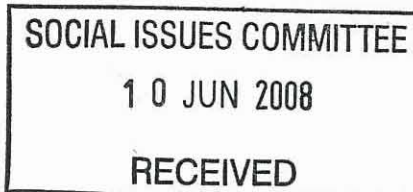




New South Wales Government  
Department of Premier and Cabinet



TCO/21521 - HSJB

- 6 JUN 2008

Ms Victoria Pymm  
Principal Council Officer  
Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms *Victoria* Pymm

I refer to your letter dated 5 May 2008 inviting corrections to the transcript of my appearance before the Standing Committee's inquiry into Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage on 29 April 2008, and seeking my response to the questions taken on notice.

I enclose a copy of the transcript marked with corrections. My colleague Ms D'Adam has also had the opportunity to review the transcript.

I further enclose a response in four parts to the questions taken on notice.

1. Those questions from the list of draft questions which were not dealt with during evidence. The response includes information regarding specific achievements to date in relation to State Plan goals that include Indigenous people.
2. Advice as to reporting of hospital admission rates for acute respiratory infections, gastroenteritis and skin infections among Aboriginal children.
3. Information regarding programs for Indigenous men.
4. A diagram representing decision-making structures for Aboriginal affairs in NSW.

As I indicated to the Committee, I would be happy to make a further appearance if this would assist the Committee in completing this important inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Kruk  
Director General

**QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL,  
DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET**

1. *Questions from the list of draft questions that were not reached during evidence*

1. Does the NSW Government break down broader State Plan goals (such as keeping people safe) to identify their application to Indigenous people?
  - a. Will the data be disaggregated to determine levels of improvement within Indigenous communities?
  - b. Will outcomes for Indigenous people be determined separately (in relation to the broader goals)?

**Response:**

'Strengthening Aboriginal communities' is one of the 14 high-level goals of the State Plan. Under this goal, Priority F1 focuses Government effort on making measurable improvements against the following objectives:

- Safe families: Ensure Aboriginal families are supported to live free from violence and harm
- Education: Increase the readiness to learn of Aboriginal children prior to school entry
- Environmental health: Ensure that all Aboriginal communities have equitable access to environmental health systems
- Economic Development: Increase Aboriginal employment

The Priority Delivery Plan for F1 also incorporates a strategy of building community resilience to secure long-term sustainable change in outcomes for Aboriginal people. This strategy underpins the delivery of Priority F1 and all other State Plan priorities of relevance to Aboriginal people.

State Plan performance data is disaggregated and reported publicly for Aboriginal people under the following priorities:

- Priority F5 – Reduced hospital admissions
- Priority S4 – Increasing levels of attainment for all students

Thirteen other State Plan priorities have been identified as having particular relevance for Aboriginal people:

- R1: Reduced rates of crime, particularly violent crime
- R2: Reducing re-offending
- F3: Improved outcomes in mental health
- R3: Reduced levels of antisocial behaviour
- F4: Embedding the principle of prevention and early intervention into Government Service delivery in NSW
- R4: Increased participation and integration in community activities
- F6: Increased proportion of children learning with skills for life and learning at school entry
- S3: Improved health through reduced obesity, smoking, illicit drug use and risk drinking

- F7: Reduced rates of child abuse and neglect
- S4: Increasing levels of attainment for all students
- E4: Better environmental outcomes for native vegetation, biodiversity, land, rivers and coastal waterways
- S5: More students complete Year 12 or recognised vocational training
- E8: More people using parks, sporting and recreational facilities and participating in the arts and cultural activity

The application of these priorities to Aboriginal people is being driven by relevant lead and partner agencies, and monitored by the Two Ways Together Coordinating Committee, the Government's principal coordinating body for Aboriginal Affairs (see below for a description of oversight arrangements for Aboriginal affairs).

Comprehensive measurement of outcomes for Aboriginal people occurs through the *Two Ways Together Report on Indicators*, which is released every 2 years. The most recent report was released by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on 22 April 2008.

## 2. Coordinating objectives:

### a. What input is there from Aboriginal communities?

#### **Response:**

#### Two Ways Together

The Two Ways Together Coordinating Committee is the Government's principal coordination mechanism for Aboriginal affairs policy and service delivery at the State-wide level. The Coordinating Committee includes Aboriginal people among its membership. Aboriginal communities are represented on the Coordinating Committee through the membership of a number of peak organisations from the non-government sector:

- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council
- Aboriginal Child Youth & Family Secretariat
- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

Aboriginal peak organisations are also represented on Two Ways Together Regional Engagement Groups, which provide advice to the Government's Regional Coordination Management Groups (RCMGs). DPC supports the RCMGs. The Regional Engagement Groups assist in setting priorities and finding solutions for service delivery to Aboriginal people at the regional level (see response to question 4 below for further detail).

Community Working Parties form part of the local-level implementation of *Two Ways Together*. They are comprised of local community representatives and provide input into the development and delivery of services to Aboriginal people by working with a range of government agencies, and with Regional Engagement Groups.

#### NSW Interagency Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities

Input from Aboriginal communities on the issue of child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities (ACSA) is coordinated through the Ministerial Advisory Panel.

The Ministerial Advisory Panel was formed in 2007 to advise and advocate on the issue of child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities within NSW, and to advise the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the progressive implementation and reporting of the NSW Interagency Plan.

The role of the Ministerial Advisory Panel includes:

- providing advice to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the issue of child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities in NSW;
- providing a forum for the exchange of information between stakeholders on child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities; and
- communicating and promoting the priorities, principles and best practice that should underpin all government programs of assistance to Aboriginal people in preventing child sexual assault.

The Ministerial Advisory Panel has a majority of Aboriginal members, and comprises the following people:

Ms Sandra Bailey (CHAIR)	CEO, Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council
Ms Gillian Calvert (DEPUTY CHAIR)*	Commissioner for Children & Young People
Ms Beverley Manton	Chairperson, NSW Aboriginal Lands Council
Ms Wendy Fernando	Community Worker, Women's Legal Services NSW
Ms Glendra Stubbs	LINK-UP (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation
Ms Marcia Ella-Duncan	Chair, NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce
Ms Joan Dickson	Member, NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce
Mr Greg Telford	Member, NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce
Ms Melva Kennedy	Member, NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce
Professor Chris Cunneen*	Member, NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce
Mr Brendan Thomas	Assistant Director General, Attorney General's Department

*\*non-Aboriginal members*

3. How does the Department of Premier and Cabinet coordinate Government objectives that require input from a number of agencies in relation to goals that include Indigenous people?
  - a. What has been achieved to date?
  - b. How does DPC measure outcomes and revise the State Plan goals?

**Response:**

Under the State Plan, the lead responsibility for delivering priorities is allocated to lead Ministers and CEOs. Ministers and CEOs make use of a range of mechanisms to drive delivery of their State Plan priorities, including existing processes such as CEO cluster groups.

Because of the range of portfolios involved in achieving the State Plan goal of strengthening Aboriginal communities, the Chief Executives Committee is directly overseeing the delivery of Priority F1. The CEC is chaired by the Director General of DPC, and includes the Director General of the DAA.

DPC tracks performance against achievement of State Plan Priorities and Targets quarterly through performance reports prepared by lead agencies. Regular public updates on State Plan progress are provided through the State Plan website ([www.stateplan.nsw.gov.au](http://www.stateplan.nsw.gov.au)).

The Government has committed to a revision of State Plan Priorities and Targets every 3 years. The next review will be in 2009 and will involve significant public consultation.

Key achievements to date

The Government released the NSW State Plan in November 2006. The Government's 10-year Aboriginal Affairs plan, *Two Ways Together 2003-2012*, forms the principal mechanism for delivering Priority F1 of the State Plan: *Improved health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people*. *Two Ways Together* sets the whole-of-government approach to improving services through partnership with Aboriginal people, with the objective of improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in NSW. Information is provided below regarding specific achievements to date from this whole-of-government approach.

Under the State Plan the Government has reformed the Budget process to allocate resources to deliver State Plan priorities. Announcements made as part of the Budget brought down on 3 June 2008 demonstrate the results from the new Budget reprioritisation process. The Budget includes the following initiatives that support State Plan Priority F1 and other Priorities relevant to Aboriginal people:

- A joint investment by the Government and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council of \$205 million over 25 years for a significant water and sewerage upgrade and maintenance program in more than 60 discrete Aboriginal communities. The program will build on the Government's investment of \$16.4 million in water and sewerage infrastructure under its 10-year Aboriginal Communities Development Program, and provide for ongoing and effective monitoring and maintenance. The Budget includes an initial commitment of \$6.3 million over 3 years to build water and sewerage infrastructure in 22 communities, and \$29.9 million over 4 years to

provide on-going support for the operation, maintenance and monitoring of water and sewerage systems through this program.

- \$1.9 million in 2008-09 to provide Community Builders in 40 Partnership Communities as part of the implementation of *Two Ways Together* at the local level. These officers will work with government and non-government agencies to connect services to the needs of people in Aboriginal communities.
- \$1.1 million over four years for an evaluation and strategic planning unit within DAA to strengthen the Government's evidence base on Indigenous policy.
- \$960,000 over four years for Community Engagement Officers as part of the Safe Families program in four locations as part of the initial implementation of the *NSW Interagency Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities* at the local level. The Officers' initial focus will be on raising awareness and engaging communities around issues of child sexual assault. In addition, reprioritisation funding of \$200,000 over four years for activities to help build community capacity in those locations.
- \$22.9 million over four years to extend the local-level implementation of the NSW Interagency Plan to five further locations in western NSW under an expansion of the Safe Families program.
- \$19.1 million over four years through NSW Health to the *Building strong foundations for Aboriginal children, families and communities* strategy. This strategy will extend services already provided under the Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Strategy to ensure that all Aboriginal families in NSW with young children have quality access to early childhood health services.
- \$15.2 million over four years through NSW Health for the enhancement of the existing Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative program to include a more culturally appropriate program for Aboriginal people. The Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) is a partnership program that aims to provide stable housing linked to specialist support for people with mental illness.
- \$2.8 million for the continuation of Aboriginal Justice Groups and Aboriginal Community Patrols. Aboriginal Community Justice Groups are representatives of the local Aboriginal community who come together to look at crime and offending in their community and develop strategies to address the underlying causes of that offending. Aboriginal Community Patrols aim to provide safe transport options for Aboriginal young people who are on the street late at night and provide referrals and outreach support to clients.
- \$570,000 has been allocated to the Department of Lands to assist Aboriginal people to resolve native title claims. Part of this additional funding will be directed towards detailed surveying work required to formalise land transfers.

### **Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Strategy (AMIHS)**

NSW Health developed the AMIHS in 2000 in response to research into Aboriginal perinatal health in NSW. AMIHS is based on a model of service provision which includes a team approach to community maternity services (including midwifery, Aboriginal health workers, specialists and general practice), a flexible and non-judgmental approach, and sensitivity to the underlying social and economic circumstances which have such an impact on the lives of Aboriginal people.

An independent evaluation of the initial roll-out of AMIHS in seven rural locations found that:

- significantly more women attended their first antenatal visit before they were 20 weeks pregnant;
- more women initiated breastfeeding, and more were still breastfeeding when asked again at 6 weeks after the baby was born;
- there was a significant reduction in the number of babies born preterm; and
- Aboriginal women were very satisfied with the services provided.

In view of these results, in April 2007 the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) and NSW Health entered a partnership to link Aboriginal children and families more effectively with existing prevention and early intervention programs offered via DoCS *Brighter Futures* program. The project will strengthen the early intervention service spectrum for Aboriginal children and families in order to effect change in lifelong outcomes for this population group. DoCs and Health have each contributed \$2.2 million per annum for 2 years commencing in 2007-08 and Health has contributed \$4.4 million recurrently from 2009-2010.

The enhancement enables the establishment of a further 17 sites, making a total of 31 sites in NSW; and the existing AMIHS and Alternative Birthing Services Program sites are being reoriented and transitioned into the new AMIHS model. A further 3 sites which operate on the AMIHS model were established in 2006-07 via seeding funding to Area Health Services with the requirement that they are recurrently maintained by those Areas subsequent to completion of the 3 year seeding period.

### **Intensive Family Based Services (IFBS)**

The Department of Community Services provides IFBS to Aboriginal families whose children are at risk of entering an out of home care (OOHC) placement due to protective concerns, or where the children have been placed in OOHC and have a case plan goal of restoration. It targets families at the 'high risk' or acute end of the service continuum, but employs a strengths-based approach common to many early intervention programs, including DoCS' *Brighter Futures* program. DoCS currently operates five IFBS services (Casino, Bourke, Dapto, Redfern, Campbelltown, Mt Druitt) and is planning to establish two more in the Hunter and New England Regions.

Key results of the IFBS evaluation were:

- a statistically significant reduction in the number of child protection reports for children and young people at 3, 6 and 12 months post intervention;
- a reduction in the likelihood of out-of-home care placements by up to one third where the child or young person had a placement in the 12 months pre intervention;
- a cost benefit ratio of 1.9. That is, the costs of this type of intervention compared to savings made in relation to a reduction in child protection reports and out-home care placements; and
- a statistically significant impact on reports involving carer drug and alcohol and carer mental health issues.



## **Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) and Children Project**

The ETS and Children Project has been funded by NSW Health (\$2.4 million over 2002-2006) in partnership with the Cancer Council NSW, National Heart Foundation of Australia (NSW Division), the Asthma Foundation (NSW) and SIDS and Kids NSW. The main project goal is to reduce the exposure of children aged 0-6 years to ETS in homes and cars in NSW.

The project used media (TV, radio advertisements and poster billboards) in addition to brochures, a website and other resources to promote the campaign message. Evaluation of the project has indicated a positive outcome from a population health perspective. There was a 55.7 per cent increase in the number of smoke free homes within the primary target audience since the implementation of the campaign and a 41.8 per cent increase in the number surveyed reporting that all cars in which children had travelled during the last month were smoke-free.

There has been a significant focus through the implementation of the project through Aboriginal media outlets that continues to be in place. In addition, Aboriginal resources developed for this project are currently being used with the SmokeCheck program.

## **Schools in Partnership -Targeted Aboriginal Students Strategy**

Schools in Partnership was established in response to a recommendation from the Aboriginal Education Review conducted by the Department of Education and Training. It is a cross-agency program that encourages schools with high population of Aboriginal students to develop community partnerships with parents and communities. 30 schools across the state will participate in this program over the next four years, with 10 already established.

The 2007 evaluation shows the following results to date:

- Year 3 Basic Skills Test results showed that in 2005, 47.4 per cent of Aboriginal students in the ten SiP schools were in Band 1 (the lowest band). In 2006, this had fallen to 29.3 per cent, constituting an improvement of 38 per cent.
- In 2005, the number of Year 3 students in Bands 1 and 2 (the two lowest bands) was 77 per cent. In 2006, this had decreased to 62 per cent.
- Across SiP schools in 2005 in Year 5, 17.1 per cent of Aboriginal students were in Band 1. In 2006, there were just 4.3 per cent in Band 1. In 2005, 38.8 per cent of students were in Bands 1 and 2. In 2006, this number had dropped to 26.3 per cent.
- Using Bomaderry Public School as an example, literacy aides working with students who performed poorly in 2005 had significant results. In 2005, 67 per cent of Year 3 students were in Band 1; in 2006 this number was reduced to 17 per cent. Similarly, 28 per cent of Year 5 students in 2005 were in Band 1, and in 2006 there were only 8 per cent.

The evaluation concluded that the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students would be overcome within a decade in SiP schools.

## **Kids Excel and Youth Excel**

\$7 million has been provided over four years for Kids Excel to provide extra support for children up to 12 years old through practical activities such as breakfast programs, health services and behaviour management programs. This program sees partnerships being developed between teachers, parents, children and communities and successful cooperation between schools, government agencies and community groups, and the program has already had a significant impact. Results to date are as follows:

- In 2006, when compared with 2004 results there was a 14.2 per cent decrease in the percentage of Aboriginal students in the lowest band in Year 3 Literacy in Kids Excels Schools, compared to a 0.2 per cent decrease for Aboriginal students across all Government schools.
- To date, Basic Skills Test results indicate that Kids Excel has significantly reduced the proportion of Aboriginal students obtaining the lowest skill band outcomes in Year 3 and Year 5 Literacy and Numeracy. The program appears to be on track to meeting its target of 'Number of students achieving lower band results halved' by the end of 2008.

\$4.5 million over four years has been allocated for Youth Excel to provide additional support for high school students such as Aboriginal-specific homework classes, student mentoring, employment of Aboriginal teachers and programs to link students with employment or further higher education, and the program has already had a significant impact. Results to date are as follows:

- In 2006, when compared with 2004 results there was a 13.8 per cent decrease in the percentage of Aboriginal students in the lowest band in School Certificate English in Youth Excel Schools, compared to a 1 per cent increase for Aboriginal students across all Government schools.
- Taken as a whole, School Certificate English data indicate that Youth Excel appears to be on track to meet its target to halve the number of Aboriginal students achieving lower end results and double the number of Aboriginal students achieving upper band School Certificate English results by the end of 2008.

It should be noted that the Kids Excel and Youth Excel programs target a relatively small number of students, and the smaller the cohort, the more volatile aggregated results can be.

## **Aboriginal Communities Development Program (ACDP)**

DAA manages the ACDP, a ten-year \$240 million capital program to construct new houses and repair existing houses that pose a health or safety risk and to address environmental health issues. ACDP targets 22 priority Aboriginal communities, and since being implemented in 1998, 1,084 people have been adequately housed and 3,190 people have been provided with improved housing. The training and employment component of ACDP has allowed a total of 222 Aboriginal people to start apprenticeships and traineeships in construction trades in the carpentry, joinery and landscaping trades since 1998. These training and development outcomes mean that Aboriginal people can be involved in the construction of the houses that they, and members of their families, will ultimately occupy.

The ACDP has also been instrumental in assisting communities develop Aboriginal community-owned building companies. Through ACDP, 15 Aboriginal building companies have been established in 13 communities in NSW, with \$55 million in contracts let. They undertake repairs and maintenance to existing houses and the construction of new houses. More than 250 Aboriginal people have been employed with these building companies, with increased Aboriginal participation in remaining building companies.

A large number of local Aboriginal people have also been employed in 'non trades' areas by mainstream contractors in priority communities and the Housing for Health Program. The Employment and Training Program of the ACDP won a Gold Premiers Award in the "Community Building" category in 2006.

ACDP includes a *Housing for Health* component administered by NSW Health in partnership with DAA which addresses issues such as repairing leaking shower recesses, faulty electrical wiring, leaking taps and repairing items. Since 1998 *Housing for Health* has been delivered to approximately 2,100 houses in 66 communities in NSW. *Housing for Health* has resulted in:

- a 10-fold increase in electrically safe houses (which reduces injuries and saves assets);
- a 5-fold increase in fire safety in houses (which reduces injuries and saves assets);
- a 3-fold increase in ability to wash people, particularly children (which reduces infections);
- a 7-fold increase in ability to wash clothes/bedding (which reduces infections);
- a doubling of satisfactory waste removal – such as a working toilet (which reduces infections); and
- a 6-fold increase in ability to store, prepare and cook food (improving nutrition).

### **Improving Aboriginal Employment in the NSW Public Sector**

To improve Aboriginal employment opportunities within the NSW public sector, the Government has introduced *Making It Our Business: Improving Aboriginal Employment in the NSW Public Sector 2006 – 2008*. The strategy supports agencies to set and meet specific Aboriginal employment targets based on the agency's size, its roles and responsibilities, its location and the Aboriginal client base.

Achievements in recent years are as follows:

- In DAA, the Aboriginal employment rate in June 2006 was approximately 50 per cent.
- In the Department of Environment and Conservation, in September 2006, Aboriginal employment rate was around 6 per cent, although it was as high as 16 per cent in the Department's northern region.
- In 2006-07, Aboriginal people filled 7 per cent of Housing NSW positions. In the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) in 2005-06, Aboriginal people filled 69 per cent of positions.

### **Governance training**

In line with the State Plan Priority F1 underpinning strategy of building community resilience, TAFE NSW offers a number of customised courses to improve governance capacity among Aboriginal people. For example, Aboriginal Committee Training was undertaken by 41 students in 2006 and 36 students in 2007. The Certificate IV in Business (Governance) had 123 students in 2006 and 103 students enrolled in 2007. A Certificate IV in Leadership has also been developed and will be actively promoted to Aboriginal communities in 2008.

4. Do the Regional Engagement Groups still exist?

- a. If so, what do they do?
- b. Are Indigenous people on them?

**Response:**

Regional Engagement Groups (REGs) are coordinating, planning and performance-monitoring bodies which bring together the NSW Government, the Commonwealth Government and Aboriginal communities. REGs are in operation in each of the regions of NSW and supported by the respective regional office of DAA.

That is:

- North Coast and Hunter - Coffs Harbour office
- Murdi Paaki - Bourke office
- Illawarra South East - Narooma office
- New England/North West - Tamworth office
- Central Coast and Greater Western Sydney - Sydney office
- Mid-West and Riverina - Wagga Wagga office.

The membership of each REG includes Aboriginal people. In each REG, the core membership consists of:

- Regional Manager, DAA;
- Manager, Commonwealth Government Indigenous Coordination Centre;
- Chair, Regional Coordination Management Group (RCMG);
- Regional Coordinator, DPC;
- *Two Ways Together* peak Aboriginal organisation representation (*listed under response to question 2 above*); and
- Other regional community representation as agreed by the Director General, DAA.

Each REG is co-chaired by the DAA Regional Manager and one of the non-government members of the REG. Non-government members of the REG will nominate the co-chair unless a regional representative structure is in place (e.g. the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly). In this instance the regional nominee will be invited to co-chair the REG.

5. Under priority R3 Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour the 'increasing engagement of NSW Police with the community, particularly with minority groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' is listed as a new direction to be considered. What is being done in relation to this possible new direction?
  - a. When will any new initiatives be implemented?
  - b. How will progress be measured?

**Response:**

The NSW Police Force is currently working with the Attorney General's Department and DAA to develop further Aboriginal justice initiatives.

Progress to date includes the employment of a NSW Police Force Indigenous Domestic and Family Violence Officer in September 2007 to ensure that police policies reflect the specific issues for Aboriginal communities.

Funding has also been obtained from the Commonwealth Government to employ four additional female Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs). The ACLOs will support responses to family violence issues and improve reporting of and responses to family violence.

Priority R3 Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour includes the following target:

We will reduce the proportion of the NSW population who perceive problems with louts, noisy neighbours, public drunkenness or with dangerous, noisy, hoon drivers.

Delivery of Priority R3 is being reported through quarterly progress reporting by NSW Police and regular updates on the State Plan website.

Data released on 19 November 2007 shows that in the 12 months to April 2007, the total percentage of people who perceive a problem with any of the four selected anti-social behaviours was 39.2 per cent. This was a slight decrease from the 2006 figure of 39.5 per cent.

6. *Making It Our Business* refers to the problem of attracting Aboriginal staff to the NSW public service positions.

- What has been done to address this issue?
- How successful has it been?
- How has this success been measured?
- How is it sustained?

**Response:**

DPC is working with public sector agencies to implement the strategies of *Making It Our Business* (MIOB). Many agencies already have comprehensive Aboriginal employment and development strategies:

Department of Education and Training

Department of Community Services

NSW Health

NSW Police

Attorney General's Department

Department of Environment and Climate Change

This has seen the sector move closer to the Government's target of achieving a minimum of 2 per cent Aboriginal representation by 2008 over the past two years (currently at 1.9 per cent). Some agencies substantially exceed this target, and have set increasingly higher targets, in recognition of the nature of services they provide and their interaction with Aboriginal communities.

Agencies are also focusing on development issues. For example, DPC and DAA are currently assessing options for leadership programs specifically targeted to Aboriginal employees, to provide opportunities to increase the representation of Aboriginal employees in senior positions.

Implementation of MIOB is to be formally reviewed by DPC and DAA commencing in May 2008. This will include consultation with public sector agencies to assess their progress in implementing the strategies of MIOB. The review will measure agency progress against the key outcomes identified in MIOB.

7. The NSW Government committed to achieving a minimum of 2% Aboriginal employment in public sector agencies by 2008.

- What role does your Department play in the achievement and monitoring this target?
- What are the figures to date?
- Does the data indicate what the grade level that Aboriginal people are employed at? If so, can you please give us an overview of Aboriginal employment numbers at the various grade levels?
- What is the retention rate of Aboriginal employees?

**Response:**

DPC monitors agency progress in terms of the participation and development of all Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups, including Aboriginal people, on an annual basis. DPC assesses the representation of Aboriginal people in public sector agencies (including universities) and provides advice and guidance to agencies on specific strategies to increase employment and facilitate development opportunities. DPC also assists individual agencies in the development of Aboriginal employment and development strategies as requested.

The sector has made progress towards the 2 per cent target. The following table provides the representation of Aboriginal people in the sector for the period 2004-2006:

Estimated representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees in the NSW Public Sector	Year
1.7	2004
1.9	2005
1.9	2006

Source: NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile overview report, DPC

Aboriginal employees continue to be over-represented in the lower salary bands. This reflects the large representation of Aboriginal employees in cadetships, traineeships and apprenticeships (*see below for detail*).

The following table details the representation of Aboriginal employees by salary band in the sector, compared with the broader workforce for 2006:

Salary Group	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Total NSW Public Sector
< \$33,910	11.84	6.40
\$33,910 to \$49,791	38.36	29.26
\$49,762 to \$63,006	27.33	27.25
\$63,007 to \$81,478	18.00	26.82
\$81,479 to \$101,848	3.43	6.43
\$101,849 to \$138,152	0.83	2.62
> \$138,152	0.20	1.23



DPC is working with agencies to address development issues, and will use the review of MIOB to develop further strategies in this area.

The following table depicts the separation rates of Aboriginal people, compared with the total public sector workforce:

Year	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Total NSW Public Sector
2004	13%	9.1%
2005	14%	11.1%
2006	11%	9.3%

Source: NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile unpublished data, DPC

#### NSW Public Sector Indigenous Cadetship Program

The Cadetship Program encourages Indigenous people to take up public sector employment by supporting tertiary students to combine full-time university study (or higher level vocational study) with part-time employment.

It provides cadets with:

- a study allowance for 40 weeks annually for up to four years whilst studying;
- 12 weeks employment annually in a Government agency with support and mentoring; and
- permanent employment on successful completion of the cadetship.

The Program promotes the public sector as a career option to Indigenous people, and addresses agency skills gaps and EEO responsibilities.

DPC coordinates the operation of the Program across NSW. The Program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). DPC holds contracts with DEEWR on behalf of NSW agencies. The first NSW contract commenced in 2001.

The study allowance and some course-related costs are met by program funding and paid to cadets by agencies. Employment costs (3 months salary per annum for the duration of the cadetship, and permanent employment on successful completion of study and workplace components) are met by NSW public sector agencies.

143 cadets have commenced the program to date. 42 have successfully completed the program (the term of the cadetship can be from one to four years, depending on the course of study).

There is increasing agency interest in the program. In 2008, 28 agencies will be advertising 82 new places.

8. How effective do you think *Two Ways Together* has been in changing the way that Government and communities work together?
1. What ongoing evaluation, if any, has there been?
  2. What do the figures indicate to date?
  3. How has the Government changed the way it works so that it is more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal communities? (page 5 *Making it Our Business*)

**Response:**

*Two Ways Together* will be evaluated in three stages, commencing in 2008 and continuing in 2010 and 2012. A significant component of the evaluation will be to assess the effectiveness of the partnership approach between Government and Aboriginal people at the State, Regional and local level. This will be from the perspective of all participants, not just NSW agencies. The views of the Commonwealth Government, Aboriginal peak bodies, and Aboriginal communities will also be considered. This is an appropriate point at which to test the effectiveness of partnerships. It will inform future implementation of *Two Ways Together*, as well as other Government collaborations.

The *Two Ways Together Report on Indicators 2007* provides some case studies of where government working together in partnerships with communities has led to improved outcomes for Aboriginal people. The Report also shows where outcomes based on policy and program changes made as a result of collaboration and consultation are now bearing fruit. For example, the NSW Department of Education worked with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to consult Aboriginal people and communities across NSW in 2004 to find out what changes could be made to improve education outcomes. The Report on Indicators shows that some of these changes are having a positive impact, for example increasing enrolments and attainment at TAFE as an alternative pathway to completing education.

Through the implementation of *Two Ways Together* the Government is fostering local planning in partnership communities and amongst other agencies and stakeholders across NSW. DAA is currently developing Guidelines for the Partnership Community Program that will inform engagement with Partnership Communities and others in developing local plans, and monitoring and reporting on the implementation of that planning.

9. In the 2005 *Two Ways Together* Report it is noted that the Aboriginal people and the NSW Government and government agencies work together, and are jointly responsible to plan and deliver solutions that meet community needs. How do you prevent this from becoming an exercise in buck-passing?
- a. What is the nature of the responsibility of Aboriginal people in this context?
  - b. What power comes with that responsibility?

**Response:**

*Two Ways Together* recognises that Aboriginal people know best the needs of their community, and establishes ways to make sure that Aboriginal people have a strong voice in planning and deciding how their needs and aspirations are met.

The Government has made a commitment to work in close partnership with the Aboriginal community at the State, regional and local levels. Accountability for making this partnership work is ensured through the report on indicators published every two years.

Additionally, the performance measures specified in CEO contracts provide a significant mechanism for ensuring that the Government meets its commitment to Aboriginal people.

The implementation of the State Plan has given an additional focus to Aboriginal Affairs right across Government. Accountability for delivering the State Plan priorities is ensured through the quarterly updates provided by lead agencies, and through the State Plan annual report. These reports are publicly available on the State Plan website.

The Government has put in place structures to support joint efforts with the community to plan and deliver solutions. At the regional level, Regional Engagement Groups (REGs) have been established across NSW and Aboriginal people are represented on them. Local-level implementation of *Two Ways Together* is occurring in 40 partnership communities across NSW.

DAA is currently developing guidelines for the Partnership Community Program that will inform engagement with partnership communities, working with that community to develop local plans, and monitoring and reporting on the implementation of that planning. Through the Partnership Community Program, communities will be able to engage with government, as decision makers, around the targeting of service delivery, and the coordination of programs and efforts to build capacity in their communities and in their region.

A key feature of this work is the provision of on-the-ground support by DAA Regional Offices, and agreement on which government agencies have primary responsibility for overseeing and ensuring the implementation of aspects of local plans.

10. In 2006, the Director General of DAA told the Federal Inquiry into Indigenous Employment that there was a lack of coordination across government and a disjointed approach to programs. What is the NSW Government doing to facilitate a more coordinated approach to Indigenous service provision, both in NSW and between the NSW and Federal governments?

**Response:**

The NSW and Commonwealth Governments have committed to work together to address Aboriginal disadvantage under the *Overarching Agreement on Aboriginal Affairs*. Under this bilateral agreement, the Commonwealth committed to working with the NSW Government through the structures developed under *Two Ways Together*, with the aim of promoting greater inter-governmental coordination.

Since 2005, *Two Ways Together* has developed further with government coordination occurring at State, regional and local levels. At the State level, the delivery of Priority F1 through *Two Ways Together* is driven by the Chief Executives Committee and the Human Services and Justice CEOs forum. These CEO forums are supported by the Two Ways Together Coordination Committee, which includes senior representatives from State and Commonwealth Government agencies and NSW peak Aboriginal organisations and meets quarterly.

At the regional level, Regional Engagement Groups operate across NSW. In addition, the NSW and Commonwealth Governments have agreed to work across 40 partnership communities under *Two Ways Together*.

In addition, since 2005 DAA Regional Offices have co-located with the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Coordination Centres, which has seen an improvement in regional coordination.

CoAG Working Group in Indigenous Reform

More recently, NSW has joined with all other Australian jurisdictions through CoAG in its commitment to overcome indigenous disadvantage. CoAG has formed a national Working Group on Indigenous Reform, on which NSW is represented by the Director General of DAA, and at a senior executive level by DPC and NSW Treasury.

A key role of the Working Group is to ensure that the new round of Specific Purpose Payments to be developed during 2008 includes Indigenous-specific outcomes and objectives. These will address many areas within the spectrum of disadvantage including health, education and housing.

The Working Group has also been tasked by COAG with preparing specific reform proposals regarding Indigenous early childhood development and basic protective security for Indigenous parents and children:

- Reducing alcohol and substance abuse and its impact on families, safety and community wellbeing;
- Addressing passive welfare;
- Building blocks and governance; and
- Optimising service delivery (including infrastructure and water).

2. *Reporting of hospital admission rates for acute respiratory infections, gastroenteritis and skin infections among Aboriginal people*

The headline measures under the Environmental Health objective of State Plan Priority F1 are hospital admission rates for acute respiratory infections, gastroenteritis and skin infections among Aboriginal children in NSW.

The first State Plan annual update was published in December 2007. The update reported as follows for 2005-06:

- The admission rate for acute respiratory infection was 80 per cent higher for Aboriginal children than for non-Aboriginal children.
- The admission rate for gastrointestinal infections was 14 per cent higher for Aboriginal children than for non-Aboriginal children.
- The admission rate for skin infection was 300 per cent higher for Aboriginal children than for non-Aboriginal children.

The Cabinet Committee on State Plan Performance reviews progress across all State Plan priorities every quarter. The Committee identifies where performance is off track, and, in consultation with the lead Minister, identifies strategies to help achieve our targets. The first full year of State Plan performance data will be available in June 2008, and will be reported in the State Plan annual report later in the year.

The *Two Ways Together Indicators Report* released on 22 April 2008 states as follows:

- In New South Wales in 2005-06, the hospitalisation rate for acute respiratory infections in Aboriginal children was 1.8 times higher than all children. Acute respiratory diseases include acute upper respiratory infections, influenza and pneumonia. The rates for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in New South Wales have decreased in recent years.
- Between 1993-94 and 2005-06, hospitalisation rates for skin infections in Aboriginal children were more than three times higher than the rates for all children. Skin infections in this analysis include staphylococcal infections, impetigo, cellulitis, abscesses and lymphadenitis associated with infections.
- The rate of hospitalisation for gastrointestinal illnesses in both Aboriginal and all children increased significantly between 1993-94 and 2005-06 with a three-fold increase in hospitalisations of Aboriginal children in that period. In 2005-06, the rates were only slightly higher in Aboriginal children, compared with non-Aboriginal children. The gastrointestinal illnesses in this analysis include salmonella infections, shigellosis and other bacterial, viral and parasitic gastrointestinal illnesses.

Both State Plan and Two Ways Together reporting draw on the same data collections. There may some slight differences between the two reports resulting from aggregation or from differences in reporting periods.

### *3. Programs relating to traditional roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal men*

#### **Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural and Development Centre**

The Centre at Colleambally near Griffith opened in 2005 and is for Aboriginal boys aged 12-15 yrs at risk of contact with the criminal justice system. The Centre is funded by the Attorney General's Department, and is allocated \$2.2 million for 2007-08. The centre houses up to 16 Aboriginal boys who stay at the centre on a voluntary basis for three to six months.

The centre provides educational, vocational and cultural programs to improve the participants' health, learning outcomes and cultural identity and prevent them from becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Tirkandi Inaburra has implemented a program made up of a range of activities designed to incrementally build educational/vocational, living, sport/recreational and cultural identity. Cultural aspects are woven throughout each activity. All graduates are supported through an exit plan and mentoring programs on return to their communities.

35 participants have now graduated from Tirkandi Inaburra. 29 graduates are actively engaged in school in their communities; one graduate is in full-time employment; and five have left school and are not employed. No graduate has been convicted of a criminal offence.

#### **Rekindling the Spirit**

Rekindling the Spirit involves a number of agencies working together to provide a range of culturally-specific support services to Aboriginal communities in Lismore and Tabulam. These services include offenders as well as their families, and provide activities such as group work, counselling and camps. The focus is on targeting domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and child abuse and neglect within the family. This program is administered by the Department of Corrective Services and will receive funding of \$464,000 in 2007-08.

#### **Yindyama La/Yindyama La Vinaa Program Family Violence Project, Dubbo**

This four-year program is focused on rehabilitation of perpetrators of family violence. Commencing in May 2006, 19 male perpetrators of domestic violence were initially referred to the program. An additional component of the program is focused on supporting families of the perpetrators. The family program provides an avenue for the resolution of family violence by providing female victims with the opportunity to:

- better appreciate the impact of violence on themselves and their children and their responses to violence;
- understand the changes that offenders may experience while participating in the male program;
- explore their own violent behaviour;
- increase knowledge of safety issues for themselves and their children.

To date, 109 referrals have been made, 27 people have graduated, and there have been only 7 breaches of good behaviour bonds.

## **Our Journey to Respect**

Our Journey to Respect is a 12-session program for young male Aboriginal offenders that aims to reduce the incidence of intergenerational violence. The program focuses on attitudes and behaviour related to family relationships and masculinity. The aim is to reduce the incidence of family violence by facilitating progression from relationships based on power and control, to relationships based on respect. The program is administered by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

4. Schematic representation of decision-making structures for Aboriginal Affairs in NSW

