDs) and Dog Operations Units (DOUs). The Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAIDs) coordinate a multi-jurisdictional partnership involving police in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia, to reduce the supply of licit and illicit substance in the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Lands, the Top End and Central Australia. The SAIDs act as focal points for collating intelligence and coordinating policing activities, principally in detecting and disrupting drugs, petrol, solvents, kava and alcohol.

The aim of the review was to assess the contribution the SAID/DOUs make to address and reduce the supply of illicit substances into remote Aboriginal communities. Primarily conducted from March 2011 through to June 2011, the review included the compilation and analysis of program and output information, statistical data, and semi-structured interviews with over 35 stakeholders.

The review concluded that based on most performance measures of drug law enforcement and intelligence-led policing, and for a relatively small investment, the initiative can be viewed as very effective. The initiative has contributed to supply reduction and enforcement efforts that have led to significant reductions in petrol sniffing and reduced alcohol consumption within some remote communities. The SAID/DOUs assist with the policing outcomes related to petrol and alcohol, but according to the review, their main achievements relate to cannabis and kava, both in terms of the number and volume of seizures and the apprehensions of mid-level traffickers involved in their distribution.

The review found that stakeholders valued the coordinating role of the units, especially in a cross-jurisdictional environment and the drug detection dogs because they generate good public relations and increase rates of efficient, non-intrusive detection. More broadly, the intelligence and dog units were seen as playing a crucial role in detecting and deterring criminal networks that are

involved in more systematic trafficking of illicit substances and in ensuring there is early warning of changes in illicit drug supply to remote areas.

The review concluded that the key to the units' success to date seems to be having small dedicated teams assisted by drug detection dogs that can respond to regional issues and trends, and their ability to focus on remote Indigenous communities. There were however various aspects of the initiative that require further investigation and review, and future priorities were identified in the report. The full report is available on the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website.¹⁸

In 2009 the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) and Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) commissioned a research project which was funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, into the new police stations built as part of Northern Territory Emergency Response. James Pilkington undertook the research and the report 'Aboriginal Communities and the Police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory' was published in October 2009.¹⁹

In November 2009, the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments commissioned the Allen Consulting Group to undertake an Independent Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory.²⁰ The review was published in April 2010 and outlined a number of recommendations for future strategies for policing in the Northern Territory.

6.1. Police

Key developments

As at 30 June 2012:

- The Commonwealth Government provided the Northern Territory Government funding for the salaries, recruitment, training and allowances for an additional 60 NT Police officers;

18 J. Putt, Review of the Substance Intelligence Desk and Dog Operations Unit report, FaHCSIA, Canberra, 2011.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/indigenous-australians/publications-articles/evaluation-research/review-of-the-substance-abuse-intelligence-desks-and-dog-operation-units>

19 J. Pilkington, Aboriginal communities and the police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory, NAAJA and CAALAS, Darwin, 2009
www.naaia.org.au/documents/Themis%20Report.pdf

20 Allen Consulting Group, Independent review of policing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory: Policing further into remote communities, Allen Consulting Group, Melbourne 2010.
<http://fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/indigenous-australians/publications-articles/closing-the-gap-in-the-northern-territory-including-northern-territory-emergency-response/independent-review-of-policing-in-remote-indigenous-communities-in-the-northern-territory>

- Upgrades: Five permanent police station upgrades have been funded at Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Ali Curung, Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Yuendumu;
- Overnight Facilities: Five overnight facilities have been installed at Titjikala, Milingimbi, Kaltukatjara (Docker River), Umbakumba, and Angurugu;
- Themis Stations: 17 Themis Stations are currently operational in communities;
- Permanent Police Complexes: Over \$50 million dollars has been allocated to build five, permanent police stations in the Northern Territory priority areas of Gapuwiyak, Ramingining, Yarralin and Arparra. A fifth site for a permanent police station upgrade in Yuendumu is currently being negotiated between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments. The Yarralin Police complex has been completed and was officially opened in April 2011; and
- Construction of 14 residential accommodation units for the Police College at Berrimah was completed in June 2012.

Data Notes

It is very important to note that increases in reported crime should not be confused with the underlying incidence of crime. Increases in reported crime are likely to be associated with increased police numbers in the NTER communities and may be associated with improvements in community safety (see Part I of this report).

The discussion and analysis in sections 6.1 to 6.8 is based on data supplied by the Northern Territory Police and the Northern Territory Department of Justice.

The data includes police involvement in incidents that did not result in offences. For example, responding to complaints or observations of behaviour that either did not involve offending behaviour or were dealt with by dispersing people or other responses that did not involve further police intervention.

The NTER was principally addressed to the safety and well-being of children. It is particularly difficult to collect and report outcomes for this objective; however, some data are available and are reported below. Of course, the short-term impact of the NTER may be to increase reported crime and it is important to 'see through' such a short-term effect. If people in the NTER communities are more able to report crimes, then in the long run this is likely to have a positive effect on community safety, as perpetrators will be more likely to be apprehended.

A police presence in communities is also more likely to record incidents of attempted suicide and personal harm, which may have previously gone unrecorded.

While data on assault and violent crime largely reflects crimes committed against adults, a general normalisation of violence is not good for children or adults and creates an environment in which crimes against children are more likely to occur.

Intra-family violence is one of several risk factors that are known to lead to youth suicide and suicide attempts. There is significant evidence that violence is

normalised in some remote Indigenous communities.²¹ Much violence remains unreported in official data and this needs to be kept in mind in interpreting the data provided below.

Sixty additional police (compared to the number prior to the NTER) have been deployed. The additional police presence meant that the recording of all incidents across all categories rose, particularly in the communities where Operation THEMIS is in place.

The data presented below and in previous Monitoring Reports indicate that there has been a large increase in incidents reported to police and convictions since the introduction of the NTER. The last four Monitoring Reports have shown that in many crime categories the police incident numbers and convictions have either stabilised or decreased. This Monitoring report has shown an increase in police reports across several incident categories, particularly alcohol related, assaults and domestic violence.

The number of recorded domestic violence related incidents has been affected not only by the introduction of extra police under the NTER but also by the introduction of mandatory reporting of family and domestic violence. Changes to the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* came into effect on 12 March 2009, when it became mandatory for all adults in the NT to report serious physical harm to Police. The serious harm needs to be 'actual, suspected or an imminent threat between people in a domestic or family relationship'.²²

6.2. Alcohol, Drug and Substance Related Incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, substance abuse and drug related incidents continue to be of concern in the NTER communities. Table 6.1 below shows the number of incidents relating to alcohol, substance abuse or drugs over the past five financial years.

Table 6.1: Confirmed Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Drug Related Incidents

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Alcohol related	3239	4206	4146	3960	4870
Substance abuse related	457	585	671	623	854
Drug related	257	231	301	354	351

Source: Northern Territory Government.

Note: Data have been revised since the previous Monitoring Report due to improved reporting systems.

The number of confirmed alcohol related incidents reported by police across the NTER communities increased by 30% between 2007-08 and 2008-09. The number stabilised for the next two years before increasing again by 23% between 2010-11

21 ABSTRACT Address by the CEO of the Australian Crime Commission, Alastair Milroy, to the 2008 Bennelong Society Conference - 20 June 2008

[Stop Family Violence: Information about Domestic and Family Violence in the Northern Territory.](http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/Domestic_and_Family_Violence/index.aspx)
http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/Domestic_and_Family_Violence/index.aspx

and 2011-12. Substance abuse incidents have steadily increased since 2007-08 although they showed a small decline of 7% between 2009-10 and 2010-11, before increasing by 37% between 2010-11 and 2011-12. Drug related incidents decreased by 10% between 2007-08 and 2008-09 and increased by 53% between 2008-09 and 2010-11. They have remained stable between 2010-11 and 2011-12.

6.3. Domestic Violence Related incidents

Domestic violence related incidents have more than doubled between 2007-08 and 2011-12. There was a 39% increase between 2007-08 and 2008-09 and another large increase of 31% in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12). Mandatory reporting of family and domestic violence to police was introduced in 2009.

The percentage of domestic violence incidents that are alcohol related have slowly declined from 40% of all incidents in 2007-08 to 33% of all incidents in 2011-12.

Table 6:2: Domestic Violence Related Incidents

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Alcohol related	639	856	922	1009	1300
Total Domestic Violence related	1611	2234	2700	2961	3883

Source: Northern Territory Government.

Note: Data have been revised since the previous Monitoring Report due to improved reporting systems.

Confirmed breaches of Domestic Violence Orders increased by 83 incidents between 2007-08 and 2010-11. In the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12) they have declined by 24 incidents. Breaches of Other Orders have increased by 20 incidents between 2007-08 and 2009-10 and have increased by 13 incidents between 2009-10 and 2011-12 (Table 6.3).

Table 6:3: Confirmed Breaches of Domestic Violence Orders

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Breach - DVO	124	126	186	207	183
Breach – Other Order/s	34	38	54	51	64

6.4. Assault

Relative to population size there is a high level of assault across the NTER communities and the Northern Territory.

The total number of confirmed assaults including the categories of; assault; aggravated assault; indecent assault; and sexual assault, (highlighted in Table 6.4 below) reached a peak of 510 in the 2008-09 before declining to 385 in 2010-11. There has been an increase of 11% in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12), with the total number of confirmed assaults at 428. This is well below the peak of 510 reached in 2008-09.

The numbers of attempted suicide/self-harm incidents recorded by the police show a substantial increase between 2007-08 and 2011-12. The data included for attempted suicide / self-harm incidents refers to incidents of this nature that have come to the attention of police. The change in figures from 2007-08 to 2011-12 should not be interpreted as a general increase in this type of incident. Rather, it can only be interpreted as police becoming involved or aware of an increased number of this type of incident. This could be reflective of a range of issues including increased confidence in reporting to police.

The rate of suicide amongst Indigenous people in the Northern Territory is high and although no clear trends are evident in recent years, there is some evidence to suggest that it has been increasing over several decades.²³

For this reason, attempted suicide/self-harm incidents along with confirmed personal harm incidents continue to be of concern in the NTER communities.

Table 6:4: Confirmed Personal Harm Incidents

Personal Harm reports	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Armed Person	55	58	47	51	73
Assault	79	114	124	91	95
Assault - Aggravated	246	346	268	264	306
Assault - Indecent	12	14	18	13	10
Assault - Sexual	48	36	31	17	17
Attempt Suicide / Self Harm	109	138	159	227	316
Behaviour - Indecent	8	3	8	7	11
Mentally Ill Person	122	149	162	115	153
Missing Person	25	23	20	19	21

Source: Northern Territory Government.

Note: Data have been revised since the previous Monitoring Report due to improved reporting systems.

Table 6.5 shows that the number of assault cases lodged with the courts for offences in the NTER communities decreased by 11% between 2008-09 and 2010-11. In the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12) however, there has been an increase of 20% making 2011-12 the highest in assault lodgements recorded since the start of the NTER.

In line with the assault lodgement data, the number of assault convictions for NTER communities decreased 9% between 2008-09 and 2010-11 and increased 12% between 2010-11 and 2011-12.

The conviction rate (of lodgements) increased from 64% in 2008-09 to 68% in 2009-2010 and decreased to 61% in 2011-12.

Lodgements in the rest of the Northern Territory have shown steady increases since 2008-09. There has been a 7% increase in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12).

23 Measey, M.L., Li, S.Q., Parker, R. and Wang, Z. 2006, 'Suicide in the Northern Territory, 1981-2002', *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 185 (6), pp. 315-319.

Convictions in the rest of the Northern Territory declined by 4% between 2008-09 and 2009-10 but increased by 13% between 2009-10 and 2010-11 and by 4% in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12).

Conviction rates in the rest of the Northern Territory declined from 64% to 59% between 2008-09 and 2009-10 and increased to 65% between 2009-10 and 2010-11 and remained stable at 64% in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12).

Table 6:5: Assault Lodgements and Convictions

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
NTER Communities				
Lodgements	632	593	565	676
Convictions	402	403	366	411
Conviction Rate	64%	68%	65%	61%
Northern Territory - Other				
Lodgements	2205	2284	2316	2477
Convictions	1406	1343	1516	1580
Conviction Rate	64%	59%	65%	64%

Source: Northern Territory Government

6.5. Restraining Orders

Applications for restraining orders showed an large increase of 26% between 2008-09 and 2009-10 before decreasing by 13% between 2009-10 and 2010-11. Between 2010-11 and 2011-12 there has been a 30% increase. Restraining orders granted also showed a large increase of 26% between 2008-09 and 2009-10 before decreasing by 8% between 2009-10 and 2010-11 and then increasing by 34% between 2010-11 and 2011-12.

Instances of sentencing for a breach of a restraining order in NTER communities increased by 20% between 2008-09 and 2011-12 (Table 6.6).

Table 6:6: Restraining orders

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Applications for ROs – Bush Courts	455	574	499	651
Restraining orders granted	359	452	416	557
Sentencing occasions for RO Breach	90	88	111	108

6.6. Sexual Assault

The Northern Territory Department of Justice have provided data on lodgements in court for sexual assault across the NTER communities and the other parts of the Northern Territory.

Table 6:7: Sexual Assault Lodgements and Convictions

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Lodgements				
NTER Communities	41	43	15	19
Northern Territory - Other	114	108	109	96
Convictions				
NTER Communities	13	19	13	11
Northern Territory - Other	42	41	37	44

Source: Northern Territory Government

Table 6.7 shows the number of lodgements in court for sexual assault offences in NTER communities increased by 2 between 2008-09 and 2009-10, decreased by 28 between 2009-10 and 2010-11 and increased by 4 in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12). In the rest of the Northern Territory lodgements decreased by 6 between 2008-09 and 2009-10, remained stable between 2009-10 and 2010-11 and decreased by 13 in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12). The number of convictions for sexual assault in NTER communities was 13 in 2008-09, 19 in 2009-10 and has decreased by 6 between 2009-10 and 2010-11 and decreased again by 2 in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12).

While Indigenous Australians are over-represented in lodgements in court and convictions for sexual assault it is important to note that most convictions in the Northern Territory relate to offences committed outside the NTER communities.

6.7. Child Sexual Assault

The number of convictions for child sexual assaults committed in the NTER communities in 2008-09 was 11. In 2009-10 it was 12, in 2010-11 it was also 12 and in 2011-12 it had decreased to 7.

The total number of child sexual assault convictions over four years from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2011 was 45, this compares to a total of 25 convictions in the 4 years prior to the commencement of the NTER (that is from 1 July 2003 to 1 July 2007).

The conviction rate for child sexual abuse is likely to understate the actual level of abuse and it is misleading to view it in isolation.

6.8. Child Abuse

Issues of child welfare go well beyond sexual abuse. There is evidence that child neglect is a more common issue²⁴ than sexual assault in the NTER communities. This is confirmed by Northern Territory police data.

The data in Table 6:8 should be treated with some caution as they are based on the assessment of police – however, the patterns are consistent with the child

²⁴ Nettie Flaherty and Chris Goddard, Child neglect and the Little Children are Sacred Report, Children Australia, Volume 33, Number 1, 2008

protection data noting that police are the largest single source of child protection notifications in the NT.

The total number of reported incidents of child abuse in the NTER was 174 in 2007-08. It increased to 302 in 2009-10 before decreasing by 10% in 2010-11 and decreasing again in the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12) by 8%. Child welfare-STI has increased since 2007-08 reaching a peak of 43 in 2009-10 before decreasing to 35 in 2010-11 and to 17 in 2011-12. Child welfare pregnancy also showed a similar trend, reaching 31 in 2009-10 and decreasing to 10 in 2011-12. The vast bulk of child abuse reports across the NTER communities were accounted for by the category 'child welfare' (85% in 2011-12).

The category 'child welfare' relates to issues that would generally be considered to be child neglect. There has been a large increase in reported incidents of abuse relating to child welfare across the NTER communities. There were 136 cases in 2007-08 and 214 cases in 2009-10. In the last reporting period (between 2010-11 and 2011-12) there has been an increase of 16 cases.

Table 6:8: Police Incidents – Reports of Child Abuse

Category	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Child Abuse Material	0	2	2	1	3
Child Welfare	136	171	214	196	212
Child Welfare - Pregnancy	12	27	31	26	10
Child Welfare - STI	18	16	43	35	17
Prohibited Material (Prescribed Area)	7	8	12	14	7
Unclassified Adult Material	1	2	0	0	0
TOTAL	174	226	302	272	249

Source: Northern Territory Government

Note: An 'incident' is confirmed once preliminary investigation of an incident has been undertaken.

For some incidents the category may change. In the Child Welfare Category 12% of incidents did not have a 'confirmed incident' status.

Child Protection Data

There is no new child protection data and the last data can be found in the July to December 2011 Monitoring Report.

- Since the commencement of the NTER, the child protection substantiation rate for Indigenous children in the NT has increased by two and a half times (from 16.8 per 1,000 children in 2006-07 to 43.3 in 2010-11). This is a rapid increase in a relatively short time frame and similar increases were not observed in the other jurisdictions over the same period although rapid increases have occurred in other jurisdictions when additional child protection resources have been provided.
- Analysis in the NTER Evaluation Report suggests that most of the increase in substantiations in the NT from 2006-07 occurred in remote parts of the NT. This suggests that the increase is related to extra child protection services provided through the NTER and by the Northern Territory Government.

- In 2006-07 the rate of substantiation per 1,000 Indigenous children in NT was considerably lower than the national average but is now higher than the national average (34.6 in 2010-11).

6.9. Night Patrol Services

Night patrols assist people at risk of either causing harm or becoming the victims of harm in order to break the cycle of violence and crime in Indigenous communities. Patrols interact with Indigenous people in local community areas, identify those who may be at risk of coming into adverse contact with the criminal justice system and, where required, take them to an appropriate place such as a recognised safe house.

Key Developments

Between 1 January and 30 June 2012, night patrol services funded by the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) in the Northern Territory assisted in approximately 84,710 incidents.²⁵

This assistance includes transporting people to a recognised Safe Place (House), or another safe place (such as a family member's home), referral to other services, ensuring children are not out late at night, or intervention to prevent or limit antisocial behaviour, including fighting, domestic violence, gambling and arguments.

Background

The Australian Government, through AGD, provides funding for night patrol services across 80 communities in the Northern Territory, including 72 of the 73 NTER identified communities, urban Aboriginal living areas in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine and other communities affected by the NTER.

Patrols operate at least five nights per week, ideally with three patrollers and a team leader on duty at any one time. The night patrol program provides funding to employ more than 350 full time equivalent positions, supporting Indigenous employment across the diverse locations of the Northern Territory.

Progress

AGD continues to implement the recommendations outlined in the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Performance Report on NT Night Patrol Services (March 2011).

The majority of high-level Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between night patrol service providers and the Police, to improve coordination and understanding of respective roles, have been signed. Community level agreements, which elaborate the local arrangements for coordination, are being

²⁵ The Attorney General's Department continues to work with service providers to improve the accuracy of data collected by night patrols. This data is incomplete in some areas and does not include all activities of night patrol services.

progressively rolled out across the 80 communities. These are also intended to enhance community members' understanding of the services' roles.

A performance framework has been developed for night patrols which will improve the quality of data collected by patrols with a focus on outcomes rather than outputs. A training package has also been developed, which will provide base level training for night patrollers.

Challenges

AGD recognises the challenges associated with continuous analysis and improvement of the night patrols program. In this context, AGD aims to improve reporting and demonstration of outcomes achieved by the program, implementing the ANAO's final recommendation.

Looking forward

The Australian Government through the AGD will continue to work with the Northern Territory Government in developing effective and efficient night patrol services in Northern Territory Indigenous communities. AGD has held workshops both in Alice Springs (March 2012) and in Darwin (April 2012) with night patrol staff to discuss program delivery including the performance framework and training for night patrollers.

6.10. Safe Places

The main purpose of the Safe Places is to provide a safe place for men, women and children to go when fleeing family violence. A Safe Place can be either a Women's Safe House or a Men's Place.

Key Developments

Since April 2009 there have been a total of 1,917 women, children and men in remote Aboriginal communities who were provided services as clients of the Safe Houses. Of this number, 995 were women and 850 children accompanying women. In this same period, 72 men accessed the Men's Places.

In the period from 1 January to 30 June 2012 a total of 165 men, women and children accessed the Safe Places for crisis accommodation:

- 77 women;
- 76 children accompanying women; and
- 12 men.

The Safe Places house a number of functions which include:

- Short term crisis accommodation for women and their children with safety planning developed in the Safe Place;
- Group safety and well-being programs, which could include parenting programs, family violence prevention programs, behaviour change programs etc.; and
- Linkages and referrals to counselling, legal and support services.

At Men's Places, crisis accommodation and client based services that help men address issues in relation to family violence are provided within a broader approach to male health and wellbeing. At Men's Places there is a strong focus on providing improved access for all men to a wide range of activities and programs aimed at improving the safety and wellbeing of men and their families.

Background

The Family Support Package was announced in September 2007 as a direct response to recommendation 77B "increase the number of communities with safe house/places for women and children fleeing violence" contained in the *Little Children are Sacred* Report. The three elements of this package respond most directly to the Report's overall theme of protecting Indigenous children. See Table 6:9 for opening dates.

Various safe house models were explored to ensure the needs of all victims of family violence are met and that the resulting accommodation and accompanying services provide suitable care. A key feature of the package is to develop a coordinated Indigenous family violence management strategy for a number of Northern Territory communities based around existing services and infrastructure. Leveraging existing support services such as health facilities, schooling, police, and community service, thereby ensuring the elements of the package will provide for sustainable practices and service delivery.

The design of Safe Place complexes was chosen to achieve a balance between aesthetics and securing the safety of the families using them. Community projects to enhance the landscape of the Safe Place complexes commenced in 2008 and were completed in 2010.

Challenges

Staffing requires a continuing investment in intensive support, which is managed by working closely with Safe Places staff, providing supervision, training and mentoring, implementing flexible working arrangements and ongoing recruitment. Training has been developed which aims to develop the skills of staff to provide a service with continuous improvement.

Ten of the Safe Places had major infrastructure upgrades between 1 January and 30 June 2012 to increase the level of crisis accommodation and flexibility of infrastructure to meet community needs. During infrastructure upgrades Safe Places were closed and alternative arrangements for critical incidents were in place.

Progress

During the reporting period there were 22 Safe Places in 15 remote and two urban communities.

Table 6.9 below shows the communities where the Safe Places are located and the date they were opened.

Table 6:9 Safe Places: location and date of opening

Indigenous Communities	Women (New)	Men's (New)	Retrofit / Refurbishment	Opening Date
Angurugu		1	1 – Women's	Women – 28 July 2009 Men – 25 March 2010
Apatula (Finke)		1		20 February 2009
Wugalarr (formerly Beswick)	1			27 August 2010
Ntaria (formerly Hermannsburg)	1			6 March 2009
Kalkarindji	1			20 February 2009
Lajamanu			1 – women's	13 February 2009
Maningrida	1	1		Women – 27 March 2009 Men – 15 May 2009
Wurrumiyanga (Formerly Nguiu)	1	1		14 February 2009
Ngukurr	1	1		30 January 2009
Peppimenarti			1 - women's	23 February 2009
Pmara Jutunta		1		1 May 2009
Ramingining	1	1		24 April 2009
Ti Tree	1			1 May 2009
Yarralin	1			25 April 2009
Yuendumu		1		7 May 2009
Alice Springs (Transitional House)			1 – women's	12 June 2009
Darwin (Transitional House)			1 – women's	6 July 2009
Total	9	8	5	

During the reporting period, there were on average 54 positions filled in remote Safe Places, the majority of which were filled by local Indigenous people. Employing local Indigenous people assists in providing appropriate service delivery, helps to develop the local workforce and builds community capacity, understanding and acceptance.

Women's Safe House workers provide clients with a place of safety, an initial point of contact and support, information, referral to other services and advice on staying safe once they have left the Safe House.

Women's Safe Houses are staffed by local community women. Women's Safe House workers provide a 24 hour service, comprising daytime opening hours on weekdays and an on-call service overnight and on weekends.

Men's Places are staffed by local community men. Men's Place workers provide week day service, comprising daytime opening hours but at times are called on for assistance after hours.

As at 30 June 2012, approximately 90% of remote Safe Place workers had held a position for six months or more.

The Northern Territory Government manages the operations of Safe Places and reports to the Australian Government. The Northern Territory Government supervises the operations of Safe Places, and during this period conducted 97 visits to remote Safe Places. Visits are part of a range of continuous improvement and support measures. During visits, the Northern Territory Government supports and assists the progress of Safe Place implementation, consults with community members and staff on a range of issues, liaises with local service providers as well as identifying any capital works requiring attention.

6.11. Mobile Child Protection Teams

The Mobile Child Protection Team (MCPT) offers support to regional offices in investigating Child Protection notifications of child abuse in remote communities. The MCPT assists in managing workloads in child protection across the Territory through the injection of further resources into areas where there is an incongruity between the quantity of child protection reports and the number of workers available to conduct the investigations. The MCPT is able to reduce the pressure on regional offices during times of low staffing and assist remote offices to maintain services during staff recruitment processes.

The MCPT also alleviates the difficulties inherent in recruiting staff to reside in remote areas. The MCPT is able to attract highly qualified and experienced staff who welcomes the opportunity to operate in remote areas for specific periods of time and yet retain a home in an urban centre.

Key developments

- In the period 1 January – 30 June 2012, the MCPT visited 30 of 73 NTER communities.
- In the same period, the MCPT was involved in investigating and providing follow up services in 800 child protection notifications.
- Of these notifications and investigations, nil resulted in legal action being taken.
- During this period the MCPT was able to offer a consistent, stable child protection support service to all Regional Offices to ensure that they were able to investigate the child protection notifications referred to their office in a timely manner.

Background

The Mobile Child Protection Team is a Darwin based, Territory-wide service operating on a 2 week-out 1-2 weeks-in model whereby staff travel to regional NT Child Protection offices that have identified a need for extra Child Protection staff.

The primary objective of the MCPT is to:

- Increase the capacity of the Northern Territory Child Protection system to respond to child protection matters, particularly Indigenous children in remote communities;

- Assist staff in local Child Protection offices across the NT with workload issues and case practice (utilising the knowledge and practice expertise of local staff to inform practice with the local people, culture and communities); and
- Build and nurture relationships with key stakeholders and services within the Northern Territory's Child Protection system.

The MCPT endeavours to provide timely, high quality investigations into allegations of child abuse and neglect or protective concern/s about children and young people; assist Aboriginal families and communities to make decisions about the safety and care of their children; and to contribute to the development of a holistic and sustainable child protection and family support service system to meet the care and protection needs of Aboriginal children.

Essential to successful team operations and enhanced client outcomes is a collaborative case work approach with regional office staff. Regional offices hold expertise and knowledge of the intricacies of the region, the children and families of the area, and operational perspectives and practices of the office. Although it is not always possible for a range of reasons, MCPT best practice would be to complete investigations with a regional office staff member.

Progress

The MCPT have continued to assist the Northern Territory Department of Children and Families (DCF) in addressing notification of child abuse within the Territory in a timely manner.

During the reporting period the MCPT have continued to cement relationships with key stakeholders through their regular presence at NTFC offices and within remote communities. The team's regular presence has fostered a strong and collaborative working culture and an increased understanding of the role of the MCPT. Both these factors have been core components to achieving optimum outcomes for children and their families particularly within remote communities.

Challenges

The recruitment and retention of staff has been an ongoing challenge for MCPT. Ongoing improvements to the recruitment and retention strategies have ensured that the MCPT has remained fully staffed and ensured that we retain the practitioners that we recruit. Retention strategies have included:

- New intensive Induction Programme;
- Team Leaders appointed to cover specific offices with a named team of practitioners;
- New practitioners shadowing existing team members for a period of time;
- Regular, recorded supervision and Work Partnership Plans;
- Core training identified;
- Flexibility around obtaining training in Regional offices;
- Stability within teams in the MCPT which work to specific regional offices;

- Updated laptops with lighter weight models which are easier to travel with and take into remote communities; and
- Practitioners spending longer periods of time in each regional office enabling greater knowledge of the surrounding communities and relationship development with offices and communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The MCPT is monitored by NTDCF. Evaluations will occur on a yearly basis. Situation Reports are submitted monthly.

6.12. Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers

The Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Program (RAFCP) provides a responsive and culturally appropriate child protection service to Aboriginal families living in remote communities by employing, training and supporting local Aboriginal people to work as family workers in their own communities

Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers (RAFCW) are Aboriginal staff that live and work in their communities. They have language skills, established relationships and knowledge of the families and clan groups in their community and nearby communities. They have knowledge of Aboriginal culture and law. They are leaders in their communities.

RAFCWs are managed by their Team Leaders who are based in Alice Springs and Darwin. Team Leaders fly into communities to provide support and training to RAFCWs regularly. Staffing of the program consists of one manager, an administrative officer, four team leaders and 14 RAFCW staff in communities.

The RAFCP sits within the Northern Territory DCF Regional Services Branch and has offices across the Territory. There are two regional offices one in Darwin and one in Alice Springs and 13 offices in remote Aboriginal communities.

The RAFCP is primarily staffed by Aboriginal people.

Key developments

The below information refers to the period 1 January to 30 June 2012. During this period referrals were received and recorded from three sources, those being Community referrals (generated by individuals and families within a given community), Agency referrals (generated by non-government services and agencies), and Departmental referrals (those generated by Child Protection staff or other relevant Northern Territory Government Agencies).

In total 300 referrals were received and accepted between 1 January to 30 June 2012 via Community, Agency or Departmental referral types;

32 Community referrals were generated by individuals and families contacting the Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Program (RAFCP) or help for themselves, for other people or to report child protection concerns in the NTER communities; in regard to these referrals there were 182 interactions between the RAFCP and these clients.

123 Agency referrals from non-government services to the RAFCP. These referrals are received from services that reside in regional centres and have clients in the community; that reside in regional centres but deliver services in the community and services that reside in the community. There were approximately 293 interactions between RAFCP and these services; and

145 Departmental referrals from child protection staff for advice, information and assistance to engage and support clients and their families in communities. Many of these referrals were for ongoing family support to vulnerable and at risk children, young people and families; in regard to these referrals there were 996 interactions between the RAFCP and these clients.

Key responsibilities

The RAFCP works in partnership with the Northern Territory DCF child protection staff, and remote services to provide early intervention to communities and to respond to safety issues as they arise within families and the community. They do this in a number of ways:

- By providing a place for children, young people and families to visit in their communities when they need help with the day to day issues that arise in families and in bringing up children;
- By providing a confidential place for children, young people and families to talk about and report concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families in their community;
- By supporting clients and community people to contact mainstream services including the Northern Territory DCF child protection staff, the police, education, housing, Centrelink, drug and alcohol services and other services for help and to advocate for them;
- By providing information and advice to child protection workers to plan interventions, make assessments and respond quicker to safety issues as they arise in the community;
- By case managing clients and their families to provide day to day support;
- By aiding child protection workers and staff from other services to meet with clients and their family to discuss and formulate a plan to address safety issues;
- By working with the police, night patrols, safe places, women's centres, health clinics, schools, youth centres, sexual assault services, housing, Centrelink and other relevant services to plan interventions, engage and support shared clients and respond to broader community safety issues;
- By delivering and co-facilitating information sessions and programs to the Northern Territory DCF clients and the broader community;
- Sitting on interagency reference groups and Aboriginal community meetings; and

- Assisting the Northern Territory DCF case managers to talk to clients about the benefits of income management.

Progress

The RAFCP is based in 13 remote communities and during the period was mostly operational in all 13 communities, not including outstations. There are 14 RAFCW Community based staff.

Three RAFCW staff from the communities of Ti Tree, Yuendumu and Papunya completed the Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention and graduated on 31 July 2012.

RAFCWs provide outreach services and support to nearby communities that share the same language and family connections. The following table 6:10 provides information on where the RAFCP is based and where it is operational through outreach services.

Table 6:10 Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Program

RAFCP Based	Communities RAFCP provides an outreach service (table does not include outstations serviced)			
Nguiu	<i>Pirlangimpi</i>	Milikapiti		
Galiwin'ku				
Borrooloola	Robinson River			
Papunya	Haasts Bluff	Kintore	Mt Liebig	
Yuendumu	Willowra	Yuelamu	Nyirripi	
Kalkarindji	Dagaragu	Lajamanu		
Oenpelli				
Santa Teresa	Finke	Titjikala		
Ti Tree	Laramba	Six mile	Engawala	Napperby
Ntaria	Wallace Rockhole	Areyonga		
Daly River	Peppimenarti	Palumpa		
Mutitjulu	Imanpa			
Elliott				

Service activity indicates:

- That children, young people and families are accessing the program for help as safety issues arise;
- That Northern Territory DCF child protection teams are utilising the RAFCWs to respond to safety issues and strengthen families in remote communities;
- That RAFCWs are working with relevant services with specific families to improve child safety and family capacity to protect and raise children; and
- Aboriginal staffs are taking leadership in their communities to address child safety issues and strengthen families.

6.13. Legal Services

Key developments

In the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 legal service providers have continued to handle a large number of NTER related matters. The data for the NT Legal Aid Commission, the three NT Community Legal Centres and the two NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services shows that in 2011-12 a total of 3,439 services have been provided comprising 1,281 advices, 487 duty matters, 98 approved applications for grants of aid and 1,573 cases. These six legal service providers also undertook outreach services in 98 communities.

In the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 the legal service providers – the NT Legal Aid Commission, the Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service, the Central Australian Women's Legal Service, the Top End Women's Legal Service, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) and the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) have provided:

- 3,439 services comprising 1,281 advices, 487 duty matters, 98 approved applications for grants of aid and 1,573 cases. They also undertook outreach services in 98 communities.

Progress

In 2011-12 the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Community Legal Centres received a total of \$3.5M to meet increased demand arising from the Northern Territory Emergency Response. There has been increased demand for assistance relating to unpaid fines, traffic offences, police warrants, and personal harm offences, resulting from increased policing along with alcohol and pornography restrictions. Legal assistance activities delivered through the three programs include advice, duty lawyer, case work and outreach sessions (including community legal education).

The law types covered include criminal, civil and family law. Legal issues involve child protection, domestic violence, welfare rights (including the new system of income management), housing, tenancy and consumer law. Increased policing, along with alcohol and pornography restrictions, has increased demand for assistance relating to unpaid fines, traffic offences, police warrants and sexual offences. Approximately 35.5 FTE staff are being utilised to deliver legal assistance arising from the NTER.

6.14. Alcohol Restrictions

The alcohol reform agenda is a significant cornerstone in both the NTER and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement in order to protect women and children, make communities safe and create a better future for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

Under the NTER, new laws were introduced to ban drinking, possessing, supplying or transporting liquor into a prescribed area. On the basis of the existing evidence and the views conveyed in the NTER redesign consultations, the Australian Government believes that alcohol restrictions should continue, but that there

should be a change of focus from a universally imposed measure to a measure designed to meet the individual needs of specific communities. These community variations are based on careful analysis of evidence about each community's circumstances and are implemented in consultation with the community. Moving to local restrictions will be based on evidence about such matters as the level of alcohol-related harm in a community and whether a community based Alcohol Management Plan is in place.

Key developments

- FaHCSIA supports increased licensing compliance activity, monitors requests for liquor licence variations and is consulted on these applications;
- FaHCSIA has processed applications from various interests including the Northern Territory Government seeking a declaration to permit alcohol consumption in Northern Territory Parks and from particular tourism and enterprise operations;
- The Australian Government through FaHCSIA has committed significant funding on a number of supply control initiatives, in particular the successful buy back of two takeaway liquor licences in Alice Springs;
- Funding has also been applied to build on the evidence base in this area of work, including research on;
 - A longitudinal study on the correlation between price, patterns of consumption and related harm in the Alice Springs region, is being undertaken by Curtin University.
 - A Sentinel Reporting Project measuring significant change in a community through the implementation of Alcohol Management Plans in remote communities, being undertaken by Little Fish Pty Ltd.
 - Licensed Social Clubs in the Northern Territory and alcohol related harm being undertaken by Bowchung Pty Ltd.
 - The Australian Government through FaHCSIA, provided significant funding to support the Northern Territory Government's Banned Drinker Register which restricts take away alcohol sales to problem drinkers and facilitates their referral to appropriate services. The Banned Drinker Register system commenced in July 2011 but was deactivated in August 2012 following the Country Liberal Party taking office in late August 2012. During the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement negotiations in November 2012 with senior NT Government officials, the issue of NT Government returning the \$1.5 million was raised. NT Government advised that the funds had been expended and thus nothing is owed. Regarding the remaining infrastructure and hardware, NT Government is yet to form a policy on this matter.
 - And Under NTER and now Stronger Futures, the Australian Government provides funding to the NT Government for the appointment of eight Licensing Inspectors who undertake licensing

and compliance work across the NT. Licensing Inspectors are located in Darwin and regional centres of Alice Springs, Tennant and Katherine.

6.15. Alcohol Management Plans

Key developments

There has been an increase in the number of communities that have been engaged to build Alcohol Management Plans.

- Alcohol Management Plans are currently being developed in communities including Borroloola, Elliott, Beswick, Barunga, Manyallaluk, Jilkminggan, Wurrumiyanga, Milikapiti, Pirlangimpi, Ranku, Binjari, Titjikala, Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Ngukurr, Ntaria, Laramba, Ali Curung, Belyuen, Amoonguna, Gunyangara, Yirrkala, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Darwin town camps and specific Alice Springs town camps.
- Existing Regional AMPs in Katherine and Tennant Creek are being redeveloped. A liquor supply plan is in place in Groote Eylandt and the Gove Peninsula (East Arnhem), and has been evaluated by Menzies School of Health Research;
- Significant investment has also been applied to support alcohol related harm programs in the Northern Territory, including:
 - Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program in the Barkly Region.
 - FASD Program in Darwin, Palmerston, Tiwi Islands, Victoria Daly and Belyuen Regions.
 - Development of a Family Coping Resource Toolkit and Program to build capacity of treatment services to help reduce alcohol related harm.
 - Installation of additional street lighting in hot spots in the Alice Springs Central Business District to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - Darwin Watchouse Pickup and Diversionary Program for people released from protective custody.
 - Back to Bush Indigenous Youth Extension Program.
 - Employment of an Alice Springs Senior Community Worker through the Alice Springs Transformation Plan, to engage town camp residents, government agencies, community organisations and businesses to help address the long term problems contributing to anti-social behaviours and disadvantage in the town camps.
 - Capacity building program for the employment of Clinical Supervisor, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Nurse and two Outreach Workers to deliver alcohol and other drugs educational and awareness programs in the Palmerston and Darwin Regions.

- Save a Mate Our Way (SAMOW) Tiwi and Daly Program, conducted by young people with an emphasis on youth health issues such as alcohol and other drug use and mental health. The Program includes the employment of six part-time Youth Program Community Workers.
 - Katherine Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs Management Program and employment of one Project/Training Officer, one Senior Project Officer and seven Aboriginal AOD Workers.
 - Katherine Indigenous Alcohol Reference Group (KIARG) Support Program.
- The Australian Government through FaHCSIA has provided the Northern Territory Department of Justice (DoJ) with funding to undertake activities to reduce alcohol related harm, including:
 - Building the evidence base around addressing alcohol related harm.
 - Establishment of an alcohol data unit.
 - Development of a broad scale and targeted community education and awareness programs.
 - Finalising the transitional arrangements for Tackling Alcohol Abuse.
 - Development of education tools to inform Indigenous people on the Northern Territory Alcohol reforms.
 - Implementation and evaluation of a community engagement approach to the Katherine Alcohol Management Plan.

Background

Alcohol Management Plans assist communities to address the harm caused by excessive alcohol consumption through supply reduction, demand reduction and harm minimisation. A number of communities have already begun implementing strategies in their Alcohol Management Plans.

Looking forward

As a long-term aim, the Australian Government will continue to work with the Northern Territory Government to increase the number of communities with Alcohol Management Plans and to strengthen their focus on harm minimisation. Under Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory twenty additional AOD workers will be funded to work with communities in need of alcohol and other drug counselling.

6.16. Audit of publicly funded computers

This measure aims to protect Aboriginal women and children in remote Northern Territory communities from inadvertent exposure to prohibited and/or violent material on publicly funded computers.

Those responsible for publicly funded computers located in NTER prescribed areas are required to install filters, maintain usage logs and have a user policy in place.

Responsible persons are also obliged to ensure an audit is undertaken twice per year and a signed declaration form is returned with the audit.

Key developments

- Investment in new educational materials to inform the value of undertaking audits has resulted in an increased response rate and compliance rates.
- A process was developed for the November 2010 audit to allow the auditing of the Shire Citrix Server, (which encompasses 55 of the 60 Shire sites) instead of auditing individual computers.

Background

Audits of publicly funded computers in the Northern Territory occur biannually. Audits were undertaken in June 2008, November 2008, May 2009, November 2009, May 2010, November 2010, May 2011, November 2011, and May 2012.

Progress

In the lead up to the May 2010 audit, an education program was launched to improve understanding and enhance compliance. Promotional materials including storyboards, booklets, mouse pads and posters were developed and issued to organisations with the audit packs. The communication materials were well received and compliance rates increased from 41% in the November 2009 audit, to 73% in the May 2010 audit.

The response rate for the May 2011 audit was 71%, of these 63% of organisations were fully compliant. The response rate for the November 2011 audit was 58%, of these 55% of organisations were fully compliant. Requirements for the Publicly Funded Computer audit in the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007 (*NTER Act*), providing evidence of filters, user logs and user policies, finalised when the *NTNER Act* ceased on 30 June 2012. They will be replaced with a non-legislative measure that all Commonwealth funding agreements will require funded organisations to take steps to minimise inappropriate use of publicly funded computers.

6.17. Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk and Dog Operations Unit

The Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAIDs) coordinate a multi-jurisdictional partnership involving police in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia, to reduce the supply of licit and illicit substance in the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Lands, the Top End and Central Australia. The SAIDs act as focal points for collating intelligence and coordinating policing activities, principally in detecting and disrupting drugs, petrol, solvents, kava and alcohol.

Background

The SAIDs and Dog Operation Units (DOUs) are involved in targeting the trafficking of licit and illicit substances in the cross-border regions of the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia and also in the Top End.

The role of the SAIDs is to:

- Gather intelligence on suppliers and criminal networks;
- Coordinate policing operations in the cross-border region of NT, SA and WA as well as the Top End, targeting traffickers of drugs, alcohol, petrol, kava and other illicit substances;
- Conduct covert and overt enforcement and disruption activities;
- Work with partner agencies including health, youth workers, women's councils and communities to inform them about the role of the SAID and the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse;
- Promote the Indigenous Family Safety Agenda and youth initiatives; and
- Pursue traffickers under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to strip them of their money and assets.

The Australian Government through FaHCSIA funding specific to the SAIDs and DOUs has allowed the Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian Police to develop a greater proactive targeted approach specific to the various forms of substance abuse that are prevalent in remote areas.

The successes of the SAID and DOU are as a result of high profile enforcement activities in areas that have been identified by SAID intelligence analysis as being known 'hotspots' for the trafficking or use of certain illicit substances. It is not necessarily the case that there has been an increase in the amount of illicit substances and alcohol in remote areas, but that the Police have a greater capacity, including SAIDs/DOUs to identify, manage and target offenders, resulting in significant seizures of illicit substances. See Table 6.16 for a comparison between outcomes this reporting period and last reporting period.

The SAIDs and the DOUs have developed an extensive intelligence network throughout the cross-border region and beyond. This network did not exist prior to SAID and now allows for comprehensive information/intelligence sharing across remote areas. The network also allows officers to work efficiently and proactively in remote areas which would not otherwise be so extensively serviced with such capability particularly in the cross-border region.

The Northern Territory Police have been able to provide more Drug Dog handlers and Drug Detection Dogs (DDD) on the front line. This has allowed for greater coverage throughout the Northern Territory. As these Dogs have experienced many different work environments, their detection parameters have increased, facilitating Police capacity to locate different types of concealed illegal substances, including cannabis, methamphetamine and kava. The DOU teams are able to target areas such as freight, airlines, passengers, vehicles and all modes of transport.

With the commencement of operations of the Katherine SAID and DOU in early 2009, there has been a significant reduction in the Top End of trafficking in illicit substances, especially kava and cannabis. This has supplemented the activities of the Northern Territory Remote Community Drug Desk that was already having an

impact across Arnhem Land communities. The existence of a well-resourced SAID and DOU operating from Katherine has greatly enhanced this impact.

The effectiveness of the SAIDs and DOUs has contributed to key outcomes under the National Partnership Agreement and to the Closing the Gap agenda. There has been an outstanding level of cooperation between the State/Territory police and the Australian Government.

Cross-border Justice Scheme and Operations

The success of the Cross-border project is based on collaborative high level arrangements that have been established between the Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian Governments and the subsequent flow on effect. On a law enforcement level, there is an excellent working relationship between Police management as well as front line Police in the cross-border region. This includes the ongoing development of operational networks that lead to active and reciprocal information/intelligence sharing at both the strategic and operational levels as well as joint cross-border policing initiatives such as road safety campaigns and targeted drug operations.

Such operational activities can now be conducted without the jurisdictional constraints that may have previously hampered these types of policing activities.

Consequently, there have been a number of persons put before the new Cross Border Court system throughout the region, and the success of this new element of targeted drug operations is now being realised. Utilising the new legislation to enact this important element of the criminal justice system is in its infancy, but is developing rapidly through high levels of collaboration which complement the efforts of law enforcement in protecting people living in the cross-border region.

The cross-border Justice Scheme is a cross-jurisdictional initiative to counter the effects of inconsistent legislation and policing practices. It is a cooperative arrangement between the Australian, Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian governments which allows officials in the cross-border region to deal with offenders from any one of the participating jurisdictions.

State and Territory legislation relating to this agreement has been passed by all three jurisdictions. The Government is also pursuing amendments to the *Service and Execution of Process Act 1992* to support the effective operation of the cross-border justice scheme. There is a Service Level Agreement between each Police Commissioner to deal with day to day operational issues.

Progress

There are currently three SAIDs located in Alice Springs and Katherine in the Northern Territory and Marla in South Australia. The Alice Springs SAID commenced operations in January 2006, Katherine in February 2009 and Marla in July 2009.

There are three Dog Operation Units which are based in Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin (covering air and sea ports).

Table 6:11, Table 6:12 and Table 6:13 show the current staffing level for the SAIDs and the DOUs. All employees are sworn Northern Territory police officers, with the exception of the SAID administration officer based in Darwin.

Table 6:11 Staffing levels for the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks

	Katherine (NT)	Alice Springs (NT)	Marla (SA)
Number of staff*	3	2	1

*There is also one administration officer based in Darwin

Table 6:12 Staffing levels for the Dog Operation Unit

	Katherine (NT)	Alice Springs (NT)	Darwin (NT)
Number of staff	2	1	2

Table 6:13 Dog Operation Unit – Funded Dogs

	Katherine (NT)	Alice Springs (NT)	Darwin (NT)
Number of Dogs	2 Drug Detector Dogs	1 Drug Detector Dog	2 Drug Detector Dogs 4 General Duty Dogs

Outcomes

Table 6:14 shows the SAIDs and DOUs achieved the following outcomes between January 2011 and June 2012.

Table 6:14 SAID and DOU outcomes by reporting period

	Jan-June 2011	July-Dec 2011	Jan-June 2012
Arrests	115	128	55
Charges	269	340	177
Summons	101	130	77
Infringement notices issued	174	159	111
Seizures			
Alcohol (Litres)	1233	1445.45	635.55
Cannabis (Kilograms)	24.6	82.15	68.82
Kava (Kilograms)	352.8	911.9	441.6
Petrol (Litres)	22	11	0
Amphetamines (Grams)	66	111.9	143.1
MDMA (Ecstasy) (Grams)	22	20.6	0
Other Drugs (Grams)	13	18.2	31.1
Proceeds of Crime			
Vehicles Seized	2	6	14
Cash Seized \$	113,004	57186	141,165
Remote Community Visits	221	333	175

Financial year analysis of the statistics shows that between 2010-11 and 2011-12 seizures of alcohol increased by 27% and seizures of both Cannabis and Amphetamines increased threefold between the two years. Seizures of Kava dropped slightly (-5%).

6.18. Law Enforcement Powers

Under the NTER, the *Australian Crime Commission Act 2002* was amended to insert provisions to enable the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) Board to authorise a

special intelligence operation/investigation into 'Indigenous violence or child abuse', which was defined as 'serious violence or child abuse committed by or against, or involving an Indigenous person'. Whilst the measure facilitates reporting and investigation of offences, any prosecution will be for offences applicable generally, and in accordance with the criminal procedure that apply generally.

The measure protects the rights of Indigenous people, especially children and women, in the NTER communities by facilitating the reporting and investigation of crimes involving serious violence and abuse, the prosecution of such offences, and therefore the prevention of further serious violence and abuse.

6.19. Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Services

Key developments

Between 1 January and 30 June 2012:

- 15 interpreters attained national accreditation, bringing the total number of currently active Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service (NTAIS) interpreters to 81.
- 5,168 people sought access to an Aboriginal interpreter across the Territory; and
- 5,961 hours were spent interpreting specifically for law, justice and health agencies and AGD funded legal assistance services.

This further enables the NTAIS to provide core interpreter services in the most commonly spoken Aboriginal languages in the Northern Territory: Yolngu Matha, Kriol, Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri, Murrinh Patha, Anindilyakwa, Luritja, Eastern Arrernte, Western Arrernte, Kunwinjku, Burarra, Modern Tiwi, Alyawarr, Anmatyerr, Warumungu and Maung.

Background

In January 2009, FaHCSIA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Housing (now called the Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services) to improve communication between government and Indigenous people in the Northern Territory.

Under the MoU, the NTAIS was funded to develop specialist training for Indigenous interpreters on various government initiatives, design and implementation of a strategy for raising awareness of the importance of interpreting services, and employment of interpreters and community liaison/mentor officers.

Building on this initiative, Schedule E in the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement provided \$8.085 million from July 2009 to June 2012. This funding assisted the NTAIS to strengthen interpreter services across the Northern Territory, enhancing engagement between Indigenous communities, government agencies and non-government agencies.

Progress

As at 30 June 2012, 17 community liaison/mentor officers were in place in NTER communities to recruit and support the Community Based Interpreters (CBIs). The CBI positions are an opportunity for local interpreters to take up part or full-time employment with career development support from the community liaison/mentor officers. At 30 June 2012, 19 full-time equivalent CBIs were employed, comprising 27 active CBIs. .

As of 30 June 2012, the NTAIS was operating 13 offices across the Northern Territory at Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Groote Eylandt (Alyangula), Wurrumiyanga, Wadeye, Kalkarindji, Yuendumu, Mutitjulu and Ntaria.

Projects undertaken by the NTAIS from 1 January to 30 June 2012 include:

- Provision of more than 10,000 hours of interpreting in 55 languages across the Northern Territory;
- The translation of the Anti-Racism Strategy into 19 languages ;
- The translation of the radio advertisements for Stronger Futures into 12 languages;
- The translation of the Heart Foundation's Heart Attack Signs into 13 languages ;
- The translation of the radio, DVD and talking book materials for Water Conservation into five languages;
- Involvement of CBIs and mentor support staff in consultations in 25 communities for the Remote Jobs and Communities Program;
- Participation in the Language and Law Conference;
- Assistance in the development and delivery of training for the Diploma of Interpreting at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; and
- Facilitation of ward by ward training of medical staff in the usage of interpreters at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Challenges

NTAIS has identified challenges they are working through including:

- Matching supply of interpreters to increased demand for services; and
- Raising awareness of the need for and appropriate use of interpreters.

Looking forward

FaHCSIA is working closely with the NTAIS to develop a plan for service delivery under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement. This will include measures to assess the NTAIS' ongoing efforts to improve professional interpreter services, and strengthen its capacity to meet demand for services.

The Australian Government through the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) provided additional support to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service in recognition of the increased demand on its services as a result of the NTER. This funding supported the delivery of interpreter services relating to law and justice matters.

7. Governance and Leadership

This Building Block seeks to promote effective governance arrangements in communities and organisations, as well as strong engagement by governments to promote long term sustainability. Indigenous people need to be engaged in the development of reforms that will impact on them. Improved access to capacity building in governance and leadership is needed in order for Indigenous people to play a greater role in exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

7.1. Government Business Managers

Key developments

- As at 30 June 2012, there were up to 56 Government Business Managers (GBMs) servicing 73 NTER communities as well as Borroloola and town camps in Darwin and Alice Springs. Tennant Creek, Elliott and Katherine are now being serviced through the Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) Network. Some GBMs service more than one community due to community size and proximity;
- The ICC/GBM/IEO network had a Northern Territory Wide Recall in May 2012 which focussed on providing information and workshopping a number of key priorities under the Stronger Futures in the NT legislation and the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP);
- Continued engagement with communities around the new Stronger Futures in the NT measures require that GBMs and IEOs will continue to play a key role in the area of community engagement with residents and local stakeholders in remote communities and town camps. Government Business Managers and IEOs have been actively engaging with community stakeholders to ensure people are aware of the content in the Stronger Futures in the NT legislation and are given the opportunity to continue to provide feedback;
- Government Business Managers continue to support local reference groups to update, implement and monitor Local Implementation Plans and whole of government input for the Remote Service Delivery communities in the Northern Territory;
- Government Business Managers and IEOs gathered information and populated templates for input into the Community Database;
- Government Business Manager and IEOs assisted with ABS Census arrangements in communities.
- Government Business Managers and IEOs, as part of a regional team, supported community and stakeholder information sessions regarding the transition of the Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP) Program to the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) in conjunction with DEEWR;

- Government Business Managers have been actively involved in capacity building in communities, including facilitating youth involvement in local government and police, communications projects, supporting the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) processes and Night Patrol; and
- Government Business Managers and IEOs provided a central point of contact and developed positive working relationships across Government agencies to assist with better coordination of government service delivery at the community level.

Background

Government Business Managers work with the FaHCSIA Northern Territory State Office, Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs), Northern Territory Government and other Australian Government agencies to facilitate community engagement and to provide intelligence to relevant stakeholders on remote service delivery issues. They provide the central point of contact for a range of stakeholders. Government Business Managers are managed and supported by Regional Directors, ICC and Regional Operations Centre (ROC) managers.

Government Business Managers provide support for staff from across government agencies, at both the Commonwealth and Territory level.

The GBMs role is to develop a detailed understanding of the community in which they work, including service delivery and funding arrangements, and to work with all relevant agencies in order to assist in improving service delivery. Government Business Managers live in and work in communities to facilitate the coordination of government services and provide intelligence to agencies on local issues and concerns.

7.2. Community Engagement

Key developments

- As at 30 June 2012 there were 15 Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs) in the 15 Remote Service Delivery (RSD) sites and 10 IEOs in non-RSD communities in the Northern Territory;
- Indigenous Engagement Officers continued to support GBMS to facilitate a range of community based work with the introduction of the new Stronger Futures measures;
- Indigenous Engagement Officers supported GBMs when delivering and engaging with residents and local stakeholders in remote communities and town camps during the delivery of the Stronger Futures consultation process;
- As noted above under section 7.1, ICC/GBM/IEO workshops were successfully held during the reporting period; and

- Indigenous Engagement Officers and GBMs continue to work closely to ensure improved two way communication, understanding and community engagement.

Background

As at 30 June 2012, there were 15 Indigenous Engagement Officers (IEOs) in the 15 Remote Service Delivery (RSD) sites and 10 IEOs in non-RSD communities in the Northern Territory. Under Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory, the number of IEOs will increase to enable coverage of up to 54 communities over the next two years

The IEOs act as a conduit between communities and government, promote their community's role in defining needs, setting goals, and formulating policies and plans, and work with community members to bring about greater community input into government decision-making.

Training & Development

An Indigenous community engagement training program was developed in partnership with Charles Darwin University. This training was designed using participatory action research methodologies and was successfully delivered to IEOs between January and June 2009 and in April and May 2011. The IEOs have also participated in regular national workshops and some attended workshops with GBMs.

The Commonwealth and State Relations Branch are currently working with RSD stakeholders in the development of an Indigenous Engagement Officer's recall to be held in Darwin in mid-2012.

The recall is being designed as a three day workshop with a focus on building Indigenous Engagement Officer's capabilities, and equipping them with an understanding of the Australian Government's Remote Service Delivery and Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory agendas. It is anticipated that this will support them fulfil their core functions, and improve their capacity to provide an interface between local Indigenous communities and the Australian Government.

Core elements of the recall include the tailored delivery of key leadership modules from the Australian Government's Indigenous Leadership Program, aligned to knowledge and capacity building activities.

Looking forward

The measure has successfully created local employment opportunities and has helped to forge better community-government relationships. The IEOs provide regular reports and other valuable information about their communities to government, and the communities in return have gained a better understanding of government initiatives.

Under Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory, the number of communities where Indigenous Engagement Officers are employed will increase from 30 to 54 over the next two years.

Resetting the Relationship with Indigenous Australians

The government has committed to Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage and improving the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians by building capacity to participate economically and socially and to manage life-transitions through increased engagement, coordinated whole of government policy advice and targeted support services.

Participants from some non-RSD communities have attended National Indigenous Leadership Workshops where the focus has been on including participants from RSD sites. Another 13 leadership/community governance workshops have been held in and for RSD communities in the Northern Territory for 248 participants.

Several other Indigenous Leadership and Governance projects were funded through the Northern Territory State Office.

7.3. Commonwealth Ombudsman Support

The Ombudsman's office has provided independent oversight and a complaints service for the NTER and other Indigenous programs in the Northern Territory (NT) since August 2007.

NTER has formally finished, but the Government will continue a number of programs and investment in the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory initiative. The Ombudsman's Office will not continue a dedicated role in the Stronger Futures programs.

The funding previously received under the NTER allowed the office to conduct outreach to Indigenous communities in the NT to ensure people had access to an independent complaints service and so that we could gain better insight as to the impacts of services and programs at the local level.

Over the past five years, the Ombudsman's office has investigated complaints, worked with agencies to resolve systemic issues, established relationships with a range of stakeholders and visited 73 prescribed communities and town camps in the NT at least once. This work has allowed us to gain a unique insight into the impacts of government programs on Indigenous people in the NT and as a result we have facilitated the early identification and resolution of a range of administrative problems.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman's report for the January-June 2012 period (see Appendix B) provides some examples from this reporting period of cases where our office identified problems in government administration and obtained remedies for those affected.

8. Income management

Income management is not a measure under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement. The inclusion of Income management in this report is indicative of the fact that the program compliments and enhances a range of measures under the Agreement.

Income management was first introduced in 2007 as part of the NTER. In 2010 the non-discriminatory model of income management was introduced across the Northern Territory, and funding for NTER income management and related services ceased at 30 June 2010.

Prior to the introduction of the non-discriminatory model in 2010, income management only affected people in receipt of income support or family assistance payments who lived in the 73 NTER communities, their associated outstations, or any of the 10 NTER town camp regions of the Northern Territory. Because income management has an impact on the lives of a significant number of vulnerable people living in the Northern Territory, its ongoing progress continues to be reported in conjunction with the NTER measures.

The non-discriminatory model of income management aims to provide financial stability to people who are vulnerable or at risk of harmful behaviour. It is targeted to income support recipients who are likely to benefit from income management. Exemptions are available for full-time students and apprentices, people with a sustained history of workforce participation, and parents who can demonstrate their children are attending school or receiving support for their development in early childhood.

Income management works by ensuring a proportion of income support and family assistance payments cannot be spent on excluded items, comprising alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling goods and activities. Money that is not spent on excluded goods is available to be spent on necessities, including food, housing, utilities, clothing and medical care. There is no restriction on use of the proportion of a person's payments that is not income managed.

Income management provides a tool to stabilise people's lives and ease immediate financial stress. Stabilising people's lives is an important step to removing the barriers to participation in community and work.

Income management does not change a person's payment entitlements; it only changes the way they receive their payments.

8.1. Expenditure through Income Management

Key Developments

- As at 29 June 2012, there were 17,553 people on income management in the Northern Territory;
- Almost one quarter (4,052 of 17,553) of all people on income management in the Northern Territory chose to participate voluntarily; and
- As at 29 June 2012, a total of 2,403 people were not participating in income management as they had been granted exemptions.

Progress

There were a total of 17,553 people on income management in the Northern Territory as at the 29 June 2012. Of these:

- 4,052 (23.1%) chose to participate in Voluntary Income Management;
- 51 (0.3%) were on the Child Protection Measure;
- 139 (0.8%) were on the Vulnerable Measure; and
- 13,311 (75.8%) were on the Parenting/Participation Measure. Of these:
 - 9,136 were on the Long Term Welfare Payment Recipient Measure; and
 - 4,175 were on the Disengaged Youth Measure.

Under the new model, people who voluntarily participate in income management are eligible for an incentive of \$250 at the end of each six months that they participate as an added encouragement to budget and save. As at 29 June 2012, a total of 11,692 incentive payments had been made across the Northern Territory, equating to \$2,923,000.00.

As at 29 June 2012, most people on income management in the Northern Territory received Newstart Allowance (43%), Disability Support Pension (16.2%) and Parenting Payment Single (13.8%). Around a third (35.7%) of people on income management also received Family Tax Benefit (FTB).

Income Management

The non-discriminatory model of income management extends to people across the Northern Territory aimed at those in most need for support, including those with a high risk of social isolation, poor money management skills, and those likely to participate in risky behaviours. The model is aimed at long-term unemployed, disengaged youth, people assessed as vulnerable by a Centrelink social worker, or referred by a child protection worker. People can also volunteer if they are not subject to a compulsory measure. It is also being trialled in parts of Western Australia and Queensland. From 1 July 2012 income management will be extended to five new locations across Australia as part of the measures announced in the 2011-12 Budget.

The child protection measure is as an additional tool for the Northern Territory Department of Children and Families in their work with families, with a particular focus on neglect cases. Under this measure, Northern Territory child protection workers determine whether or not income management would be helpful to a particular individual or family. They make a referral to Centrelink to income manage an individual or family, and then determine how long the child protection income management is to be applied, ranging from three to 12 months.

To provide greater support to people who are income managed, the Government has allocated over \$50 million to expand financial literacy initiatives, as part of the income management model. This includes access to budgeting and financial literacy training, financial counselling, matched savings incentives and other financial management support services.

8.2. BasicsCards²⁶

The BasicsCard is a PIN-protected card which uses the existing EFTPOS system and enables people to easily access their income managed funds. It is available for use at 6,788 merchants nationally. The BasicsCard may be used to purchase any items available through an approved merchant, except for excluded items – alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling goods and activities.

Key Developments

- As at 29 June 2012, 97% (18,671 out of 19,182) of all people on income management had an active BasicsCard.
- As at 29 June 2012, people have spent over \$493 million using the BasicsCard, primarily at stores that mainly sell food (72.6%), clothing (14.8%) and fuel (6.3%).
- As at 29 June 2012, there were 6,788 approved BasicsCard merchants across Australia.

Progress

Of the 284,107 BasicsCards that have been issued since September 2008, 222,411 (78.9%) were replacement cards. Lost cards accounted for the majority (76.6%) of these cases where replacement cards were issued, followed by damaged (13.3%) and stolen cards (3.8%). Of all BasicsCard transactions made since September 2008, 82.5% of transactions were successful. Of the 17.5% failed transactions, 73% were due to insufficient funds, with the remainder due to either invalid PIN entered used at a terminal not activated for BasicsCard, the card had been cancelled; or the transaction exceeded the daily spend limit, currently set at \$1500.²⁷

Issues

From 1 July 2010 everyone who had a BasicsCard was successfully transitioned to the new BasicsCard with its added security including the person's name, PIN APPROVAL ONLY and No Signature Authorisation all printed on the card. Merchants were also successfully transitioned to accept the new BasicsCard. In response to feedback from people on income management, eligibility for merchants has been expanded to include toy stores and the list of excluded goods now includes home brew kits and concentrates.

The BasicsCard is one of many payment mechanisms for spending income managed money. In the event of an EFTPOS outage, FaHCSIA and Centrelink make alternative arrangements for people to access their income managed funds.

In the past, determining their BasicsCard balance has been a major issue for some people. This can also have flow on impacts on stores when people do not know their balances try to purchase more than they can afford. In response to this issue,

²⁶ Please note that all BasicsCard data is Australia wide, not Northern Territory specific.

FaHCSIA and Centrelink have provided a range of options for people to check their balance.

People can check their BasicsCard balance via the Income Management Line (13 2594) which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. People can also phone the 1800 number (1800 057 111) which is free from home phones. There are facilities available in Centrelink offices for people to check their BasicsCard balance at no cost to them. People can also find out their balance by accessing the Centrelink website (www.centrelink.gov.au). People also have the option of requesting that their balance is printed on receipts when they shop at participating stores.

Community stores and some other stores have hot-linked phones which provide direct access to the Income Management Line to check their BasicsCard balance and to speak to a Centrelink Customer Service Adviser if required.

Ten purpose built BasicsCard kiosks had been installed in the following locations across the NT: two in Alice Springs, two in Casuarina and one each in Bathurst Island, Darwin, Karama, Katherine, Palmerston and Wadeye. A further nine kiosks are also operational in other states of Australia.

Appendix A - Youth in Communities Project Information

Funded Organisation	Communities	Total Funding GST excl.	Funding Period	Project Description
AFL NT	Wadeye Galiwin'ku	\$390,000	2 years 2010-11 and 2011-12	AFL Regional Development Program. Funding for a regional development manager working in communities to establish and coordinate competitions, organise coaching and umpiring courses and promote healthy, active lifestyles.
AMSANT Inc / Malabam Health Board Aboriginal Corporation	Maningrida	\$875,000	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Provide a youth service at Maningrida employing a Coordinator, Manager and two youth workers.
Australian Red Cross Society Northern Territory Division	Daly River Nguiu Gunbalanya Angurugu Wadeye	\$4,989,592	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Funding for one fully qualified youth worker, and two Indigenous trainee youth workers in each location.
Australian Sports Commission	Gapuwiyak Wadeye Yeundumu Gunbalanya Nguiu	\$500,000	2 years 2010-11 and 2011-12	The Sport Demonstration Projects will seek to trial a best practice model for delivering sport focused diversion activities through improved whole of government coordination and the use of place based approach to service delivery to build community capacity.
East Arnhem Shire Council	Angurugu	\$442,871	1 year 2009-10	Upgrading of sport and recreation outside activity area including fencing, shade, new computers and air-conditioning.

Funded Organisation	Communities	Total Funding GST excl.	Funding Period	Project Description
East Arnhem Shire Council	Galiwin'ku	\$1,134,634	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Two youth workers and two youth worker trainees. Some maintenance to the drop in centre. Temporary accommodation for two youth workers at the Galiwin'ku Government Business Manager Complex until 1/10/2010. Accommodation will then be provided by the Shire.
East Arnhem Shire Council	Yirrkala, Mililingimbi Ramingining Gapuwiyak Umbakumba	\$2,384,233	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Diversiory programs - discos, movie nights, workshops, sporting programs, youth leadership programs, community based and shire wide youth forums, youth referrals, self-harm intervention reduction of substance misuse, drop in centre activities, and bush trips/camps.
East Arnhem Shire Council	Ramingining Angurugu Galiwinku Mililingimbi Umbakumba Gapuwiyak	\$341,640	1 year 2009-10	Infrastructure upgrades including minor renovations and repairs to a youth worker dwelling, exercise equipment for health and fitness programs, flooring and insulation for music shed, tractor type sprinkler and shade structure for the Gapuwiyak oval, fit-out to drop in centre at Mililingimbi and upgrade of youth hall toilet block at Umbakumba.
Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island Enterprises Aboriginal Corporation	Umbakumba Angurugu	\$250,000	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Youth strategy will be developed to coordinate existing services, identify gaps, and support leadership development opportunities for youth.
Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation	Elliott	\$169,074	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Engage at risk disengaged young people through programs and services including alternative education programs, diversion programs, case management, sport and recreation, life skills, training to employment programs, alcohol and other drug awareness programs, access to health programs, court advocacy and police support.

Funded Organisation	Communities	Total Funding GST excl.	Funding Period	Project Description
Laynhapuy Homelands Association Inc.	25 different communities in Laynhapuy Homelands	\$1,880,952	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Youth development program that links with supporting and mentoring youth by providing diversionary programs and social planning programs. Three full time positions will mentor four trainee Indigenous youth development officers.
MacDonnell Shire Council	Areyonga, Papunya Haasts Bluff Hermannsburg Kintore, Mt Liebig	\$4,732,115	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Youth workers and Indigenous trainee workers at: Areyonga, Haasts Bluff, Hermannsburg, Kintore, Mount Liebig, Papunya. Staff for headquarters.
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council	Imanpa Kaltukatjara Apatula Mutitjulu	\$2,592,455	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Diversionary and early intervention services for 15-20 year olds including after school and school holiday programs, safety and healthy activities, personal development and case management of youth at risk. Youth development officers and part time Anangu youth development officers will be based in these four communities.
Roper Gulf Shire Council	Ngukurr Numbulwar Borrooloola	\$1,886,765	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Training of Indigenous youth into certified youth worker positions in the three communities. Build on current sport and recreation programs which offer recreational activities, before and after school care and holiday programs. Provide case management which will work closely with social workers, the health centre, school and other social program activities.
Victoria Daly Shire Council	Nauiyu (Daly River)	\$16,676	1 year 2009-10	Minor upgrade infrastructure for an after-hours recreation facility for youths aged 10-20 years. Including: kitchen bench, shelving, stove and range hood, multiple water fountains for sport and recreation hall and swimming pool, sports equipment and television.
Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation	Lajamanu Nyirripi Willowra Yuendumu	\$254,281	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Funding will provide for the employment of one Outreach coordinator who will act as a supervisor for the existing outreach youth worker team which comprises of two youth workers in each of the specified communities. The Outreach coordinator will be based in Yuendumu.

Funded Organisation	Communities	Total Funding GST excl.	Funding Period	Project Description
Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation	Lajamanu	\$226,024	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Funding for one youth worker who will work in conjunction with an existing youth worker funded by Kurra Corporation until 2012 and the Mt. Theo management team. Both positions will assist youth specifically targeting those aged 12-20 years. The youth worker will work with the outreach worker in Yuendumu and with other local trainees.
Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation	Lajamanu	\$1,215,000	1 year 2009-10	The construction of a duplex for youth worker accommodation Renovation of the existing hall/youth centre. Construction of roofing to existing basketball facility. Employment of a Project manager. Electrical fittings/fixtures, shelving, security doors and windows, air conditioning to gym and general repairs and maintenance.
West Arnhem Shire Council	Gunbalanya	\$105,602	1 year 2009-10	Construction of the extension and upgrade to a dedicated Youth diversion activity space for Indigenous males aged 10 - 20 year old in Gunbalanya.
Young Men's Christian Association of the Top End Inc.	Katherine area: Jilkmingan, Binjari Barunga, Beswick, Manyallaluk, Kalano Rockhole, Kybrook Farm, Werenbun	\$884,397	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	The funding will provide a program that aims to develop manual arts skills, foster self-confidence and knowledge and enable participants to reintegrate into the school system. The target group will be youth aged between 10-14 years and will focus on Indigenous youth who are identified as youth at risk and who are engaging in anti-social behaviours and are showing a high rate of truancy at school.
Young Men's Christian Association of the Top End Inc	Palmerston	\$685,020	3 years 2009-10 to 2011-12	Funding will provide for a youth education and employment program and diversionary activities for youth aged 10-16 not in mainstream education to be delivered in Palmerston and surrounding areas. Sessions will be held in the drop in centre from Monday to Thursday with additional activities such as overnight camps and day excursions.

Appendix B - Commonwealth Ombudsman's Report

The Ombudsman's office has provided independent oversight and a complaints service for the NTER and other Indigenous programs in the Northern Territory (NT) since August 2007. The NTER has ceased however a number of programs will continue under the Government's Stronger Futures in the NT initiative. The office did not receive funding to continue its dedicated role in relation to Stronger Future programs in the NT. The funding previously received under the NTER allowed the office to conduct outreach to Indigenous communities in the NT to ensure people had access to an independent complaints service and so that we could gain better insight as to the impacts of services and programs at the local level.

Over the past five years, the Ombudsman's office has investigated complaints, worked with agencies to resolve systemic issues, established relationships with a range of stakeholders and visited 73 prescribed communities and town camps in the NT at least once. This work has allowed us to gain a unique insight into the impacts of government programs on Indigenous people in the NT and as a result we have facilitated the early identification and resolution of a range of administrative problems.

Below are some examples from this reporting period of cases where this office identified problems in government administration and obtained remedies for those affected.

Community building wrongly handed to the shire was returned

Ms A complained to this office that the local shire had taken over a building which belonged to the parish and despite her efforts to raise this with the shire and the Government Business Manager, she had not been successful in having the building returned to the parish.

Our investigation established that when the local community councils were replaced by the shires, FaHCSIA, as the administrator of the Commonwealth's statutory five year lease, granted permission to the shires to allow them to use the assets and buildings previously used by the community council for local government business and services.

In granting this permission to the shires, FaHCSIA relied on lists of assets and buildings that the NT government provided, identifying which houses and buildings were noted as being used for shire business. FaHCSIA's permission to the shire was only valid to the extent there was not a pre-existing interest over a property. However, prior to issuing the permission to the shire, FaHCSIA did not inform the community of its proposed actions or consult with them to establish whether there were in fact any pre-existing interests over any of the properties identified for shire business. Consequently, communities were unaware that FaHCSIA had granted permission to the shire to use assets and buildings in the community for shire business until some years later, and the community did not have the opportunity to dispute the shire's use of assets such as community houses or buildings.

As a result of this complaint, FaHCSIA convened a meeting between the parish and the shire and an agreement was reached that the land and building would be returned to the parish. FaHCSIA also provided information to the community via flyers

and a factsheet to inform people about plans for community housing, buildings and property after the five year leases expire.

One size does not fit all – Individualised service assists an IM customer

Mr B complained to our office in January 2012 that Income Management (IM) was causing him financial difficulties. He said that he had unsuccessfully sought an exemption from IM. He explained that he lives on the property of a mining company and has limited living expenses: he does not pay rent, phone or electricity bills. Due to his limited living expenses, Mr B was having difficulty using all of his IM funds to pay for priority goods. Mr B had been raising this problem with Centrelink for some time. But the options suggested by Centrelink, such as transferring funds to a store so that Mr B could shop at the store using his IM funds did not resolve the ongoing problem for Mr B.

We acknowledged that Mr B did not qualify for an exemption from IM. However, after discussing this matter with Mr B, we identified that a core issue for him was that his living circumstances were such that he was able to meet all of his priority needs with only part of his IM funds. This meant there was a portion of funds which remained in his IM account which he could not easily access because of his remote locality or utilise due to his minimal living expenses. We raised with Centrelink whether it was able to consider Mr B for unrestricted cash payments — an option allowing Centrelink to provide IM funds to a customer via cash payments where the customer could demonstrate that their priority needs had been met. After facilitating contact between Mr B and Centrelink, Centrelink arranged for Mr B to receive regular unrestricted cash payments.

Houses made safe after lengthy delays

Mr C and Mr D, two people who live in different remote NT communities, complained about delays in the NT government undertaking modifications to their houses which were needed to make them safe. Both Mr C and Mr D had disabilities and used motorised scooters. An NT agency had assessed both houses and determined that modifications in the form of ramps, hand rails and changes to the bathrooms were required. In early to mid-2011, the agency notified the NT government of the required modifications by sending reports with recommendations.

In February 2012, when this office received the complaints, we established that no action had been taken to progress these modifications. Following an investigation, a work order was issued on 20 February 2012 and the majority of the work was completed in March 2012.

We expressed concern to FaHCSIA and the NT government that these complaints highlighted weaknesses in their management of disability modifications and repairs and maintenance of houses. FaHCSIA and DHLGRS advised that it had engaged consultants to report on the end-to-end process for the completion of works and that it was taking steps to strengthen its processes for managing disability modification and repair and maintenance requests.

Compensation arrangements honoured

Mr E complained that FaHCSIA had not honoured a compensation agreement relating to accidental damage of a sacred site. Community compensation had been agreed in the form of a tractor and a truck, and a storage compound to house the vehicles. The Shire purchased the vehicles with money from FaHCSIA, but then used them in other communities until the truck broke down. The compound was not built.

We established that the terms of the compensation had not been documented at the time the compensation arrangements were made. Following our investigation, FaHCSIA agreed to meet with the parties, formalise the terms of the compensation arrangements and discuss guidelines surrounding the usage and storage of the tip truck and tractor. The truck has since been repaired and the storage compound built.

Importance of accessible and effective complaints mechanisms

Independent research commissioned by this office supports the feedback we have received from Indigenous people in the NT— that is, they have valued the opportunity to raise issues with us and have them investigated by an independent agency; they have valued the face to face approach and have felt more comfortable to discuss issues or raise complaints in person; and that they are motivated to raise issues even where their circumstance cannot be changed but where it may lead to improvements for others. We commissioned independent research to improve Ombudsman services to Indigenous Australians. The findings are applicable to all agencies and this research can be found on our website, together with our own observations of areas for improvement in agency communication and engagement with Indigenous communities.²⁸

- This office has consistently relayed to agencies the need to have robust and effective complaints mechanisms in place. Complaints provide a rich source of information about the service delivery experience from the perspective of the end user. They provide an opportunity for agencies to identify problems early and take remedial action. For those agencies working with remote Indigenous communities, extra attention needs to be given to ensuring any complaints service is accessible to those living remotely. Agencies have a responsibility to ensure pathways to complain or seek information are visible and understood by all people who are affected by an agency's programs or services;
- An accessible complaints service requires more than a dedicated 1800 number or local government official who people can talk to. Accessible and meaningful complaints services for Indigenous people in the NT should also feature:

²⁸ Independent research: Improving services to Indigenous communities.

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/media-releases/show/207>

- Agencies getting the message to people that they value complaints and feedback, that they see complaints as an opportunity to improve, that it is ok for people to complain and that their complaint will be taken seriously. This will assist to dispel any misconceptions that there is no point in complaining as agencies do not welcome complaints;
- Where more than one agency is involved in a program or service or where an agency has contracted a third party to provide a service, complaints need to be dealt with holistically with a firm focus on providing a remedy for the individual;
- Government officials who interact with the public should be encouraged to listen to people's questions, queries or personal circumstances and use the interaction as an opportunity to assess whether the person has experienced problems or issues with a service or a process. It is often difficult for people to articulate their complaint or know that their circumstances warrant complaining. Government officials, who know their agency's business, should be proactive in considering whether there are adverse impacts or concerns resulting from their agency's programs, services or decisions;
- Agencies need well established working relationships with stakeholders, representatives and advocates to assist them to identify and resolve issues on behalf of their clients;
- Using interpreters when talking to people where English may not be their first language to ensure the agency understands the person's concern or personal circumstances and that the person understands their options;
- Taking the opportunity to explain to people the program, service, process, obligation or entitlement to ensure they understand how it works and what they can do if they are concerned or dissatisfied;
- Focusing on identifying a remedy for the person quickly and taking action to fix a problem;
- Managing the complainant's expectations as to possible remedies or outcomes and having these discussions early with the person to avoid disappointment;
- The capacity for an agency to look over complaints and identify common themes or systemic problems requiring action;
- The ability for frontline staff to escalate a complex or intractable matter to a more senior officer for attention and/or approval to take the necessary action to fix;
- Encouraging staff to problem solve and re-build relationships with clients and the public where things have gone wrong;
- Ensuring there is local advertising and contact information about complaints processes and avenues for raising concerns with an agency;
- Establishing agreed ways of communicating with people about their complaint so that a person knows how and when they should expect to hear from the agency; and

- Providing written information to people about decisions or outcomes.

Providing an accessible complaints and review process is a fundamental component of good public administration. The Ombudsman's office is committed to working with agencies to improve internal complaint handling, with a particular focus on accessibility for Indigenous people living in remote NT communities.

Complaints investigated by this office throughout the duration of the NTER and Closing the Gap initiatives in the NT, have identified a number of important areas of public administration requiring improvement. We have valued the opportunity to work closely with Indigenous people, stakeholders and agencies to improve services, programs and government decision making.

Although our resources will not extend to continuing our extensive outreach program to remote Indigenous communities in the NT, we are considering options to ensure that our independent oversight of *Stronger Futures in the NT* continues.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AGD	Attorney General's Department
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AMSANT	Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance Northern Territory
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drug
CBI	Community Based Interpreters
CCF	Competence and Capability Framework
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program
CHCI	Child Health Check Initiative
CNP	Child Nutrition Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
DCF	Department of Children and Families (Northern Territory)
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DHF	Department of Health and Families (Northern Territory)
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
DoJ	Department of Justice (Northern Territory)
DOU	Dog Operation Unit
EHSDI	Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FTB	Family Tax Benefit
GBM	Government Business Manager
HSDA	Health Service Delivery Areas
IEO	Indigenous Engagement Officer
IPSS	Indigenous Parenting Support Services
ISP	Intensive Support Playgroup
ItG	Invest To Grow
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program

LSP	Locational Supported Playgroup
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOS	Mobile Outreach Services
MCPT	Mobile Child Protection Team
NSA	Newstart Allowance
NTAHKPI	Northern Territory Aboriginal Health Key Performance Indicators
NTAHF	Northern Territory Aboriginal Health Forum
NTAIS	Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service
NTNER	<i>Northern Territory National Emergency Response (Act 2007)</i>
RAFCP	Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Program
RAFCW	Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Worker
RAHC	Remote Area Health Corps
RPES	Remote Participation and Employment Services
RSD	Remote Service Delivery
SAIDs	Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks
SIHIP	Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program
SNP	School Nutrition Program
YA(o)	Youth Allowance (other)

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