



Ministerial Taskforce on  
Aboriginal Affairs



# **Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs**

## **Community Consultation Report**

### **Aboriginal Affairs**

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## 1. Executive Summary

In August 2011, the NSW Government announced the establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (the Taskforce or the MTAA). The Taskforce has been established to develop a new Aboriginal affairs strategy by the end of 2012.

As part of the development of a new Aboriginal affairs strategy, the Taskforce undertook extensive community consultation during December 2011 to March 2012. The purpose of this report is to provide summary of the information and data that arose out of the community consultation process. This community consultation comprised of fourteen community forums held across the State and a written submission process in response to three Community Discussion Papers.

As at 24 April 2012, a total of **201** submissions on the MTAA's terms of reference have been received, including the detailed written record of the community consultation forums. The total number of identified responses or comments in relation to the MTAA Terms of Reference arising from all of the submissions was **4,145**.<sup>1</sup>

This report was subjected to inter-agency consultation in April 2012, and has informed the deliberations of the Taskforce.

For this preliminary report, the following analysis has been undertaken:

- An overview analysis of submissions (see section 5).
- A review and summary of all comments (responses) raised in relation to the three specific Terms of Reference of the MTAA - service delivery and accountability, education and employment (see section 6).
- A number of common themes emerged during the community consultation process which cut across or are common to all of the Terms of Reference. These themes were identified and responses relevant to each theme collated. A review and summary of all comments (responses) in relation to these cross cutting themes has been undertaken (see section 7).
- The community consultation forums and written submissions raised a number of specific service delivery issues not directly related to the MTAA's Terms (for instance issues raised in terms of health outcomes, youth services, aged services, and transport). These responses have been reviewed and summarised (see section 8).
- As part of the written submission process, the Taskforce encouraged submitters to provide examples of local solutions or programs which have had a positive impact on Aboriginal communities (see section 9 and Appendix C).

It should be noted that it is proposed that the findings of this consultation report be used to: inform the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan currently being developed; inform the meeting papers and deliberations of the Taskforce; inform the interim Taskforce report that will be released publically as part of the second round of consultations scheduled to take place in August 2012; and inform the final Aboriginal affairs strategy scheduled for release by the end of 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Each submission was reviewed and particular comments or responses coded and categorised. The total number of identified responses or comments was 4,145.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of meeting participants and not necessarily the NSW Government.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 *A new Aboriginal affairs strategy*

In August 2011, the NSW Government announced the establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (the Taskforce or the MTAA). The Taskforce has been established to develop a new NSW Aboriginal affairs strategy by the end of 2012. It will include concrete reforms around the following Terms of Reference:

1. to improve service delivery and accountability in Aboriginal affairs, with particular consideration of the recommendations of the Auditor General's report on Two Ways Together, and other arising reports;
2. to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW; and
3. to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW.

The NSW Government believes that effective reform in these areas is central to addressing Aboriginal disadvantage. While there are undoubtedly other issues that must be addressed such as juvenile detention rates, health and housing, they will be considered through the strength-based framework of education and employment.

### 2.2 *Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs*

The NSW Government is committed to bringing the voice of Aboriginal people to the core of Government. As a result, the Taskforce membership includes both senior Ministers and senior Aboriginal leaders, who will be making decisions together. The Taskforce includes the following independent Aboriginal advisors:

- Mr Danny Lester, Chief Executive of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- Professor Shane Houston, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) of the University of Sydney
- Ms Maydina Penrith, former member NSW Youth Advisory Council

In addition **Mr Stephen Ryan** represents the Coalition of Peak Aboriginal Organisations (CAPO) and provides the following Aboriginal community organisations with a voice in Taskforce deliberations - NSW Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Aboriginal Legal Service, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW, the NSW Aboriginal Child, Family & Community Care Secretariat NSW and Link-Up NSW.

The Taskforce also includes seven Ministers responsible for key service delivery portfolios, as well as the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Director General of the Department of Education and Communities and the General Manager of Aboriginal Affairs.

A full list of the members of the Taskforce can be found at Appendix A.

### 2.3 *Objective of this Report*

As part of the development of a new Aboriginal affairs strategy, the Taskforce undertook extensive community consultation from December 2011 to March 2012. The purpose of this report is to provide summary of the information and data that arose out of the community consultation process. This report was subject to inter-agency consultation in April 2012 and has informed the deliberations of the Taskforce.

The limitations of this preliminary analysis include the following:

- Very late written submissions received after 24 April 2012 have not been included in this analysis.
- Given the timeframes, the analysis of the submissions undertaken for this report has been largely qualitative and limited to providing a summary of the information and data.

It should be noted that it is proposed that the findings of this consultation report be used to: inform the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan currently being developed; inform the meeting papers and deliberations of the Taskforce; inform the interim Taskforce report that will be released publically as part of the second round of consultations scheduled to take place in August 2012; and inform the final Aboriginal affairs strategy scheduled for release by the end of 2012.

### 3. Community Consultation Plan

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring a strong community input into the Taskforce's deliberations and the development of the new Aboriginal affairs strategy. To achieve this, a comprehensive Aboriginal Community Consultation Plan was developed, including the following key components:

- awareness raising;
- a series of community consultation meetings; and
- a public submission process.

The stated purpose of the Consultation Plan is to:

*take the feedback and advice from the Aboriginal community to inform the development of the new Aboriginal Affairs Strategy so that it reflects Aboriginal community needs and culture, and facilitates the delivery of improved outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW in education, employment and service delivery from NSW Government agencies to Aboriginal clients and the community.*

#### 3.1 Awareness raising

General awareness raising about the establishment of the Taskforce, the development of the new Aboriginal affairs strategy and the proposed community consultations was undertaken in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to):

- Information distributed to key Aboriginal community stakeholders and organisations, including via e-mails, flyers and letters.
- Information on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW website.
- Stories in Aboriginal media such as Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Tracker and Koori Radio.
- Media releases by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Taskforce.

#### 3.2 Community Consultation Meetings

Fourteen community forums were held in urban and regional locations in January and February 2012. The meetings were open to any members of the local community to attend. The dates, location and number of people who attended each forum are outlined below in Table 1.

*Table 1 - Community meetings - dates, location and attendees*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate number of attendees</b>
24 January 2012	Redfern	150
31 January 2012	Liverpool	150
7 February 2012	Dubbo	200
7 February 2012	Tamworth	150
8 February 2012	Mt Druitt	200
9 February 2012	Newcastle	150
10 February 2012	Coffs Harbour	200

14 February 2012	Wagga Wagga	80
14 February 2012	Griffith	75
15 February 2012	Wollongong	70
16 February 2012	Nowra	50
17 February 2012	Narooma	50
22 February 2012	Lismore	80
24 February 2012	Broken Hill	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>Consultations: 14</b>	<b>Attendees (approx): 1805</b>

The community forums were promoted in the following ways:

- Media releases sent to relevant local media including print, radio and regional television.
- Information on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW website.
- Information distributed to key Aboriginal community stakeholders and organisations, including e-mails and flyers.
- Letters sent directly to relevant local Aboriginal community organisations inviting participation, including to all local Aboriginal land councils (LALCs).
- Advertisements placed in a variety of local print and Aboriginal media.

The community meetings were focused on sharing information and developing ideas and options aligned to the Terms of Reference. Each of the community consultation meetings was approximately three hours long and led by an independent facilitator.

A standard agenda was developed for the community consultations to ensure consistency (see Appendix B).

Ministerial Taskforce members, including the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, attended as many community forums as Ministerial and parliamentary commitments would allow. As a result, seven community consultation forums had Ministerial attendance.

At each community consultation meeting a panel of spokespeople, made up of CAPO members with different areas of expertise, assisted with the facilitated discussion. Participation was invited from attendees through an open-microphone format, whereby participants shared their thoughts and experiences in response to the issues raised by the Taskforce's Terms of Reference. Discussion however was not limited to the Terms of Reference.

Scribes recorded each community consultation forum. A detailed report was prepared from each consultation forum, and summary reports for each forum were made available on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW website.

In addition to the general community consultations forums, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) hosted a youth forum in conjunction with their 2012 Annual State Conference. This forum provided an opportunity to feed the views of young people, particularly concerning education, into the work of the Taskforce.

### 3.2 *Written Submission process*

In addition to the community consultation forums, written submissions were also invited from community members, interested organisations and individuals. To facilitate the written submission process, a series of *Community Discussion Papers* were released which focused on the Taskforce's Terms of Reference. The *Community Discussion*

*Papers* provided the public with the opportunity to comment on the key issues, as well as suggest possible solutions. In making a submission, the Taskforce encouraged participants to:

- provide innovative solutions to addressing some of the issues raised in the *Community Discussion Papers*;
- present new ideas, particularly those that are well-researched and supported by evidence; and
- provide examples of local solutions to issues raised in the *Community Discussion Papers* that have had a positive impact on the community.

The opportunity to make a written submission was promoted through:

- Information distributed to key Aboriginal community stakeholders and organisations, including e-mails and letters.
- Information on the Aboriginal Affairs NSW website.
- Stories in Aboriginal media such as Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Tracker and Koori Radio.
- Encouraging the lodging of written submissions during the community consultation forums.
- Media releases by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Taskforce.



## 4. Analysis methodology

### 4.1 Database of submissions

All written submissions received have been registered and entered into a database<sup>2</sup>. The detailed written records of all the comments made at each community consultation forum have also been entered as separate submissions.

The database allows each submission to be reviewed and particular comments or responses to be coded and categorised to assist analysis. The database also allows basic information about the submitters to be included eg location (regional, urban rural), age and type (eg individual or community group), if provided, allowing further analysis.

### 4.2 Analysis of data

For this preliminary report, the following analysis has been undertaken:

- An overview analysis of submissions (see section 5).
- A review and summary of all comments (responses) made in relation to the Terms of Reference of the MTAA - service delivery and accountability, education and employment (see section 6).
- Identification of common themes that emerged during the community consultation process which cut across or are common to all of the Terms of Reference. A review and summary of all comments in relation to these cross cutting themes has been undertaken of (see section 7).
- Identification of specific service delivery issues not directly related to the MTAA's Terms of Reference, for instance issues raised in terms of health outcomes, youth services, aged services, and transport (see section 8).
- As part of the written submission process, the Taskforce encouraged submitters to provide examples of local solutions or programs which have had a positive impact on Aboriginal communities (see section 9 and Appendix C).

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<sup>2</sup> Some submissions did not address the MTAA's Terms of Reference but contained information on existing programs and services and therefore could not be entered into the database. However, these submissions were considered in this analysis and summaries of these programs and services are included the *Table of Programs* at Appendix C.

## 5. Submissions - overview

### 5.1 Overall number of submissions

As at 24 April 2012, **201** individual submissions had been received. The detailed written records of the community consultation forums were treated as submissions and are included in this total.

For the purpose of analysis, each individual submission was reviewed to determine which of the MTAA's Terms of Reference the submission addressed. The community consultation database also allows each submission to be reviewed and particular comments or responses to be coded and categorised. The total number of identified responses or comments was **4,145**.

### 5.2 Who made submissions?

All responses were identified by the type of submitter. The submitter types included Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community groups and organisations, government agencies, individuals and local government (see Table 2).

*Table 2 - Responses by type of submitter*

Submitter	Percentage of total
Aboriginal community group (1)	4.4%
Aboriginal community organisation (2)	7.3%
Government agency	13.7%
Individual - Aboriginal	8.1%
Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)	5.2%
Local government	3.2%
Non-Aboriginal community organisation (3)	1.6%
Non-government organisation (4)	21.0%
Written record of community consultation meeting (5)	6.0%
School	1.2%
Individual - Non Aboriginal	1.6%
Industry	0.4%
Program submissions	6.9%
Unknown	19.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Notes:

- (1) Includes community working parties, community engagement groups and non incorporated Aboriginal community groups.
- (2) Includes Aboriginal peak bodies and Aboriginal service providers
- (3) Includes advocate groups and charities
- (4) Includes peak bodies and service providers
- (5) Includes the 14 Taskforce community consultation forums and the AECG Youth Forum.

As can be seen in Table 2, the written submission process attracted strong interest from the Aboriginal community with approximately 25% of submissions being made by Aboriginal groups, organisations or individuals. This was followed by non-Aboriginal organisations, who made up approximately 23% of all submissions.

### 5.3 Where did submitters live?

Submitters were asked to provide information on where they lived to enable an analysis of submissions based on the location of the submitter. Based on postcodes, locations were identified as either regional/remote or major city (see Table 3).

*Table 3 - Public submissions – by geographic location*

<b>Geographic location</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>	<b>No of responses</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
Major City (1)	17.7%	937	22.6%
Regional and Remote(2)	17.7%	1,088	26.2%
Undefined (3)	64.7%	2,120	51.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,145</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Notes:

(1) Includes Newcastle, Wollongong and greater Sydney

(2) Includes all of NSW excluding major cities

(3) Geographic location of the submitter was not provided, or could not be determined

As can be seen from Table 3, the geographic location of over half the submissions could not be determined, making future analysis of submissions on the basis of the location of submitters problematic. Where submitters identified geographic location, there was an even spread between major city and regional and remote.

### 5.4 Public submissions – by Terms of Reference

All responses in the public submissions, which were relevant to the Taskforce's Terms of Reference, were collated (see Table 4).

A review and summary of all comments raised in relation to the Terms of Reference of the MTAA (service delivery and accountability, education and employment) can be found at section 6.

*Table 4 - Public submissions – by terms of reference*

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<b>Percentage of total submissions</b>	<b>No of responses on the issue</b>	<b>Percentage of total responses</b>
Service delivery	38.7%	1,721	41.5%
Education	28.6%	1,475	35.6%
Employment	32.7%	949	22.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,145</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As can be seen at Table 4, the number of submissions which included responses on the MTAA's Terms of Reference, as well as the actual responses within submissions, was fairly evenly spread across the three MTAA Terms of Reference. The issue of service delivery however did attract more responses than any other Term of Reference.

### 5.5 Public submissions – by cross cutting themes

A number of common themes emerged during the community consultation process which cut across or are common to all the Terms of Reference. These themes were

identified and responses relevant to each theme collated. In addition a number of comments were raised during the community consultation in regard to specific service delivery issues not directly related to the MTAA's Terms of Reference, for instance issues raised in terms of health outcomes, justice and transport.

A description and analysis of the cross-cutting themes is outlined in Tables 5 and 6.

*Table 5 - Outline of the identified cross cutting themes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>What does it include</b>
<b>Respecting Aboriginal language, culture and heritage</b>	All issues related to Aboriginal culture and identity
<b>Community capacity building</b>	All issues associated with community capacity building and development of social capital
<b>Youth issues</b>	Any issues related to youth not specifically related to employment and education
<b>Elders</b>	Any issues related to elders not specifically related to employment and education
<b>Issues raised in regard to other specific services</b>	Issues raised in regard to specific services, not directly related to the Taskforce's ToRs of education and employment

A review and summary of all comments in relation to these cross cutting themes has been undertaken (see section 7), as well as a summary of the specific service delivery issues not related to the Terms of Reference (see section 8).

*Table 6 - Public submissions – by cross cutting themes*

<b>Cross cutting theme</b>	<b>No of responses</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
Respecting Aboriginal culture, language and heritage	720	18.3%
Community capacity building	939	23.9%
Youth issues	302	7.7%
Elders	140	3.6%
Issues raised about specific service delivery issues outside of the Terms of Reference	1,834	46.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,935</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As can be seen by Table 6, a significant percentage of submissions included comments on specific programs outside of the MTAA's Terms of Reference. Frequent recurring issues across all the responses included community capacity building and respecting Aboriginal culture, language and heritage.

## **6. Summary of submissions – Terms of Reference**

### **6.1 Overview - Service Delivery and Accountability**

A total of 1,721 comments or responses were received on the MTAA Term of Reference related to improving service delivery and accountability in Aboriginal affairs (see Table 4). An analysis and summary of the issues raised is outlined below.

#### **6.1.1 Summary of Public Consultations**

*Aboriginal representation in decision-making, service design and delivery*

##### Local level

It was emphasised throughout the consultations that Aboriginal people should drive and have ownership of services, from conception to delivery. Some submissions suggested ways to ensure that real partnering and collaboration with local Aboriginal communities is implemented. These included agencies and service providers entering into local MOUs with communities, the development of Aboriginal community service delivery protocols within government, and ensuring funding for programs was dependent on evidence of real collaboration and partnership, not “tick a box” consultation. It was also highlighted that Aboriginal communities need comprehensive data to be able to plan across a range of programs.

It was said that Aboriginal networking should be recognised and resourced to enable effective negotiation with government and non-government organisations (NGOs). The importance of Aboriginal peak bodies in representing community views on services was highlighted, although consultation participants asked how individual Aboriginal NGOs that are not part of a peak body could ensure their voice is heard.

The need for government to recognise that each community is different was reinforced. Submissions emphasised that consultation should be a genuine two way process, with ongoing dialogue which fostered relationships. Concern was expressed that decisions that come from the top down do not include Aboriginal knowledge and community aspirations, and it was emphasised that no-one represents a community better than the people who live in that community.

The need for strong Aboriginal community governance, with good representation from all family and gender groups within the community, and from peak body representatives, was highlighted. It was stated that government needs to listen to community and consult with Elders, not outsiders. The importance of local planning also highlighted because it's the only way to address local circumstances and community identified needs.

Submissions also highlighted the need to accept and recognise the diversity of views and opinions within Aboriginal communities. It was also noted that government consultation needs to be able to take account of broader community views if local governance arrangements do not represent the whole community.

A human rights based community development model was advocated as one way to ensure strong local Aboriginal community governance and control, and achieve

improved outcomes through self reliance and by empowering Aboriginal people to determine their own affairs at a community level.

Concern was raised that new community governance structures would be proposed as a result of the Taskforce's deliberations rather than building on and strengthening existing community representative bodies and structures such as local Aboriginal land councils (LALCs). It was suggested that existing community bodies such as LALCs could advise on service issues on behalf of their communities and that the role of LALCs should be formally expanded as the decision-making authority at the local level, with adequate funding. It was also highlighted that LALCs could be strengthened through the appointment of skilled, merit-based Boards.

It was noted that LALCs, Aboriginal NGOs and Partnership Communities should be supported to participate in NSW Government forums, particularly the Local Aboriginal Interagency Networks that bring service providers together in Aboriginal communities – and through the Australian Government Employee Network.

However other submissions raised issues about the representativeness, appropriateness and benefits of LALCs as local Aboriginal community governance bodies.

#### Regional level

At the regional level it was suggested that a network of CAPO members should be established to ensure effective planning and coordination of service delivery. It was also suggested that one community board in each region should be established to oversee regional service delivery. It was noted that strong leadership was needed, with clear accountability, credibility and governance standards. It was also recommended that a Western Sydney Aboriginal Organisation be established to improve service coordination and planning across the area.

#### Leadership

The critical importance of Aboriginal involvement and leadership in decision-making was emphasised. Aboriginal political engagement at the state and local level was also repeatedly identified as essential to real progress. It was said that “in Broome, 5 of the 10 councillors are Aboriginal and that this has led to a transformation of the community.”<sup>3</sup> It was proposed that designated Aboriginal seats be established in the NSW Parliament.

It was suggested that the Government develop an Aboriginal leadership program in partnership with expert Aboriginal organisations or individuals, and support the involvement of community members on boards and committees. It was also said that the NSW public sector could support Aboriginal leadership development through partnering with local Aboriginal organisations, and by empowering Aboriginal people in the field of consumer rights and obligations. The need for leadership programs at local, regional and national levels was emphasised during the consultation. It was suggested that a Koori Youth Foundation be established to nurture future Aboriginal leaders.

Submissions also highlighted that members of LALCs and other Aboriginal organisations need training in leadership, project management and governance. It was said that CEOs and Board members in particular also needed training, but noted that LALCs often had limited funds available after providing services to their

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted comment by anonymous participant

members. It was suggested that this could help improve the relationship between some LALCs and their communities.

Many submissions stressed the role of Elders within Aboriginal communities and the need to involve and consult with Elders in terms of the planning and implementation of service delivery. Engaging and consulting with Aboriginal young people, especially in terms of programs and services targeting Aboriginal youth, was also raised.

It was emphasised that building Aboriginal leadership depends on individual and community healing and addressing ongoing trauma issues. Rekindling the Spirit (KTS), a Lismore-based Aboriginal community controlled organisation aims to reduce family violence, crime and associated community breakdown by encouraging the perpetrators of violence to change their behaviour, within a supportive environment including clear rules for course participants. KTS was commended for fostering leadership strengths among other community members.

Community members expressed strong opposition to the Northern Territory Intervention and opposed the introduction of income management in Bankstown. It was said that removing Aboriginal people's right to make their own decisions is removing a basic human right.

#### *Strengthening the Aboriginal community controlled sector*

Submissions emphasised the importance and effectiveness of Aboriginal community controlled NGOs in delivering culturally appropriate, locally driven, flexible and cost effective services. Aboriginal communities expressed strong opposition to mainstreaming and urged that Aboriginal NGOs be supported to build their organisational capacity to deliver more services to Aboriginal people. It was emphasised that Aboriginal NGOs need longer term, sustained support and investment from government and the private sector to improve their service delivery. It was also noted that programs need longer lead-in time to allow effective and targeted strategies to be put in place. The need to support Aboriginal NGOs in terms of applying for grants and funding was also repeatedly raised.

Government was urged to consider providing preferred tendering arrangements to Aboriginal NGOs. It was suggested that the decentralisation of funding processes and assessment of applications is needed, to ensure appropriate community and Aboriginal representation on assessment panels. It was said that tender selection should be done in individual communities so that the process can respond to actual community needs and produce real results.

It was noted that greater recognition is needed of the contribution Aboriginal people are making in their communities. It was expressed that Aboriginal people should not still be expected to fulfil demanding roles as unpaid volunteers, particularly noting that communities sometimes expect Aboriginal workers in services to be accessible 24/7.

There were suggestions for more coordination between Aboriginal and mainstream NGOs that deliver comprehensive assessment and case management for Aboriginal communities to reduce intrusion and confusion for clients. It was suggested that secondments of Aboriginal people should take place across the NGO, government and private sectors to build the capacity of all sectors.

Waminda Womens' Health Service was commended for its leadership in educating the community and supporting positive work environments for youth.

#### *Building government accountability*

##### Coordination

Submissions identified that Aboriginal people are over-serviced yet "under-delivered." It was noted that governments need to work together to avoid duplication. This needs to involve transparent and open dialogue with Aboriginal people.

It was suggested that Aboriginal communities have many agreements with multiple levels of governments and their agencies. It was also noted that these service providers have common goals, but different approaches. It was suggested that there is a need for greater collaboration and coordination of services at the State Government level.

It was also noted that in some targeted areas/communities, there are often different levels of government. It was emphasised that overburdening communities with services can create workforce shortage implications and blur the responsibility for effective service delivery at community level between governments.

##### Funding arrangements

Concern was repeatedly expressed about the inadequacy and short-term nature of funding, and also about the discontinuation of successful Aboriginal programs on the basis that the service was no longer required, even though the community still identify a need. This was despite the fact that long-term approaches were required to properly address many of the complex issues facing Aboriginal communities.

A place-based and flexible approach to funding was supported, which would allow for regional variations to address local needs in different communities. It would also provide local program managers with the flexibility to respond to arising local issues.

##### Transparency and reporting

People urged greater transparency about the quality of services, performance of programs, and the implementation of state and federal agreements, and asked that reports be presented in a way that can be understood by communities. A report that lists all current programs, including the organisations responsible for the service delivery, was also requested. A comprehensive NSW and federal register of funded Aboriginal programs was suggested, including the ratio of funding for Aboriginal and mainstream organisations should be made public.

It was particularly noted that people living in remote communities want greater access to services and information on services. Submissions also suggested that government should provide regular feedback on programs and policies to Aboriginal communities.

Frustration was expressed that governments do not appear to take notice of the recommendations in successive reports over many years.

##### Accountability frameworks

Aboriginal Affairs was described as unable to hold government accountable since being downgraded to an office: "In its present form, AA is a toothless tiger ... only Premier's, and the Ombudsman ... strike fear into the hearts of SES officers." "An



accountability mechanism is necessary to ensure ... concrete reforms are achieved as a result of the Taskforce.”<sup>4</sup>

The NSWALC submission emphasised the need to develop a comprehensive government accountability framework at the local and state-wide level, and provided a suggested way forward to achieve this. This framework included the following elements:

- An over-arching independent state Aboriginal Advisory Committee comprising of Aboriginal leaders chosen by the community to provide independent advice to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs on the state-wide Aboriginal affairs strategy, and work with heads of agencies to review implementation and ensure accountability at the state-wide level.
- Development of local service delivery plans by local Aboriginal governance bodies and government with measurable targets, including expenditure and outcomes, with agencies accountable to local Aboriginal communities for delivery of services based on the local delivery plans.
- An annual program of publicly available and transparent audits of service delivery undertaken by the NSW Ombudsman’s Office and overseen by the state Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- Expanding and elevating the role of the Aboriginal Affairs NSW to achieve better whole-of-government approach to Aboriginal affairs and to strengthen service delivery.

It was suggested that an Aboriginal equivalent of the former Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement should be established, to create direct, public government accountability and reporting requirements addressing Aboriginal priorities. It was suggested that Aboriginal KPIs should be applied to senior NSW government staff contracts, as in South Australia. It was highlighted that program targets should be realistic, and funding conditions comprehensible, in plain English.

To improve two-way accountability, it was suggested that Aboriginal community representatives could sit on State Committees, and that NSW Government representatives should attend Community Working Party meetings.

It was said that service providers in government and community should undertake to ensure that nepotism will not override service delivery or business needs. It was said that well allocated or outstanding use of funding should be rewarded.

#### Evaluation and data

The need for evidence based planning and program design was emphasised through out the consultation. It was also noted that government, and mainstream and Aboriginal NGOs needed comprehensive data for effective planning and evaluation. It was suggested that improved and systematic data collection needs to be established, including undertaking longitudinal data collection.

#### Cultural awareness and understanding

Building cultural sensitivity and understanding within government was identified as necessary to ensuring that more appropriate programs are developed, rather than a quick fix approach. This involves improved Aboriginal cultural awareness and competency of staff at all levels within government agencies and service delivery providers. This includes mentoring of non-Aboriginal staff by Aboriginal staff and

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted comments by anonymous participants

cross cultural education and training (emphasising localised cross cultural understanding) for all staff.

It was also suggested that Government needs to recognise that it takes time to develop respect with Aboriginal communities, and that this takes resources and continuous travel to communities to build relationships and trust. It was also said that the issue of cultural safety is enormous. It was said that agency representatives who are to be sent to remote areas should participate in a cultural safety program prior to attending.

### *Improving access and choice in services*

#### Connecting services with communities

It was expressed that many service relationships with Aboriginal people involved poor customer service delivery, communication breakdown between agencies and their clients, cultural barriers and discrimination. Submissions suggested that funding agreements should require services to engage with community and that services funded for Aboriginal programs need to develop partnerships with local communities (for example organisations should develop Working with Aboriginal Communities Protocols). It was added that mainstream funding contracts should require services to both demonstrate a connection to the Aboriginal communities they service and report on how many Aboriginal people access their services.

It was also suggested that mainstream services should be required to complete an Aboriginal Access Plan. As part of their plan, service providers could set an Aboriginal access improvement target. The targets could take into account a combination of factors relevant to a service's circumstances, including:

- the numbers of Aboriginal people residing in the service area;
- the level of disadvantage in the Aboriginal population; and/or
- the numbers of Aboriginal clients already assisted by the service.

#### Workforce development

Effective Aboriginal workforce planning was identified as necessary to improve services. It was noted that every time a program is de-funded, many resources – capacity, knowledge, experience – are lost.

It was noted that the NSW Ombudsman had recommended a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for disadvantaged rural and remote locations. Recruitment panels should include Aboriginal members, including in NGOs. The need for workplace exchanges or job swaps between mainstream and Aboriginal organisations was also highlighted.

#### Improved local service delivery

It was said that agencies could provide better service to people at the grassroots level by having consultations at Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS), schools, employment agencies, and other places visited by community. Across consultations it was identified that the co-location of government services into multifunction centres could be a way of ensuring Aboriginal people can access a range of services easily in one location.

Where co-location is not available, multi-agency days could be conducted on a quarterly basis to inform the community about key services available to them such as police, health, education, and housing. The Aboriginal Community Information and

Assistance Days (ACIAD), lead by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), were described as successful in attracting community members to central locations to access services and information from NSW public sector agencies.

It was also suggested that locally based agency representatives should be based in regional or remote locations where departments do not have a full time presence to ensure service continuity and local relevance.

Primary care provided by mid north coast AMSs was commended as culturally appropriate and accessible, with the GP and visiting specialist services reducing the demand on some frontline services. The FaHCSIA funded Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Aboriginal Corporation (Deniliquin, Balranald) sources information for clients to access a wide range of services, and provides internet access for searches on services and jobs.

It was also suggested that all Aboriginal and mainstream NGOs and community care funding bodies have culturally appropriate complaints procedures to meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

The handling of cross border issues was criticised at both local and State Government levels. State border issues across NSW and Victoria were identified in Mildura, and council border issues were identified in Murrin Bridge which sits between two local government areas.

It was suggested that local councils should designate Aboriginal-specific roles and consult and negotiate extensively with Aboriginal communities about their needs and aspirations. This would also support local government services to be culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people.

#### Holistic approach to service delivery

It was emphasised that a holistic approach to services is needed. It was suggested that government policy was not flexible enough to empower Aboriginal people to live and deal with the complexities of everyday life, and that flexible frameworks to empower Aboriginal people are needed.

A holistic approach could address all the aspects of a person's life and wellbeing, such as financial management, social life, goal setting, physical and mental health and spirituality. It was suggested that this approach would assist people to cope with the levels of grief and loss in communities.

The need for services to address healing to help overcome trans-generational trauma among Aboriginal people was strongly emphasised. Addressing men's business and women's business was also a priority. However, it was made clear that "mega-services" based in large regional centres that provide infrequent drop-in service delivery do not meet community needs.

#### Infrastructure and other needs

The need to improve access to transport was repeatedly mentioned as fundamental for ensuring access to services, maintaining social networks and gaining employment. In regional and remote areas transport was often both inaccessible and unaffordable, while in urban areas it was simply unaffordable. The difficulty for Aboriginal people to get drivers' licences, due to lack of access to a car or a driving instructor, also continues to limit community access to services.

Information and communication technology (ICT) was identified as another infrastructure gap and it was suggested that the Commonwealth should develop an Indigenous ICT plan, with State/Territory components, including facilitating monitoring and evaluation of government performance.

The impact that sport and recreation can have in motivating and creating pathways to education and employment was recognised. It was also recommended that the rugby league domestic violence program should continue to be supported, as players are barred from playing if they are involved in domestic violence – a powerful motivation to stop the violence.

It was noted that the idea of seeking more corporate philanthropy for Aboriginal programs, particularly in regional areas, should also be explored.

Consultation participants commended Yenna Allowah Child and Family Centre, Mount Druitt (funded under a National Partnership Agreement), as a model for providing a culturally appropriate service. Everything from building design to services is informed by community advice. The service contract also requires that within three years Aboriginal leadership and governance structures need to be established.

The following services were also commended for improving service access and choices. The Aboriginal Maternal & Infant Health Strategy, for providing a range of services in partnership with community, using a holistic approach; local Aboriginal support groups in schools; the range of Brighter Futures programs targeting children; the partnership between AbSec and FACS recognising AbSec's advocacy role; the Lendlease program for its positive outcomes; Mooki Murris for its Aboriginal mentors who transformed the lives of Aboriginal boys, and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly.

## **6.2 Overview - Education**

A total of 1,475 responses were received on the Term of Reference related to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW (see Table 4). An analysis and summary of the issues raised is outlined below.

### **6.2.1 Summary of Public Consultations**

#### *Recognising diversity within communities*

The need to recognise the diversity of Aboriginal communities and to tailor education reform to suit local needs was frequently highlighted. It was also suggested that more opportunities be explored to introduce and use local Aboriginal words and phrases in educational settings.

It was suggested that the school system needs to be culturally contextualised to suit the needs of Aboriginal children. Creative learning environments and learning styles suitable to Aboriginal children are needed. Aboriginal specific schools and pre-schools were suggested as being better placed to service the needs of Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal Learning Kits were suggested. Developing these kits involves the mapping of stories, reflections and experiences to key learning areas. Members of

the Aboriginal community would present the material in school as part of a structured lesson.

It was widely expressed that the impact of family environments and inter-generational disadvantage on the education process need to be recognised. The impact of grief and loss on children's education was raised as a significant issue. It was recognised that absences were often due to funerals and people being too depressed to help their kids do the fundamentals. The result of trauma also led to too many Aboriginal kids coming to school with empty bags, and with no books, pencils or lunchboxes. There was also concern about the level of drug and alcohol use among kids, which also impacted on their schooling and attendance. The issue of school bullying was raised as an additional factor that impacted on attendance. Also it was noted that students prefer not to go to school when they are having difficulties in reading and writing.

### *Engagement and connections*

Concern was raised that schools need more accountability to the local community and it was suggested that Aboriginal communities should be able to pick who teach their children. The need to re-establish Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness (ASSPA) Committees (formerly DEEWR funded) was suggested because they were a useful conduit between the community and schools, and involved Aboriginal people in decision making. It was also suggested that schools need to participate in community working parties where they exist.

A holistic approach to education is required that involves family and community. It was said that schools need to be more proactive in engaging parents and carers, and recognise that some parents have trust and confidence issues when speaking to teachers. It was said that the enduring impact of children being removed from families still needs to be recognised, along with the issue that many Aboriginal families have had negative experiences from formal education. Positive reinforcement and positive approaches are needed to get parents involved in and valuing education.

In this context the employment of Aboriginal staff is a key element in establishing trust and facilitating increased participation. The Parent and Community Engagement Program (PACE) was highlighted as a good program for engaging parents, but concern was expressed that there is not enough funding to extend this program to other communities. It was also suggested that parents be more actively engaged on Personalised Learning Plans, and that a system for monitoring the plans be established.

It was suggested that long term parenting courses be established, run by Aboriginal communities for Aboriginal communities, to promote respect, higher education expectations and a desire to learn.

The need to engage more men in education as Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs), mentors and role models was repeatedly raised as an urgent issue. It was also suggested that consideration be given to AEO roles being expanded to enable more engagement with children and families. Furthermore it was flagged that it may be best to base some AEOs in community organisations.

It was widely expressed that Elders need to be engaged in schools to share their wisdom, insight and knowledge with students. It was suggested that there is a need to revisit Aboriginal education policy as a guide for reinforcing the importance of

Elders, community involvement and Aboriginal principles and protocols. The need to pay community workers was repeatedly raised, and it was suggested that schools need access to flexible funding to enable the employment of Elders and members of the community to conduct activities within schools.

It was suggested that schools be better resourced as Community Learning Centres to engage the whole community in learning. This approach could also embed teachers in the community. It was also suggested that teachers do an internship with Aboriginal communities during their teacher training.

Other issues raised include the need for Aboriginal peer support programs and it was suggested that the AECG needs to consider extending its role to connect with more communities.

### *Improving outcomes in schools*

#### Early childhood

The importance of affordable early childhood education and childcare and Aboriginal community controlled child care centres were routinely raised as priorities. Pre-literacy learning experiences are essential to ensure children are 'school ready' for literacy learning, and pre-schools are seen as a significant opportunity to ensure this readiness. It was suggested that the DEC Preschool Investment Reform Program (PIRP), which provides funding assistance to reduce fees for Aboriginal children enrolled in pre-school, needs to be more flexible and respond to actual enrolment numbers (allocation is based on previous year enrolments and does not cater for increased enrolments during the current year).

It was said that the employment of Aboriginal staff in early childhood is critical to increasing participation levels because it builds trust, improves communications with Aboriginal families, provides role models, and even creates the potential to teach culture. It was said that the recognition of prior learning, practice and experience, knowledge of culture and community connections needs to be taken into account in recruiting early childhood sector workers, and that support needs to be provided to assist workers to obtain qualifications.

Free day care and early childhood childcare for Aboriginal children was also suggested as an incentive to boost participation levels. Notwithstanding this it was also commented that assuming all Aboriginal people need fee relief is a deficit and disempowering view, and that more flexible funding arrangements are required to allow for varying strategies to support kids in early childhood (ranging from fee relief to employing additional staff, training educators and offering better support for families).

#### Embedding culture in education

It was widely expressed that Aboriginal culture needs to be embedded in the education system and Aboriginal perspectives need to be incorporated into curriculum. The importance of teaching Aboriginal studies to all students was continually raised, and this was seen as important in building understanding and pride. The need to reflect Aboriginal history in Australian history was also repeatedly highlighted (including the time since colonisation), along with the need for more opportunities for the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools. It was said that Aboriginal people must teach Aboriginal languages and culture in school, noting local Aboriginal people often have language skills and need to be supported to teach. It was also suggested that Early Language and Literacy resources be replicated for Aboriginal languages.

People asked for more culturally appropriate programs in schools to provide positive interaction and help young children understand Aboriginal culture. The “Brospeak” and “Sistaspeak” program was provided as an example. This program aligns with the school syllabus to promote better relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and engaging children who are disengaged and is run by Aboriginal people from local community.

Notwithstanding this there was a criticism that there has been a misleading emphasis on using Aboriginal specific programs in education which are counter-productive.

It was suggested that schools need to celebrate Aboriginal culture, by inviting Aboriginal people to perform dances, play didgeridoo and tell stories of Aboriginal culture and traditions. It was said that the Aboriginal flag should be in all schools, and smoking ceremonies and other ceremonial acknowledgements should take place at the beginning of the year.

#### Teacher quality and school ethos

It was commented that the principal determinant of Aboriginal student performance is teacher quality and school ethos. Concern was expressed that some teachers speak to Aboriginal children in an inappropriate and insensitive manner, without any awareness of the children’s histories or home situations. It was also expressed that some teachers and school staff do not act on issues due to fear of offending Aboriginal people.

The importance of school leadership was also identified. It was suggested that performing well in the field of Aboriginal education should be considered a highly valued career achievement. Having Aboriginal teachers in senior positions at school also sends strong positive messages to communities and students. It should be expected that teachers fully engage and adapt their teaching behaviour and content to sustain the advancement of Aboriginal children. It was said that teachers also need to be better supported to identify specific learning difficulties and special needs such as intermittent deafness, dyslexia and attention disorders. To improve teacher quality it was also suggested that the best teachers should get paid more, that contracts for directors and teachers be for 4-5 years minimum (with penalties for leaving sooner) and that Aboriginal education outcomes be considered in teacher performance reviews.

The need for more teacher cultural awareness training was highlighted, and it was suggested that cultural immersion programs be used rather than the annual two day cultural awareness training. Mandatory cultural awareness training during the first year of teacher training was also suggested. It was also reinforced that cultural awareness training needs to be linked with the local community.

It was recommended that the Aboriginal Educational and Training Policy be implemented in all schools to increase the accessibility to education for Aboriginal students by providing a framework for the delivery of culturally appropriate educational options. The Policy also assists in overcoming issues such as bullying, racism and special needs of Aboriginal students, all of which have been consistent themes during the consultations. It was said that the AECG has identified that the lack of uniform implementation of the Aboriginal Educational and Training Policy throughout NSW schools creates inconsistent standards of education delivery for Aboriginal students. It was said that schools need to revisit the policy as a guide for reinforcing the importance of Elders in classrooms to teach Aboriginal culture, to provide insight and to share knowledge.

It was raised that a whole school anti-racism program should be reviewed, and sensitively address concerns around racism and discrimination within the school setting.

#### Aboriginal educators

It was said regularly that more Aboriginal educators are needed, and that government needs to support Aboriginal workforce development from early childhood onwards. The short-term and casual nature of funding for Aboriginal positions in education was raised as a significant problem, particularly for AEOs, as these positions have a direct positive impact on retention and learning (support children through advocacy, social and emotional wellbeing). It was suggested that a funding formula be used to ensure that AEO position numbers reflect student numbers. It was also suggested that more AEOs be engaged in primary schools.

#### Suspension and non-attendance

Concern was raised that the high number of suspensions for Aboriginal children is preventing children from receiving a quality education. Changes to the suspension policy were suggested with a focus on implementing approaches to managing challenging behaviour. It was suggested that suspended children be taught in a separate room or access vocational training to make sure they keep learning. A 'circle sentencing' model was also suggested, to allow punishment to be delivered by Elders, peers and the school. The Victorian policy framework was suggested which involves consideration of a student's educational needs, any disability or impairment, residential and social circumstances along with the behaviour for which the student is being suspended. It was also suggested that targets and performance indicators be set for reducing the number and duration of suspensions.

People expressed serious concern about truancy in some communities. Improved follow up with families was urged to ensure children attend school, and the need for a holistic approach to address the underlying reasons for truancy was highlighted. Community members proposed a focus on positive programs to encourage children to go to school, such as sports programs, and cultural programs and role modelling from community people.

The NSW Ombudsman expressed concern that the Home School Liaison Program, which provides a supported link between families and schools where there are unresolved compulsory school attendance issues, needs to have a greater focus on early and ongoing engagement with families. The program has around 26 Aboriginal School Liaison Officers and 110 Home School Liaison Officers across NSW that primarily become involved when the students non-attendance is entrenched and school based strategies are exhausted. It was suggested that an increase in the number of liaison officers would be required to enable earlier and ongoing intervention, and a greater number of locations covered.

#### Engaging students and parents

Student wellbeing was said to be the axis around which school outcomes revolve, and children need to feel worthwhile and their cultural identities need to be valued. The school needs to know the student's story and develop honest and trusting relationships with students. Positive role models and suitable mentors are needed to create aspirations within children. The need for school counselling was identified, along with the need for more funding for youth activities. It was said that pastoral care in public schools needs to meet the level of support available in private schools. It was also suggested that the Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) network be used to support this.



Parental involvement and participation in schools is important, but as highlighted earlier parental attitudes can be a barrier for education as parents can feel alienated by the education system. A lack of basic computer skills and electronic communication knowledge can also inhibit parents from engaging with their child and their child's education. Adult learning classes in schools were recommended to encourage parents to gain skills they can then share with their children.

It was suggested that the government should fund Aboriginal homework centres to provide additional support and tutoring, which would in turn support student retention. It was also suggested that homework centres could support parental involvement in child development and education. It was suggested that TAFE could play a role in supporting the centres. The need to continue North North tutoring for all Aboriginal students across all years, regardless of academic ability, was also highlighted.

The need for more support for children in out of home care was identified, recognising that children in these circumstances often have complex and multiple needs and disrupted educational experiences that require more resources. The need for additional training for staff to provide the necessary support was also highlighted.

It was reported that culturally appropriate and consistent consultation with Aboriginal young offenders is imperative to effective education program planning, development and delivery. Achieving coordination in delivery can be difficult due to variations in sentence lengths, individual versus group needs and resource limitations of particular detention centres and TAFE colleges.

#### *Ongoing learning – transition*

The need for complete pathways and supported transitions for children and families from early years through to tertiary education and employment was highlighted. Transition from home to pre-school and then to primary and high school can be very difficult and the Eternity Aid *Transition to High School* initiatives was suggested as a positive model covering these transitions.

More broadly the need to substantially increase investment in transition coordination within the school environment was suggested to strengthen the pathway between school and employment or further education for Aboriginal students.

Mentoring is required in all school years, by mentors who Aboriginal students feel comfortable with and are able to support and encourage learning and nurture self determination. It was suggested that the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) be used as a standard for student mentoring. Peer support networks are also important. Ongoing tutoring during TAFE studies was also identified as a needed.

The need for opportunities for young people to become work ready at school and increased VET and work experience opportunities in schools were urged (including school based traineeships and cadetships) to support transition from school to work. It was suggested that Aboriginal career advisors are needed to work with children from year 7.

The Fresh Start initiative developed by the Clarence Valley Industry Foundation, an integrated transition program for students in years 9 to 12, was highlighted as a successful initiative. The program connects students, parents, business, industry and the broader community around education, careers, capacity building and trust

(the program operates in Grafton High School, Maclean High School, South Grafton High School and McAuley Catholic College).

Students need opportunities to regularly interact with employers in meaningful activities to develop confidence and knowledge about work, particularly if their family experience is isolated from a work culture. It was said that many such programs are already operational, but as one-off programs. An 'adopt a class' model was suggested as an example to allow local Aboriginal organisations and groups to interact and support students in pre-apprenticeship trade courses.

It was commented that the links between school and vocational training are not strong enough, particularly in the country and not all schools have work experience. The *Taste of TAFE* transition program operating in Parkes was identified as a positive opportunity for students to attend TAFE campus for a day and make choices about their preferred study pathway. TAFE needs to be flexible and more receptive to community needs. Training needs to be linked to real job opportunities. It was also suggested that more focus need to be given to assist student into work placements.

Suggestions to help Aboriginal people to stay in their community to work or study included establishing local mentoring program, offering courses locally that are relevant, engaging private businesses willing to open doors for young Aboriginal people and supporting distance education with ICT support. The use of flexible learning solutions by training and education providers can also provide young people with strong post school education pathways while remaining in their community.

University was considered unattainable for many young Aboriginal people, and it was suggested that government needs to provide more information, more scholarships and adequate financial and rental assistance to improve Aboriginal student access to tertiary study. Other incentives suggested include HECS exemptions, greater Abstudy allowances and bringing back NSWALC's Education Empowerment program. It was suggested that high schools be linked to Universities from Yr 7 instead of Yr 10.

It was said that high numbers of Aboriginal school leavers are leaving school without a functional level of literacy, which becomes a barrier to further study and employment. It was urged that "extra lesson" literacy learning opportunities are essential for students prior to leaving school. The need for community-based training and education programs, run by Aboriginal NGOs, to provide additional support to Aboriginal students was repeatedly raised. Increasing participation in certified short courses, such as First Aid and Health and Safety, was suggested as a way for students to develop skills to gain employment.

The need to ensure the education of young people in detention is effectively supported was highlighted, especially taking into account the variations in length of sentence, variations in courses and training available within detention centres, and the need to focus on the special needs of detainees during and post release. It was commented that most Aboriginal young offenders had disengaged from any form of education for a long time prior to entering the juvenile justice system. They also have a history of learning failures, diminished numeracy and literacy and minimal access to new technologies and computers for learning. It was suggested that Aboriginal educators should be employed in Juvenile Justice Centres and that Intensive Support Programs for post release options should expand to include case management in relation to education opportunities. It was noted that the education successes achieved while young people are in detention risk being diminished without comprehensive exit strategies and post release support.

The need for mentoring, advocacy and housing was identified as a significant need to support for young people in out of home care that are transitioning from school. More youth hostels (including mentoring and living skills support for each student) were recommended to support young people moving for education and employment.

Free use of laptops for Aboriginal people studying TAFE and university courses, subsidised internet connection and Aboriginal study rooms with tutoring and other supports at TAFE and university were suggested to support tertiary students.

#### *Whole of government approach*

The need for early intervention was routinely raised. It was suggested that government agencies need to work in conjunction with schools to support parents, to stabilise family homes, encourage attendance and improve student outcomes. The need for programs targeting children that have disengaged from education and children with disabilities or special needs was also emphasised.

An independent body to monitor school accountability was suggested. An integrated governance approach was suggested involving key government agencies (health, housing, family and community services and police), the AECG and community in a board structure.

It was suggested that a locally based hub approach could enable the co-location of many agencies involved in student servicing, which would improve student and family access to services. It could also increase cross-agency coordination and student outcomes. The 'schools as community centres' model was also suggested as a successful approach because it is driven by the local community. These approaches may also encourage greater access to learning support infrastructure outside the school environment.

It was said that Aboriginal health and employment should be embedded into all education policies, strategic and operational plans. There needs to be a focus on healing so children do not fall through the gaps. Mental health support was also identified as necessary for parents and children. Long waiting times or poor access to paediatrician, occupational therapy, eye, hearing etc specialists, were raised as a major concern across remote, regional and metropolitan areas.

It was suggested that greater links between health professionals and schools would support improved attendance and educational attainment, and that a mobile health team model to visit each town should be considered (similar to mobile breast screening model, but focused on children's health issues). It was also suggested that employing speech pathologists and occupational therapists within pre-schools would upskill teaching staff, improve teacher practice, and improve language and literacy.

More engagement between schools was highlighted as a need to support mobile and transient students.

### **6.3 Overview - Employment**

A total of 949 responses were received on the Terms of Reference related to improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW (see Table 4). An analysis and summary of the issues raised is outlined below.

#### **6.3.1. Summary of Public Consultations**

##### *Strengthening Aboriginal Public Sector Employment*

###### Strengthening intake

It was said that government needs to demonstrate commitment to making visible improvement in Aboriginal communities to improve the public sector's general reputation. It was suggested that the public service should raise its profile at job expos, schools, universities, and Aboriginal community events through information delivered by Aboriginal staff.

It was suggested that School Based Traineeships and Apprenticeships (SBAT) tailored for public service work be offered to allow entry into the public service, and the student to gain their Year 12 qualification.

The need to recognise that mainstream recruitment processes are often a barrier was highlighted, along with the need to implement more culturally appropriate strategies (like Project 2800) to enable Aboriginal people to upload resumes and photos onto a website. It was said that the public service should find other ways to assess merit than written applications.

The need to develop more programs like the NSW Police Force's *Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery* program (IPROWD), which assists Aboriginal people to join the NSW Police Force, and the pilot best practice *Aboriginal Trainee Paramedic Pre-Employment Course* currently being developed with TAFE, was highlighted.

###### Mentoring and career development

The development of an Aboriginal mentoring program was suggested to enable agencies to provide opportunities for Aboriginal staff through the use of career plans, training, secondment opportunities, and access to formal training. Development of career pathways for staff in identified positions that allow career progression into non-identified positions was also suggested so that identified positions are freed up from more Aboriginal people to enter the sector. The need to use traineeships to fill identified positions, rather than just cutting the position if applications aren't received, was also highlighted.

Out-posting public service policy officers to Aboriginal community organisations was suggested as it may help build capacity and generate informed advice and program/policy development.

###### Responsiveness to Aboriginal employee needs

It was suggested that a policy framework and model guidelines be established which set out the NSW Government's expectations and management standards regarding

public sector employment of Aboriginal people and make sure this is on the [www.jobs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.jobs.nsw.gov.au) website.

The need to create a culturally competent, appropriate and safe workplace and workforce and train all staff in Aboriginal cultural competence was frequently expressed. It was suggested that strategic use of identified positions may be required to ensure cultural change within some work areas.

Other suggestions included developing and maintaining Aboriginal Staff Support Networks (ASSN) in all departments, providing Aboriginal employees with the opportunity to train together, and offering job share positions to allow workers to balance work, family and community responsibilities.

The need to recognise that staff in identified positions are also members of their communities and are sometimes seen to be “on call 24 hours a day” because of their public service position was highlighted, along with the need to understand how the ‘public service role’ can be perceived by their community. Aboriginal people in public service roles can suffer work related stress quickly if not supported properly by their managers and their networks.

### *Strengthening Linkages with the Private Sector*

#### Supporting Aboriginal jobseekers and workers

It was commented that many Aboriginal people have suffered from trans-generational discrimination and may lack the confidence to build the resilience needed to work in non-Aboriginal or bureaucratic workplaces. Aboriginal workers want to feel respected and valued, given opportunities to learn and develop and have the opportunity to make decisions about the work they are undertaking.

It was highlighted that many employment and recruitment practices are counter aligned to Aboriginal practices and culture, and can be an inadvertent barrier for Aboriginal people.

It was said that it is vital that Aboriginal communities participate in promotion of employment opportunities, and community-based mentors are engaged to guide people through application and employment processes. There is support for Aboriginal community controlled employment placement agencies that provide a one-stop shop solution for Aboriginal people seeking training and assistance in finding and maintaining employment. The organisations could also assist private companies seeking to employ skilled Aboriginal people.

The need for a diversity of 'internship' style positions for young Aboriginal people to gain experience working in government, non-government and private organisations was highlighted. Also identified was the need for consolidated lists of internships and other current employment opportunities that can be distributed through regional networks.

The need to better support Aboriginal people to take up employment opportunities elsewhere, while maintaining connections with family and country, was highlighted. It was suggested that the Aboriginal Employment Related Accommodation Program should be expanded to include Aboriginal people who move to work or train in any location that is a significant distance away from their community.

It was commented that employers from industries or companies that have no history of employment Aboriginal people need to be challenged to make their organisation

as a whole more attractive to Aboriginal employees. This involves building a culturally competent workplace and workforce, and it was suggested that Aboriginal organisations be engaged for training purposes. It was also suggested that employers develop specific Aboriginal employment and support programs. This may involve developing a job placement protocol package that provides a basic understanding of cultural practices and barriers.

#### Employer focused approaches

Partnerships between universities, industry bodies, State Training Services and employment agencies were suggested as a means to effectively prepare, place and support jobseekers, including for work experience and training. These partnerships could host regional job expos that promote positions available in industry.

Company and NGO based Aboriginal employment strategies (Employment Reconciliation Action Plans) were suggested to build confidence and skills in new workers through mentoring and career development activities and raise Aboriginal employment levels. It was said that training should be mandatory for all staff in Aboriginal cultural competence, to make organisations attractive to Aboriginal (and non-Aboriginal) people.

The need to provide support for employers with Aboriginal employees was identified. It was said that government funding to cover costs to enable organisations to implement Employment Reconciliation Action Plans, to generate a continuum of support to participants and to employers, with a focus on creating long term ongoing employment is needed. Pre-employment courses should be made more accessible for applicants in the not-for-profit and smaller private sector employers and it was said that these courses are usually only run when partly funded by an employer.

A change in government tendering processes was suggested to require employer participation in structured Aboriginal employment programs which engage Aboriginal job seekers and develop community partnerships.

#### Joint Industry- Government or NGO approaches

It was said that Aboriginal employment outcomes can be improved through better collaboration and strategic partnerships involving all three levels of government, and the private, public and community sectors. Support for industry sector based agreements and partnerships was suggested to increase Aboriginal employment in growth sectors.

Work-based social enterprises can provide Aboriginal workers with a continuous period of paid work and vocational training, in a real work environment, often coupled with support from a qualified trainer to help improve employability. Some Aboriginal communities are considering work-based social enterprises to replace the role of CDEP in developing job skills and the cultural competence of employers.

It was advocated that LALCs should also help deliver sustainable employment and training outcomes within their communities.

#### *Building Pathways between Education, Training, and Employment*

The need to promote Aboriginal role models in the workforce, and in education and training environments was identified. An example is Aboriginal men who are alumni of Quirindi High School have been paired with Aboriginal boys enrolled at the school, and provide mentoring to help the boys set and attain educational goals. These men are employed, community leaders, and act as role models for the boys they work

with.

The need to create more on-the-job learning opportunities was identified. Focusing on apprenticeships and sponsorships (not traineeships) and offering incentives to tradesman to take on Aboriginal apprentices (especially in growth trade areas) was also suggested. Once Aboriginal apprentices complete their trade qualification these skills can be used in their communities. These skills may also support small business development. Offering sponsorships for year 9 to 12 students in return for employment at the specified business was also suggested.

Local collaborative approaches were suggested. These would involve local communities and organisations (such as council, schools, universities, TAFE, Department of Education and Communities, the AECG and DEEWR) working together to connect training to local jobs through a detailed operational action plan which reflected local priorities and opportunities (for example Fresh Start, an initiative of the Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum). As part of this approach it was suggested that in-community impact workshops run by Aboriginal mentors could build tactical parent skills to support students in their transition from school to work.

#### *Developing Regional and Remote Employment Opportunities*

The need to empower and educate Aboriginal people to exercise and retain control of long-term economic benefits in local communities was identified. Highlighting the achievements of other communities and showcasing business and employment opportunities was also identified as important. There is a need to ensure that Aboriginal communities are in control of their cultural and intellectual property and that this is not exploited.

There is a need to build a diverse Aboriginal owned and operated small business sector to create employment opportunities. In smaller rural communities with high levels of non-Aboriginal outmigration, this may be the key to a sustainable future for the whole community, not just for Aboriginal people.

There was support for place based partnership approaches between Aboriginal communities, government and private investors. Improved infrastructure and service delivery was also suggested as a means for increasing employment in regional areas, especially broadband internet and transport services.

It was suggested that peak regional Aboriginal women's and men's groups be developed to support gender specific local groups that build skills and empower Aboriginal women and men who are not part of the paid workforce.

The need to make training available that is appropriate to a region's need was frequently raised. Making more apprenticeships available to rural areas was also highlighted as a need.

It was said that the regional development and social impacts (positive externalities) of projects for which grant funding is sought should be taken into account by government funding agencies, to enable projects designed by the local community that address specific local issues a chance to promote jobs. It was highlighted that government and private procurement budgets can improve regional economies, as well as service delivery and infrastructure. It was suggested that procurement tenders in regional areas should include required Aboriginal employment outcomes.

It was highlighted that Aboriginal regional communities can gain economic

opportunities from tourism, and that government can sometimes assist by creating points of regional differentiation (eg National Parks). Aboriginal tourism, culture, language, arts, interpretation centres, sports, and National Parks attractions were identified as areas that can provide both jobs and business income.

#### Supporting Economic Capacity

It was suggested that there is a need for an overarching plan for Aboriginal economic participation and increased self reliance.

#### Aboriginal land and sea - Country as an economic base

The need for an integrated approach to find the optimal uses of LALC land was identified.

It was said that LALCs need effective community business plans and should function as social and economic enterprises that deliver resource management, employment, housing and education programs on Aboriginal lands. However, it was recognised that it is difficult for LALCs to raise capital to undertake economic development and there is a need to develop the skill base of Aboriginal people in some LALC areas to build a collective skill set to address business and community priorities.

The need to address the backlog of land claims was highlighted so that LALCs can obtain, plan for, and use these assets. It was suggested that LALCs could identify land claims with economic development potential or market value and negotiate for early assessment.

It was said that the government should fully decriminalise the traditional fishing practices of Aboriginal people. It was also suggested that NSW Fisheries provide loans to build tuna and abalone farms as this could create many jobs for Aboriginal people.

It was suggested that the government should create a commercial investment branch to pursue joint venture funding in the development of Aboriginal land in long-term projects. It was also suggested that the NSW Education and Health portfolios should develop long term projects on Aboriginal land for public benefit such as education centres and hospices.

#### Aboriginal Business Development

It was suggested that the Government support the start-up and development of Aboriginal-owned business, and support Aboriginal owned businesses to build the skills and confidence for employees to move into mainstream employment. It was said that increasing the number of successful Aboriginal businesses and workers would encourage young Aboriginal people to engage with the workforce through empowerment rather than enforcement. It was recognised that there needs to be more Aboriginal self-employed role models in communities.

It was suggested that industry partnerships with existing local organisations can assist in kick starting Aboriginal businesses, engaging with Aboriginal communities and connecting investors with ventures and products created by Aboriginal businesses.

It was urged that government procurement strategies be used to generate more Aboriginal business development and job opportunities. It was suggested that social procurement policies in the private and public sectors could enable the expansion of work-based social enterprises. It was also said that funding should be directed to Aboriginal businesses and community organisations to deliver health services,



training, youth, Elder care, and alcohol and drugs rehabilitation programs, subject to appropriate governance and performance levels. It was also suggested that State and local government should allocate small-scale capital works projects as training and business development vehicles. Advanced notice of planned tenders was also suggested for Aboriginal workers and Aboriginal businesses.

It was suggested that the Government agencies responsible for small business could develop incubators for Aboriginal commercial enterprises. It was also suggested that small business development grants, loans and micro-credit financing based on business planning could be made available on concessional terms subject to regular reporting. Business skills training and mentoring for new Aboriginal businesses and community organisations was also highlighted as a need.

#### Priority industries and skills for Aboriginal business and employment

Key professions mentioned as important for economic capacity and employment were doctors, lawyers, accountants, builders, childcare workers, trained mentors, trained cultural awareness trainers and tradespersons.

Industries mentioned as providing growth opportunities for Aboriginal people and communities included transport and logistics; tourism and events; niche food and wine; financial services; aged care; mental health; supporting people with disability; security; mining; communication and technology; healthcare; financial services; funeral services; creative and art industries; and sports and sports management.

## **7. Summary of submissions – cross cutting themes**

### **7.1 *Healing and wholeness***

A strong theme that emerged throughout the community consultations was the need for healing and wholeness for Aboriginal people and communities. This was not just restricted to an individual's or community's physical health in the westernised sense but also encompassed social, emotional, cultural and spiritual well being or wholeness. Phrases such as such as grief, loss, anger, trauma and division were frequently used as well as the resultant need to achieve healing and wholeness. These discussion were not limited to the need for healing and wholeness in terms of individuals - heavy emphasis was placed on the need for healing and to achieve wholeness and well being within Aboriginal families and Aboriginal communities as a whole, as well as the relationship between Aboriginal people and the broader community. Aboriginal people talked about the need for healing and well being arising from the trauma and violence of colonisation and the legacy of subsequent government policies such forced removal of children and that healing and well being policies and programs need to recognise this legacy to be effective.

During the consultations participants raised a number of ideas to progress healing and wholeness within Aboriginal communities. This included more individual and family counselling and therapeutic activities developed and delivered by Aboriginal people, cultural renewal activities and programs and Aboriginal healing centres. Other healing practices raised included art programs and programs specifically aimed at youth such as those aimed at overcoming bullying. A recurring message was the need to establish cultural "safe places" where Aboriginal community members can, on a temporary or permanent basis, meet and safely raise, discuss and resolve community and cultural issues without fear of anger or reprisal.

Achieving healing and well being was also strongly linked by Aboriginal people with general community development, including employment opportunities, educational outcomes and overcoming disadvantage. Healing and wholeness for both Aboriginal people and communities can therefore be seen as critical in terms of the MTAA's Terms of Reference related to improve economic opportunities and employment outcomes, and educational attainment for Aboriginal communities.

### **7.2 *Respecting Aboriginal culture, language and heritage***

A total of 720 responses were received which were identified as being related to the theme of Respecting Aboriginal culture, language and heritage (see Table 6).

#### **7.2.1 *Analysis***

##### ***Aboriginal languages***

The importance of Aboriginal languages in connecting identity, wellbeing and understanding of culture for Aboriginal families was widely recognised. The importance of offering Aboriginal language study to students was continually highlighted. It was expressed that reclaiming language is a birthright, not a privilege, and should be a basic provision of the schooling system.

It was emphasised that Aboriginal languages are not recognised enough. And it was

said that it is even more difficult when there has been disconnection from home and language due to historical events. It was also expressed that the need to teach Aboriginal languages requires adequate recognition in the education system and support provided to ensure access to language education for all Aboriginal people.

#### *Awareness of Culture in the Community*

It was said that it is necessary to ensure that culture does not fall off the agenda. It was suggested that supporting and resourcing LALCs to run community cultural programs will fulfil the Aboriginal community's need to maintain culture and identity. This can supplement/complement Government strategies and programs to improve educational, employment and service delivery outcomes.

It was suggested that Aboriginal youth workers be engaged in communities to help with employment training, and culture and heritage. In addition, it was said that culturally appropriate mentoring and support systems for young people needs to be established to encourage young people to continue in developing leadership skills

It was emphasised that the celebration of Aboriginal culture through significant cultural festivals in the wider society would contribute to positive cultural identity, social inclusion and would promote respect for self and others. It was noted that celebrating cultural diversity through the media would help increase broader community understanding and awareness of Aboriginal culture.

It was said that it's critical that cultural programs aimed at developing 'cultural knowledge' be developed by local people. An example of a local program was by Dhiiyaan Aboriginal Centre which undertakes work in strengthening Aboriginal identity. Dhiiyaan Aboriginal Centre supports the development of the culture of the Kamilaroi nation, ensuring that this knowledge will be handed down through the generations. The Dhiiyaan Aboriginal Centre also plays an important role in helping Aboriginal people learn about their family history and reconnecting Aboriginal people with living family members.

Government service delivery needs to be structured in order to be culturally appropriate and properly recognise Aboriginal Nations.

It was commented that it is positive for community organisations to be involved in heritage management issues and pass their knowledge onto the next organisation maintaining these sites.

#### *Aboriginality*

People asked to put a stop to the use of the word Indigenous and to refer to people as Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islander people. People urged that a solid criterion for identifying Aboriginal people be developed. There is a high level of concern about Aboriginal identity fraud. People urged that it is the local community that must decide if a person was Aboriginal. It was suggested that proof of Aboriginality should be determined by a board of Elders.

It was suggested that a proper review of the current Aboriginality form be conducted. The recent report commissioned by the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) on Aboriginality and ways of proving identity was commended.

### **7.3 Community capacity building**

A total of 939 responses were received which were identified as being related to the theme of *Community capacity building* (see Table 6).

#### **7.3.1 Analysis**

##### *Community partnership leads to community capacity building*

A large number of submissions stated that there was no genuine negotiation or role for Aboriginal community members in ongoing implementation and governance of programs. Submissions highlighted that if real and honest collaboration and partnership occurred with government and industry that Aboriginal community members, in time would “step up” and build community capacity, including skills in leadership, governance, management and advocacy. Real partnerships leads to real community development and success in one cannot effectively occur without success in the other.

Many submissions highlighted the key role of government agencies in community capacity building through program delivery.

In addition many submissions highlighted the key role of Aboriginal NGOs and community bodies, including LALCs, in community capacity building, especially at the local level. Many submissions emphasised the need to support Aboriginal NGOs and community organisations in terms of developing community capacity. As one submission described it “strong communities have strong leaders”.

##### *Building social capital is a journey*

Submissions frequently raised the issue that building community capacity and social capital does not happen overnight, and that time and resources are required to make this happen. Submissions were keen to emphasise that leadership and community development skills already exist in Aboriginal communities and should not be overlooked, ignored or marginalised. However, to expand these skills and build on them, especially in Aboriginal communities which face multiple disadvantages and have been marginalised, the process takes time, resources, patience, commitment from all parties, and a realistic understanding of outcomes.

##### *Community empowerment*

It was noted that people living in remote communities want greater access to services and information on those services. It was also noted that including a local Aboriginal voice in the planning and implementation of those services is critical to ensure positive uptake by the community.

It was also suggested that a strong Aboriginal voice at state level may increase engagement with Aboriginal communities; in particular, the NSW Government through Aboriginal Affairs needs to build respect and relationships with local communities.

It was also noted that government and non-government organisations should engage with the local Aboriginal community in the design of new and flexible service provision. It was suggested that by empowering the community, progress can be

made to address these challenges by taking personal responsibility for the broad strategies and solutions needed to address the complex issues in their community.

## **7.4 Youth**

A total of 302 responses were received which were identified as being related to the theme of *youth* (see Table 6).

### *7.4.1 Analysis*

#### *Government consultation, communication and partnership*

It was reinforced that consulting with Aboriginal young people to identify their needs and aspirations as well as to identify gaps in programs and strategies to strengthen their effectiveness is an important thing for the Government to do.

It was suggested that young leaders need to be partners and participate in both the Government agency and NGO planning process. A number of suggestions for enabling this include:

- Creating a Directory of Youth Initiatives to be published regionally with key contacts in Government, NGO and community agencies listed.
- Establishing a Youth Advisory Committee in each region.
- Including youth representation on local and state government, NGO and community committees.

#### *Role models and leadership development*

It was noted that Aboriginal youth are often without a voice, and feel powerless to make change. Therefore there is a need to consider what factors generate leadership, such as achieving a good education and being accepted in their communities as a whole, not just in their Aboriginal community.

The need for leadership development programs for young people was frequently raised in submissions. This includes starting programs in primary schools and having high school students and unemployed young people attend leadership courses alongside older men and women from their community and from other communities.

It was recommended that programs be developed to assist young people to communicate better with the community and Government, and to increase their confidence and leadership skills. Young people also need to be encouraged to participate in community decision making through encouragement to become members of local organisations, which will also improve understanding of mainstream and government decision making.

To assist with supporting young people in developing their leadership skills and confidence, a number of people suggested that more role models are needed. These role models need to be relevant to the youth, for example community leaders and young people who are successful in their field or in school. It could simply be someone working for a government agency or a private business in their home town. This will allow young people to see the possibilities that arise from education and employment in their chosen field.

It was also suggested that older youth should be encouraged to be role models for younger children and to raise awareness that their behaviour will affect the younger kids.

### *Health issues*

Access to health services across the board have been identified throughout the submissions. This includes access to basic health services, particularly west of the Blue Mountains, such as an ear, nose and throat specialist and dental care. These services need to be provided in culturally appropriate ways to encourage their full utilisation by Aboriginal parents and young people.

People emphasised that there is a need to educate young people on the affects of “yarndi” and alcohol on their health and on their future. Abuse of drugs and alcohol has a direct impact on education and securing work, and there isn’t enough support from service providers and agencies. For those youth already suffering addictions there is a need to provide rehabilitation locally instead of having young people leave their communities to access help.

### *Juvenile justice*

Monitoring and reducing the incarceration rates of young Aboriginal people was noted as a priority in many submissions. Submissions urged that the Bail Act be amended to ensure the amount of time Aboriginal young people are remanded is reduced and that they are not held away from their communities.

The need for early intervention and diversion programs for children and youth was noted as was the need for programs for people in juvenile detention centres. It is felt that these programs would allow more focus on what young people want to achieve upon release and reduce future contact with the criminal justice system.

The significant range of mental and physical health issues faced by Aboriginal young offenders, as compared to the general young offender population, was raised as an impediment to participation and success in education and employment programs. It was said that many young offenders are also parents and are not education oriented. As a result it said suggested that they face the prospect of long term unemployment and profound barriers to improving their social capital. It was recommended that post release support provided by intensive supervision programs that provide support to young people, their families and communities post release are expanded. These services include youth services, further education, employment and training opportunities and health and social and emotional well being programs and services. These help to reduce recidivism by tackling underlying problems with family frameworks as well as disadvantage in the wider community.

### *Housing and Out of Home Care*

Concerns were raised that Aboriginal children and young people continue to be significantly overrepresented in out-of-home care statistics in NSW. Aboriginal children in out-of-home care also have complex problems and needs, often due to the disruption and disadvantaged they have experienced prior to entering out-of-home care.

There is concern that out-of-home care is moving to non-Aboriginal organisations once Family and Community Services moves responsibility for it to NGOs in November, however there are not enough Aboriginal controlled organisations to

manage all care for Aboriginal children. It was also reinforced that Aboriginal children need to be cared for by Aboriginal families and the practice of adoption of Aboriginal children by non-Aboriginal families needs to end. It was also noted that better pathways are needed for children leaving out-of-home care to enable them to access housing.

It was recommended that the government fund intensive family support services to prevent Aboriginal children from coming into care and enable generational change. Services should be holistic and should ensure that adequate timeframes are allowed for developing relationships with and supporting Aboriginal families with complex issues.

Youth hostels for Aboriginal students were also suggested, to help provide mentorship and life skills for each student. In addition it was noted that there is a need for regional crisis accommodation to support youth as well as people on release from jail and people travelling to a region to attend funerals.

#### *Gender specific programs for youth*

Some submissions raised the importance of, and need for, gender specific youth programs. Gaps identified included programs for young fathers and residential schools for girls.

#### *Youth Services and Youth Centres*

It is recommended that there is a need to allow communities ownership of culturally appropriate and sensitively developed youth programs, if a community is quite fragmented then they may need guidance on youth programs that work.

It was proposed that youth centres be built, potentially on LALC land, to provide a safe place for youth and to provide education programs on things like safe sex, health and wellbeing. This would help reduce teenage pregnancy and keep young people in the education system.

It was also noted that funding sports activities and youth sport and recreational clubs can lead to better self-esteem and higher confidence in people, resulting in better outcomes in all areas of life. The need for investment in sport and recreational infrastructure, such as skate parks and ovals, was also raised as a way to engage with Aboriginal youth.

An example of a youth service which provides safe, holistic support for young people, including Aboriginal young people is Weave Youth Service. Weave support and empower young people through facilitating access to and supporting education and employment. They strive to create opportunities for young people to become involved in leadership and be future leaders in their community and ensure Aboriginal culture and tradition is respected and promoted (see [www.weave.org.au](http://www.weave.org.au))

## **7.5 Elders**

A total of 140 responses were received which were identified as being related to the theme of elders (see Table 6).

### *7.5.1 Analysis*

### *Decision making and engagement with government and in communities.*

The importance of consulting and engaging with Elders was repeatedly reinforced. Elders should be involved in the decision making and program development for their communities. Elders need to provide guidance to community, NGOs and Government agencies.

Consultations with Elders needs to be held in a way that is accessible, as emails and other modern forms of communication and consultation may not be suitable. The issue of monetary compensation for the time, expense, knowledge and experience Aboriginal Elders and other community leaders provide was also raised.

It was noted that Aboriginal services are best administered by their communities, with the oversight and commitment from Aboriginal Elders. However Elders need support in this role. It was said that it is important for young people to see that their Elders and communities have ownership over events and initiatives, for these initiatives to have legitimacy.

### *Contribution to cultural education in schools and guidance for youth*

There is a lot of support for Elders to be engaged in schools to yarn with the kids about cultural dignity, introduce language and share knowledge. This could be part of the Aboriginal studies in schools.

It was urged that schools and pre-schools work with Elders to facilitate culturally inclusive learning circumstances. This may involve work outside the classroom, such as through homework centres or in the community where community members may feel more comfortable. Such an approach could assist to improve attendance, foster pride and build confidence in the children.

Having Elders in schools would also help teachers gain more insight about the needs of Aboriginal students. Elders could also contribute to addressing student problems, for example circle sentencing involving Elders could be used instead of suspensions.

### *Support for Elders Groups*

It was suggested that Elders don't get the support that they are entitled to. It was said that funding support for Elders groups and councils were cut off after two years, but it needs to be ongoing.

### *Housing and Aged Care*

A growing need among the elderly is the availability of culturally appropriate respite care, nursing and home care. It was pointed out that older people in Aboriginal communities are often living in poor conditions and at high levels of disadvantage due largely to a lack of choice and adequate and appropriate services to cater for their needs. It was urged that centre based care should be run for Aboriginal people, by Aboriginal people.

A number of submissions raised the issue of the Seniors Card, and that the age for eligibility (60 years of age) is not consistent with the life expectancy of Aboriginal people. It is urged that Aboriginal people be able to access the Seniors Card at an earlier age.



*Examples of successful programs or consultation with Elders*

The Burnside Bringing Them Home Counselling Service Reference Group

The Burnside Bringing Them Home Counselling Service in Dubbo provides counselling and support for Aboriginal people who have been affected by past government policies and practices regarding the removal of children from the families. The service is guided by a reference group which is made up of local Aboriginal Elders, who are well respected and who provide strong links to the local community. The members of the reference group are given the title of 'Cultural Advisors' to value and respect their contribution and knowledge. The role of the reference group is to ensure the program maintains direction, structure and accountability to the community.

## 8. Other specific service delivery issues raised outside the Terms of Reference

### 8.1 Overview

A total of 1,834 responses were received on specific service delivery issues not directly related to the Terms of Reference (see table 7). An analysis and summary of the issues raised was undertaken (see below).

The following issues and concerns raised during the community consultation are outside the direct Terms of Reference of the MTAA and are therefore beyond the scope of the Taskforce's direct consideration. However, they are obviously important to the community and should be considered by government.

*Table 7 - Other specific comments in regard to service delivery not related to the Terms of Reference*

<b>Service delivery issue outside of the Terms of Reference</b>	<b>No of responses</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
Transport	68	3.7%
Child protection	29	1.6%
Sport and recreation	13	0.7%
Health (including mental health)	264	14.4%
Drug and alcohol programs	51	2.8%
Housing	98	5.3%
Justice (including juvenile justice)	149	8.1%
Other	1,162	63.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,834</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

#### 8.1.1 Analysis

##### Child Protection

The need to maintain a focus on child protection was a recurrent theme with the need to strengthen the role of Aboriginal service provision highlighted. Transparency in reporting and ensuring linkages with relevant national frameworks was also raised.

##### Health

###### *General*

Submissions highlighted the need for a greater emphasis on a holistic approach to Aboriginal health with calls for both additional support for Aboriginal specific health services and greater levels of cultural competency in the mainstream health sector. This included the need to consider the implications of Aboriginal culture, including men's and women's business and the importance placed on interpersonal relationships. The Rainbow Serpent Tour at the Children's Hospital at Westmead was provided as a positive program as it brought Aboriginal children and their families into the hospital before surgery to meet key staff.

### *Drugs and Alcohol*

Concern was raised particularly in relation to youth drug and alcohol use, both as a symptom of dispossession and as a barrier to success in education and employment. A lack of appropriate regional facilities was highlighted.

### *Aboriginal Staffing*

Broadly the need to look at new ways to attract and retain Aboriginal staff and to provide a supported career pathway was raised. There was also a call to provide greater linkages between training and employment opportunities to support Aboriginal people who have completed health training to remain in their communities. A framework for Aboriginal workforce development developed by the Council of Social Services NSW was outlined.

Opportunities for Government to support increased take up of opportunities through the Australasian College of Health Care Management Graduate Health Management were highlighted.

Concern was raised about the need for more Aboriginal positions in NSW health in the area of child health.

### *Hearing, Speech and Occupational Therapy*

The need for school based testing for hearing and vision (including Otitis Media), speech therapy and occupational therapy was a recurrent issue raised as an opportunity to improve educational outcomes. A partnership between the University of Sydney and the Department of Education and Communities which provides supervised speech and occupational therapy in schools was highlighted as a model. The use of therapy assistance, video conferencing and hub and spoke models of service delivery were raised as opportunities to improve access to these services in schools in more remote locations.

Also highlighted was the program operating in the ACT and Northern Territory under an MOU with the Commonwealth allowing a range of health professionals (including speech and occupational therapists) one week paid voluntary service which could support delivery of these services in remote communities.

### *Mental Health*

The need to support the mental health of Aboriginal people was raised, frequently in the context of drug and alcohol issues or linked to broader issues of healing. The need for healing and trauma centres was raised to enable an increased focus on appropriate mental health services for men and women in regional and remote areas. Also raised was the need to increase the numbers of Aboriginal mental health workers.

### *Healthy Eating*

The Yeovil Project was highlighted as a successful initiative focussed on growing vegetables for community consumption in Wilcannia. In urban areas the opportunity was highlighted to work with local councils to support more fresh food outlets in locations with high Aboriginal populations.

### *Service Outreach*

Submissions highlighted a range of service delivery models aimed at improving access to health services. Mobile bus services providing community based ear and dental services were raised. Also suggested was providing Aboriginal Medical Services with refrigerated trucks to support their capacity to provide outreach services.

### Juvenile Detainees

There was a call for improved responses to mental health issues faced by Aboriginal young people in detention and improved discharge planning to ensure they are able to access the necessary health treatments on release.

### Disability Services

The fragmentation of services for Aboriginal people with a disability was discussed as was the need for improved advocacy. The need for services to enable the early identification of disabilities in children was raised. Concern was also raised regarding the lack of accountability of service providers to the community. Some service providers have a minimal experience in working with Aboriginal people, further compromising standards of service. It was also suggested that some communities were over serviced while others received inadequate levels of service provision. Developing the Aboriginal disability workforce was a suggested opportunity. The need for better coordination between disability services and the Ministry of Transport was also raised.

### Housing

The need for improved access to affordable housing as a precursor to improvements in education and employment was raised, especially in rural and regional areas. Improving the quality and maintenance of public housing was also frequently mentioned. There was also a call for an assistance scheme to support home ownership.

The need for greater investment in accommodation for Aboriginal students was highlighted. The link between homelessness and the disproportionate number of young people in detention was also highlighted as a concern.

The need for a greater focus on providing aged care facilities for Aboriginal people was raised. The Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care Program was provided as a successful program however it has a waiting list and is Sydney focussed.

Some concern was raised about elements of Build and Grow and future funding for Aboriginal housing.

### Justice

The overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice system was highlighted as an issue of serious concern and as a barrier to employment. The rate of juvenile detention was highlighted in particular.

### Investment

The current investment in prisons was questioned with submissions suggesting a focus on investing in preventative programs. NSW specific modelling of a Justice Reinvestment model was proposed.

### Drivers' Licenses

The issue of unlicensed driving as a gateway to contact with the justice system (and as a barrier to employment) was raised. Government support for drivers' licensing programs is proposed (discussed below).

### Domestic Violence

The need to increase a holistic response to domestic violence was raised, as was the need to provide improved services for Aboriginal women and children who were victims of domestic violence.

#### *Bail Act*

Amendments to *Bail Act* were proposed to enable connection with community to be maintained when people are being held on remand. The impact of the Act on levels of Aboriginal young people in detention was highlighted.

#### *Cultural Awareness and Accessibility*

There were concerns raised that increased ongoing focus on cultural awareness for both the police and the judiciary is needed. It was noted that entrenched attitudes were unlikely to change as the result of a two day course. Furthermore it was suggested that police would be more effective if they played stronger community roles.

Broadly there was a call for a greater Aboriginal presence in justice agencies.

#### *Diversionsary Programs*

Concern was raised that Aboriginal people are not able to access diversionsary programs at the same rate as non-Aboriginal people because of either geography (i.e. the programs are not available in locations with Aboriginal populations) or eligibility requirements. Aboriginal specific diversionsary programs were suggested, with reference to successful Victorian initiatives.

#### *Transition Planning*

The importance of transition planning for young people and adults exiting detention was raised.

#### *Sport and Recreation*

The need for greater investment and support for Aboriginal sports and sporting infrastructure was highlighted. Also suggested was consideration of less sterile architecture for regional and remote sporting venues. Sponsorship for major sporting entities to play in regional and remote locations was also suggested.

#### *Transport*

Transport was raised as a barrier to both education and employment within urban, regional and remote settings.

#### *Existing Programs*

Attention was drawn to a number of existing programs that seek to provide transport support. The School Student Transport Scheme provides subsidised travel for eligible students and the Private Vehicle Conveyance subsidy is available for private vehicle transport to school where there is no public transport. It was suggested that a public awareness campaign focussed on ensuring that Aboriginal communities were aware of these schemes would be beneficial. It was also suggested that the Private Vehicle Conveyance subsidy be amended to assist Aboriginal parents with costs associated with drivers' licenses and car upkeep.

#### *Drivers' Licenses*

A driver's license was identified as supporting both employment and education outcomes. Initiatives were suggested to improve access to licenses included:

- Government subsidising licensing costs for students transitioning to employment of TAFE or further studies from high school;
- Free licensing programs in high schools;
- Greater use of the Aboriginal Driver Education Program and Community Based Driver Knowledge Test Program; and
- Subsidised costs for access to vehicles and instructors.

#### *Additional Transport Options*

The need for additional or more frequent community busses was raised. Community busses were also highlighted as an employment opportunity. The need for better coordinated disability transport has been discussed above.

#### Income Management

There was significant opposition expressed to the income management trial in Bankstown with concern raised that it was an extension of the Northern Territory Intervention.

## **9. Examples of successful programs**

As part of the written submission process, the Taskforce encouraged submitters to provide examples of local solutions or programs which have had a positive impact on Aboriginal communities.

A total of **125** programs were mentioned in submissions and consultations, many as having a positive impact on Aboriginal communities. Of these **13** programs were related to education and **37** programs were related to employment. The remaining programs (**75**) raised by submitters were not directly related to the MTAA's Terms of Reference.

Appendix C includes a table which gives an outline of the programs raised by submitters as having a positive impact on the Aboriginal community. It should be noted that Aboriginal Affairs NSW has undertaken no evaluation or review of these programs.

## **10. What next?**

A draft of this community consultation report was circulated to the Senior Executive Committee (SEC) of the MTAA and CAPO for comment and review.

The findings of this consultation report is being used to: inform the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan currently being developed; inform the meeting papers and deliberations of the Taskforce; inform the interim Taskforce report that will be released publically as part of the second round of consultations scheduled to take place in August 2012; and inform the final Aboriginal affairs strategy scheduled for release by the end of 2012.

In the development of outcomes of the MTAA, including specific initiatives and reforms, it is intended these will be benchmarked against the outcomes of the community consultation process. This will aim to ensure that existing programs and services as well as any new programs - including changes to service delivery, implementation and accountability - are consistent with the outcomes of the community consultation process.

## ***Appendix A – Membership of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs***

The Hon. Victor Dominello MP  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Chair)

The Hon. Jillian Skinner MP  
Minister for Health

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP  
Minister for Education

The Hon. Mike Baird MP  
Treasurer

The Hon. Greg Smith SC MP  
Attorney General and Minister for Justice

The Hon. Pru Goward MP  
Minister for Family and Community Services

The Hon. Kevin Humphries MP  
Minister for Mental Health, Healthy Lifestyles and Western NSW

Mr Stephen Ryan  
Representative, Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations NSW

Professor Shane Houston  
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) University of Sydney

Ms Maydina Penrith  
Youth member

Mr Danny Lester  
Chief Executive, Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Mr Chris Eccles  
Director General, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Professor Michele Bruniges AM  
Director-General of Education and Communities  
Managing Director of TAFE NSW

Mr Jason Ardler  
Acting General Manager, Aboriginal Affairs

**Appendix B – Standard Agenda: Community consultation meeting**

<b>2.00pm</b>	Refreshments and registration
<b>2.15pm</b>	Welcome to Country and Introductions
<b>2.30pm</b>	Introduction from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (if in attendance) or the Aboriginal Affairs General Manager
<b>2.40pm</b>	Facilitated discussion
<b>4.40pm</b>	Discussion drawn to a close
<b>4.50pm</b>	Closing words from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (if in attendance) or the Aboriginal Affairs General Manager
<b>5.00pm</b>	Meeting concludes



**Appendix C Programs highlighted in submissions as having a positive impact on Aboriginal communities.**

Project/Program	Organisation	Description – provided through the consultation and submission process
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Fresh Start	Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum	<p>Fresh Start is an initiative of the Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum [a collaboration of regional organisations including council, schools, universities, TAFE, Department of Education and Communities, the community, Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups &amp; DEEWR]. The program operates in High Schools throughout Grafton.</p> <p>They have secured a combination of philanthropic, community, private, state and Australian government funding support to establish the program. The cost per year is approximately \$110,000. This program reaches 280 students, 500 parents and 50,000 local community members per year. Fresh Start won the 2012 National Award for Local Government in the category 'Engaging and Strengthening Indigenous Communities'</p>
Building the Education revolution	DEEWR	<p>Building the Education Revolution (BER) is a key element of the Australian Government's \$42 billion Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan (the Plan).</p> <p>BER is a \$16.2 billion component that is providing much needed infrastructure to Australia's schools and their communities and protected Australian jobs during the economic downturn.</p> <p>BER has funded around 24,000 infrastructure projects for approximately 9,500 schools across Australia</p>
Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural and Development Centre	NSW Family and Community Services	<p>Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural and Development Centre is a residential care program for Aboriginal boys aged 12-15 years currently attending school who are at risk of engaging in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>The program supports young people with three to six month intensive support program and receives funding from the NSW Family and Community Services as part of the government's existing commitment to providing alternatives to incarceration.</p>
Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program	Department of Education and Communities	<p>The EDAEP provides funding to organisations to support Aboriginal education, employment and training by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•subsidising the salary, development and support costs of Aboriginal employees in a public service agency or local council</li> <li>•funding innovative community projects</li> <li>•supporting work experience for aboriginal students in their final year of a degree or post degree course</li> </ul>

Early Language & Literacy Program	Aboriginal Literacy and Numeracy Foundation	ALNF has successfully utilised the Early Language & Literacy and the Learning to Read and Write in First Language programs to support the employment of Teacher Assistants/Community Teachers in school and preschools. These programs operate in 9 sites in Kempsey, NSW, 3 sites on Groote Eylandt, 2 sites on Palm Island. The cost per person is approximately \$5000.
Mooki Murriss	Quirindi High School	The Mooki Murriss project works with Aboriginal men who are alumni of Quirindi High School who are paired with Aboriginal boys enrolled at the school, and provide mentoring to help the boys set and attain educational goals.
Reiby Homework Centre	Eternity Aid	The Centre provides help to youth in Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre. The homework centre program focuses on individual needs through providing intensive literacy and numeracy coupled with life skills taught by experienced teachers, health professionals and enthusiastic role models in a secure, friendly environment conducive to learning and personal interaction.
Transition to High School Group Project	Eternity Aid	Assists young people transitioning from Primary to High School. Support is provided for those developmental processes removing risks associated with this period of change.
Norta Norta	Department of Education and Training	The Norta Norta program provides targeted support to Aboriginal students to accelerate progress in student achievement. The focus of the program is to provide learning assistance in the key areas of literacy and numeracy to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.
Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)	AIME	AIME provides a dynamic educational Program that gives Aboriginal high school students the skills, opportunities, belief and confidence to finish school at the same rate as their peers. AIME also connects students with post Year 12 opportunities, including further education and employment
Connected Communities	Department of Education and Communities	An education program in 15 schools running from 2013 with a focus on working with the community and all local services to improve results for children at school.
La Perouse Youth Haven	Funded through FaHCSIA	The La Perouse Youth Haven provides study programs and leadership groups in the community.
Partnership Brokers	The Smith Family	The Partnership Brokers Program is a key component of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transition (NP YAT). Partnership Brokers cultivate relationships between education and training providers, parents and families, business and industry and community groups. They also work closely with the region's Youth Connections provider who supports the needs of 'at risk' youth.

Multi Mix Mob Playgroup	Connect Marrickville (Schools as Communities Centre)	Early childcare and parental support provided through a playgroup
Youth Excel program	AANSW	Abolished
Koori Kindermana	Albury wadonga Aboriginal Health Service	Koori Kindermana is a service operating to support Aboriginal Families to access early childhood education, parenting, health, nutrition and other support and service. This service is available to Aboriginal preschool aged children.
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>		
Breakthru Solutions	Breakthru Solutions	Breakthru Solutions is a mentoring program focussing on employment outcomes.
Empowering Our Mob Workshop (EOMW)	A4e	The Empowering Our Mob Workshop (EOMW) aims to motivate, prepare and skill Aboriginal job seekers to: job search successfully; perform well in interviews; gain employment; and stay in work. So far the workshop has successfully run in Sydney and the Hunter Region.
BoysTown enterprises	Boystown Enterprises	Enterprise employment helps participants improve their self-esteem, work ethic, employability and vocational skills, generates high employment outcomes and provides clear benefits as defined by the local community and by government agencies.
In2Health	University of Wollongong, Illawarra Division of General Practice, State Training Services and In2Careers	In2Health, is a partnership between the University of Wollongong, Illawarra Division of General Practice, State Training Services and In2Careers which prepares, places and supports Aboriginal people for employment in administrative roles in General Practices and Allied Health facilities. This program includes work experience and training on the specific software used in Doctor's surgeries.
Black on Track (Pre-Employment Program)	Black on Track	This program engages and prepares Aboriginal people for employment through promoting responsibility and building individual and community capacity for future employment.
Taree Indigenous Development & Employment (TIDE)	Taree Indigenous Development & Employment (TIDE)	Taree Indigenous Development & Employment (TIDE) do individual case management, training and mentoring of job seekers. Between 40 and 50 people were placed in jobs last year. Once a person is in a job they receive twelve months mentoring. After staying in the job for 13 weeks they get a cash payment, and another after 26 weeks.
Aboriginal Employment Program	Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority	The AEP has over 350 Aboriginal people graduate from 2008 to 2011, creating 1104 employment opportunities in the construction industry and filling 90% of opportunities. Program has been evaluated.

Koori Job Ready	Aboriginal Employment Program	<p>The Koori Job Ready program is an eight week training course offering training in a range of construction subjects including:          Electrical, Construction carpentry, Plumbing, Plastering, Scaffolding, Concreting, Brick laying, Reading and interpreting plans, Levelling, Work safety at heights, Forklift driving and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&amp;S).          Students also obtain a range of formal qualifications:          An OH&amp;S white card, Forklift licence, A first aid certificate, A Certificate II in General Construction.</p>
Yaama Dhiyaan	Aboriginal Employment Program	<p>The Yaama Dhiyaan program is the hospitality training program run by the AEP. Upon graduation participants gain a Certificate II in Hospitality Operations. Including Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), Responsible conduct of gaming, OH&amp;S, Front of house hospitality, Taking reservations, Table setting, Serving customers and Food preparation.</p>
Indigenous Internship program	CareerTrackers	<p>CareerTrackers focuses solely on private sector employment for Aboriginal University Students. They aim to create private sector career pathways exposing Aboriginal people to career opportunities that have traditionally been unknown or inaccessible. CareerTrackers aims to provide Aboriginal students with meaningful work experience and financial independence.</p>
	Rio Tinto	<p>Coal And Allied (Rio Tinto) are committed to an Aboriginal employment target of 5%, there has also been two annual Aboriginal scholarships established with University of Newcastle which will feed into the Rio Tinto Vacation Work and Graduate Program.</p>
Regional Aboriginal Volunteer Training Program	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	<p>The Home and Community Care (HACC) Aboriginal Volunteer Program prepares Aboriginal people for tomorrow's work force through training and volunteer programs.</p>
New Careers for Aboriginal People Program (NCAP)	NSW Department of Education and Communities, State Training Services and Aboriginal Services	<p>NCAP Services every Aboriginal Community in the State of NSW and work at a ground level to assist and support the Aboriginal Communities and the Aboriginal people within those communities to achieve the necessary skills to gain sustainable employment on a daily basis.</p>
Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program	Mission Australia, funded by DEEWR	<p>The object of IYCP is to increase the number of you Aboriginal people who transition effectively from school into further education and training or employment. ICYP provides financial incentives to employers who provide school-based apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities to Aboriginal students in years 11 and 12.</p>
Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan	NSW Trade & Investment	<p>The Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan aims to support Aboriginal businesses through business mentoring, business and professional development, tailored advices on tourism marketing and product development. Initiatives will include working with Aboriginal communities, industry and government agencies such as NSW National Parks to create new guided Aboriginal tourism experiences, joint industry training with peak tourism associations on tourism distribution channels and increasing the level of Aboriginal interpretation on visitor precincts.</p>

Show Me the Way	Show Me the Way	Professional, tradespeople and community members are trained as Learning Partners (Mentors) by Show Me The Way and matched with Aboriginal students, trainees, people, to walk with them through their journey of employment. Each pair of student and Learning Partners engage and “chat” via a secure purpose-built web site. Every group/cohort has a discrete web space.
Outdoor Skills Training Program	Department of Primary Industries	This training program delivers courses in farm and land management.
Uniting Care CYPF	Uniting Care Burnside	A training program was run in collaboration with TAFE at the Burnside Out-of-Home Care Program in Dubbo, which supported staff, particularly older Aboriginal workers, to improve their literacy and computer literacy skills. A TAFE teacher supported staff over a six-month period in weekly sessions. The training was conducted one-on-one with staff and focused on working with forms and templates that staff use in their daily work.
BEST Employment Ltd	FaCHSIA	BEST Employment Limited (BEST) have received funding over 36 months to deliver the Community Support Service to improve Indigenous access to mainstream and Indigenous services in Inverell, Moree, and Narrabri, NSW.
Darug Research and Information Centre	Blacktown Arts Centre	Darug Research and Information Centre provides Cultural Workplace Relations, workplace tools, training, mentoring, traineeships, cadetships, etc
Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery program (IPROWD)	NSW Police Force an TAFE NSW	The course has been developed to assist Aboriginal people to gain the skills and confidence to succeed in joining the NSW Police Force.
Muru Mittigar	Muru Mittigar	Muru Mittigar enables you to participate and interact with members of the local Aboriginal community through the exciting educational and enriching cultural activities on offer. With a focus on providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, Muru Mittigar also presents positive outcomes for the local community, by creating a meeting place for sharing cultures.
Koori Communications and Training	Koori Communications	Koori Communications provide skills based pre-voc programs eg. Small engines, parent engagement programs etc
Lighthouse program	Parramatta Catholic Diocese	The Lighthouse Program provides students in Years 9 or 10 with the opportunity to develop key skills and experience in a learning environment outside school.
Community Development Employment Projects programme (CDEP).	FAHCSIA	The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program is an Australian Government funded initiative to support Aboriginal Job Seekers.

Trainee Enrolled Nurse Program	Far West Local Health Division	The Trainee Enrolled Nurse program provided a key pathway for Aboriginal people to commence careers in the health system.
Aboriginal Secondary Schools Career Development	Central Coast Local Health District	Aboriginal Secondary Schools Career Development - working in Partnership with the local high schools and other community organisations Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD) participates and implements a range of projects to encourage and support Aboriginal students to take an interest in careers in health and secondary students to remain in schools and complete their qualifications
Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre	FaCHSIA	Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre began with a period of capacity building through full time TAFE course which then developed into work programs, and it has now transformed into full time work
First People HR	First People HR	First People HR, is an Aboriginal-focused labour hire company. Its philosophy looks at training, mentoring and employer education.
BMEET	Barkindji	An employment and training community organisation in Dareton running a very successful training program using community leaders.
Ready for Retail Program,	Joblink Plus	Established in Inverell all five Aboriginal participants (out of a total of eleven participants) received jobs.
Career Ready	Generation One	GenerationOne and its sister organisation, The Australian Employment Covenant, are working together to help increase Indigenous employment and end disparity
Grow Your Own	Mallee Family Care	Mallee Family Care have undertaken a 'Grow Your Own' policy, where staff are encouraged to move from trainees to team leaders.
Gundi Indigenous Employment Project	A4e	The Gundi Indigenous Employment Project (Gundi) was designed by Corrective Services NSW for Indigenous ex-offenders, and aims to drive employment outcomes in the building and construction sector, a key growth industry in NSW.
New Employment Incentive Program	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	The NEIS is a Commonwealth Government funded program that assists unemployed people into self employment.
Aboriginal Land Care	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	This program is committed to employing Aboriginal people to work on natural resource, conservation and heritage management projects and contracts and fulfil the long held vision of its elders Council for Aboriginal employment in such work.
Aboriginal Employment Strategy	TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute	The aim of this strategy is to increase the employment in TAFE NSW North Coast Institute of Aboriginal People to at least 4% of their overall workforce. In order to achieve this they aim to build their organisations Aboriginal Cultural Capability.

Yeovil Horticultural Enterprise	Robinson College	The object of the project is to develop a viable commercial market garden enterprise on the station 'Yeovil' 3kms from Wilcannia The project is designed to create employment as well as generate and stimulate the local and regional economy
Aquaculture	Department of Primary Industries	The Aquaculture unit continues to assist Aboriginal aquaculture projects by case management of aquaculture development proposals and assisting in sourcing appropriate funding.
Aboriginal Business Development Program	NSW Trade & Investment	This is a program offers business support to Aboriginal businesses in NSW.
Economic Development - NSW Closing the Gap Strategy	NSW Trade & Investment	NSW Trade & Investment is currently supporting the development of the NSW Closing the Gap Strategy - particularly in relation to economic development and cultural heritage.
Sydney Aboriginal Tourism Cluster	NSW Trade & Investment	Destination NSW in partnership with TAFE NSW, OEH, the Botanic Gardens coordinates the Aboriginal Tour Guide Training Program. The Cluster aims to support the development of Aboriginal businesses and encourage Aboriginal employment in the tourism industry.
Many Rivers Project	NSW Trade & Investment	Destination NSW is working with DEEWR to conduct an audit of Aboriginal tourism experiences in the Many Rivers region. The review is with a view to better supporting and developing existing Aboriginal tourism ventures businesses, as well as identify new opportunities.
Aboriginal Community Capacity Building Project	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	This project aims to increase the number of Aboriginal Community members working through natural resource management.
Governance Skills Training Program	Department of Primary Industries	Skills needs analysis, course development, sourcing of funding and delivery of courses in governance, leadership and higher administrative skills.
Business/Property planning	Department of Primary Industries	Negotiated development of property management and business plans
Skilling Queenslanders for Work		Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) initiative. These projects run from 13 to 26 weeks in length and target the long term unemployed by providing customised employment and training assistance to meet their individual needs, and the demands of a labour market for a skilled workforce.
<b>OTHER</b>		
<b>YOUTH</b>		
Adolescent Treatment Group	Eternity Aid	Eternity Aid provides help to youth at risk through the Adolescent Treatment Group

Young Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program		The program is a partnership between local businesses in Moree to support fifty-six 16 to 18 year old girls. These teens have a high rate of pregnancy. It was noted that last year the program ran a Hairdressing Certificate II, and nine out of the ten completed it, six of whom didn't have a Year 10 certificate so they couldn't access TAFE or Joblink Plus. This year they are running a beauty certificate.
Mediation	Eternity Aid	Support for Youth Justice Conferencing, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation between young offenders and aggrieved parties, and young people and their families.
Bourke Community Outreach and Youth Program	Eternity Aid	Youth activities are run through the PCYC, sports, play therapy groups and puppet shows are supported by local providers, maintaining relationships with the community.
Youth Program	Eternity Aid	Run at Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre - includes sports programs, airbrushing and vocational groups, arts, puppet shows - all supported by Local Providers, maintaining relationships with the community
Chaplaincy service	Eternity Aid	This Service is based at Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre in Bourke and provides bereavement treatment groups, intensive individual chaplaincy services.
Tribal Warrior Youth Mentoring	Tribal Warrior Association	Tribal Warrior believe that many Aboriginal people need assistance to overcome life barriers that limit their opportunities education, employment and independence. Their mentoring and Human Resource Development programs and partnerships channel people to change their lives through learning and support.
NASCA Challenge	National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy	The Program aims to deliver messages about positive lifestyle choices and the importance of education, support young people from regional and remote communities to be proud of their culture, support young people to engage with sport and help young people be motivated to achieve their goals in life
Show Me the Way	Show Me the Way	Show Me The Way supports Aboriginal youth with online social networking mentoring model-connecting students and mentors from around Australia.
Ngura Program	Wyong Shire Council	The Ngura Program which is run over the school term with the local community supporting the program. Students increase their awareness of the importance of physical activity and improve their knowledge of health and employment issues facing Aboriginal people so that the individuals can make better choices in their own lives.
Street Beat	South Sydney Aboriginal Resource Centre	Street Beatz is a small transport and outreach service operating late at night in the South Sydney area Street Beatz attempts to minimize harm for young people on the streets late at night by picking them up and taking them to their home or to another safe place



Aboriginal Summer School for Excellence in Technology and Science (ASSETS)	The University of South Australia, SA Water, RiAus and the Australian Science and Mathematics School along with Wiltja Residential Program in SA	The program provides opportunities to participate in an exciting and engaging science, cultural and leadership program. It is a rigorous and challenging science and technology program conducted by leading educators and scientists at The University of South Australia, SA Water, RiAus and the Australian Science and Mathematics School. It consolidates cultural understandings and leadership potential, together with supporting young Aboriginal people as they work to achieve their goals and future aspirations.
Indigenous Leadership Program	FaCHSIA	The program aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Inspire you to reach your highest potential</li> <li>•Encourage you to share a positive vision for Indigenous people</li> <li>•Support you to gain knowledge and skills and unique experiences</li> <li>•Empower your personal leadership journey and supporting you to mentor upcoming leaders</li> <li>•Provide you with the skills to help you reach your goals and aspirations and inspire and help those around you</li> </ul>
Dapto Cookawarra Youth Connect DKYC		Under FACS Better Futures Strategy, the project aims to achieve better outcomes for children and young people by encouraging their development and improving family and community support. The project focuses on young people aged 12-15 who are at risk of leaving school.
Youth Program - Making Tracks Together	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	BDAC believe that alternative learning activities with emphasis on prevention and diversion programs and activities, can address antisocial behaviour, school retention, and unemployment through provision of education from an Indigenous perspective (circular learning) leading to increased self-esteem and skill development. Youth will develop a knowledge and respect of themselves as individuals.
Walk About Dreaming Programs	Narromine Local Aboriginal Land Council	This service aims to meet the needs of our Aboriginal young people who are willing to take part in the reconnection program, and to also work with marginalised youth nationwide, by providing opportunities for them to find positive identities when disconnected.
<b>ELDERS</b>		
Aged Care Facility	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	The facility was established to provide care to Aboriginal frail aged, aged and people with a disability, who could not be cared for in the community. Each person at the Aged Care Facility is individually assessed and their care provided based on such individual requirements.
Community Aged Care Packages	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	Community Aged Care Packages are provided to Aboriginal aged, frail aged, and people with a disability to support the person with day-to-day living skills. Level of need of the client is identified by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) as necessary for that person to remain living independently in the community.

Christian Aboriginal Co-Operative		The conception of this Co-Operative has been brought about brought about Christian Aboriginal elders, the goal of this program is to bring back to the Aboriginal people the ability to take control and ownership of their destiny
Nursing home in Hunter Valley	NSW Trade & Investment	A nursing home is being developed in the Hunter Valley on land owned by the Local Aboriginal Land Council.
Anaiwan Elders, Riamukka Camp	Department of Primary Industries	Occupation permit MOU with Anaiwan Elders to create a cultural camping area for gatherings and teaching culture to young people and non-Aboriginal people.
Aboriginal Wheels to Meals and Outreach Food Programs	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	Aboriginal Wheels to Meals provides nutritional foods to Aboriginal people who are aged, frail aged, people with a disability and are disadvantaged.
<b>HEALTH</b>		
Bourke Allied Health Clinic	Eternity Aid	The Bourke Allied Health Clinic program was born out of the Reiby Lifeskills Program as a way of extending the support into one of the communities that was highly represented within Reiby.
Aunty Jean's Good Health Project	Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Aboriginal Health	Aunty Jean's Good Health Team program is expanding its work in Narrandera, providing health information and referrals to local indigenous people. The group works in co-ordination with a range of health care services to help clients navigate the healthcare system.
Deadly Sister Girls	FaHCSIA	Health and well being program for women in Coffs Harbour to help women lose wait and prevent diabetes and other weight related problems.
WAMINDA	WAMINDA Womens health service	Waminda aims to empower and support Aboriginal women of the Shoalhaven area to make decisions about their own health and reduce the high rate of ill health among Aboriginal women in the Shoalhaven community.
Robinvale Eusten Festival for Healthy Living	Melbourne Childrens Hospital	This festival has helped to galvanise, energise and comfort; whether small rural towns struggling through drought for survival, disadvantaged Melbourne suburbs, the towns that bore the brunt of the 2009 Victorian bushfires, or remote communities steeped in grief.
Muramali	Gandangarra LALC	Muramali is an Early Intervention Program, the service provides a one stop, culturally sensitive means of providing a range of health care services that is tailored to the individual needs of clients.
Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Programs	Aboriginal Medical Service	AMIHS aims to decrease Aboriginal perinatal mortality by providing accessible, culturally appropriate maternity care programs for Aboriginal families across NSW.

<b>JUSTICE</b>		
Intensive Supervision Program (ISP)	Juvenile Justice	Intensive Supervision Programs (ISP) provide support to young people, their families and communities post release, Educators stipulate that this support is crucial in deterring recidivism by tackling underlying problems within family frameworks, as well as the disadvantage in the wider community.
Rekindling the Spirit	DoCS	RTS provides Aboriginal Offenders from Lismore and Tabulam who are managed by FACS along with other risk clients with the opportunity to address their issues of family violence and drug and alcohol misuse, thereby reducing recidivism and the rate of Aboriginal incarceration
Youth at risk and young offender drug and alcohol program	ACMF - Australian Childrens music Foundation	ACMF aims to improve the learning and social outcomes of Aboriginal students in NSW schools and education and training units in the NSW juvenile justice system.
<b>COMMUNITY</b>		
Community Advocacy and Consultation	Eternity Aid	This program includes; Community chaplaincy, advocacy, consultation, adjunct support, availability to present at local forums and chair forums.
National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)	NCIE	The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) offers innovative programs which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Arts and Culture</li> <li>o Health and Wellness</li> <li>o Learning and Innovation</li> <li>o Sport and Recreation</li> </ul>
Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Aboriginal Corporation	FaCHSIA	Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Aboriginal Corporation, established 2003 in Deniliquin also have an office in Balranald - Community Support Service (CSS) which operates out of Yarkuwa sources the information for Aboriginal clients to access services such as housing, aged care, education & training, health & employment and free internet service for the Aboriginal Community.
<b>CHILD PROTECTION</b>		
The Dubbo Family Referral Service	NSW Health and Uniting Care Burnside	The Dubbo Family Referral Service has developed a specific model to enhance Aboriginal families access to service. (This is an initiative under Keep Them Safe commitment to stage the implementation of Family Referral Services over NSW. The three pilots were conducted in Western NSW, Hunter Central Coast, and Mt Druitt).
Kool Kids Club	Weave	Kool Kids Club is a prevention and early intervention initiative providing FREE after after school and holiday activity programs in La Perouse and the surrounding areas. The program supports the development of well being, resilience and life skills for children and young people, fostering protective factors by building on young people's strengths and enhancing their connections with community and family.
<b>TRANSPORT</b>		

Transport Fleet	Gandangarra LALC	GLALC has a fleet of 21 vehicles to transport over 650 client trips each week to and from medical appointments, taking children to and from school and assisting clients with other essential shopping and chores
Aboriginal HACC Transport Service	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	The HACC transport service offers clients transport to medical related appointments in NSW by means of ticket bookings or travel vouchers, and in more extreme cases, support worker transport.
<b>OTHER</b>		
Aboriginal Community Options Projects	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	The ACOP supports Aboriginal people who have complex needs who are frail aged or have a disability and carers of people with a disability.
Funeral and Information Service	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	The funeral and information service assists grieving families during the bereavement period. They also provide transport advice on finalising arrangements, offer to contact out of town relatives social workers etc
Weinteriga project		No Information provided
Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA)	NSW Trade & Investment	EAPA is a program to help people who are struggling with their energy bills due to a crisis or emergency situation. It operates through a voucher system with vouchers distributed via participating community welfare organisation across NSW.
Energy information initiatives including Energy Info Line, Energy Assistance Guide, presentations at community sector forums etc	NSW Trade & Investment	Various programs designed at ensuring that consumers (particularly disadvantaged consumers) have adequate information to participate as active consumers in the energy market and are aware of entitlements and protections. These include rebates for disadvantaged consumers such as the NSW Energy Rebate, the Medical Energy Rebate and Life Support Rebate, protections against disconnection and access to dispute resolution services.
Financial Counselling	NSW Trade & Investment	Funding for the Financial Counsellors Association of NSW to train additional financial counsellors, including in remote areas of the state, for instance Forbes -Wilcannia. Financial counsellors are based in community welfare organisations across the state and provide free services.
Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council (AFAC)	Department of Primary Industries	The AFAC has been established under Section 229 of the <i>Fisheries Management Act (FMA) 1994</i> to provide advice about Aboriginal fishing issues.
Fishway at Brewarrina Weir	Department of Primary Industries	In partnership with the western CMA and the MDBA, staff from the Department of Primary Industries Conservation Action Unit have been working with the local community and Traditional Owners within the town of Brewarrina to progress a fishway on Brewarrina weir. The fishway aims to enhance the ecological and cultural health of the region by improving fish passage and restoring natural flows to the National Heritage listed, Aboriginal Fish Traps adjacent to the weir.

Dubbo Fire Station - Aboriginal Cultural Centre	NSW Trade & Investment	Conversion of the historic Dubbo Fire Station into an Aboriginal Cultural Centre. The facility will include a montage history of Aboriginal people and culture in the region, a restaurant, art gallery and radio station.
Development of Pier 2/3 Walsh Bay Sydney	NSW Trade & Investment	Development of Pier 2/3 in Walsh Bay Sydney into an arts and culture hub.
Aboriginal Cultural heritage site surveys	Department of Primary Industries	Operational guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Management.
Coles Cr Co-management agreement with Ulladulla LALC	Department of Primary Industries	Co-management agreement on care and maintenance of Art sites in Coles Cr in McDonald SF. Access and site review issues managed jointly
Wagonga Picnic Area Co-management agreement	Department of Primary Industries	Co-management of unused picnic area for site protection and future tourism business.
Parental and Community engagement group		No information provided
Community Builders Program		No information provided
Many Finance Microfinance		Many Rivers Microfinance Limited (Many Rivers) is a not-for-profit microenterprise development organisation that exists to help Indigenous and other Australians to establish and develop micro and small businesses through business support and small loans.
Respite Service	Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Corporation	Booroongen Djugun Respite Service support people with a disability by giving regular or short-term breaks for carers and families, providing care in the community, and responding to emergency situations or difficulties.
Fishing workshops	Department of Primary Industries	Department of Primary Industries holds five fishing workshops a year with over 200 Aboriginal children and children from disadvantaged backgrounds participating. These workshops are an important tool for teaching kids about responsible fishing practices and fishing skills with Aboriginal Elders and educators sharing their knowledge of local cultural fishing, cultural heritage as well as practical fishing skills.
Eden Land and Sea Country Plan	Department of Primary Industries	The Eden Land and Sea Country Plan is a pilot project being coordinated by the Southern Rivers CMA together with a project steering committee (on which Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries NSW is represented). The Plan sets out the aspirations and interest of Aboriginal people within the Eden LALC. It will inform government and non-government agencies of natural resource and other issues of importance to that community.
Yenu Allowah	Uniting Care Burnside	Yenu Allowah has interim premises in a Council owned occasional care centre in Mt Druitt and aims to promote community participation and ownership and are guided by purposely established local reference groups in each location.

